

# THE Sun

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# GRAND NATIONAL

PLUS LADIES DAY PICTURE SPECIAL: PAGES 10 & 11

## NEW LOW IN SHOPLIFTING EPIDEMIC

# COSTA DEL CRIME

High St coffee chain hires  
**BOUNCERS** to guard grub

EXCLUSIVE by THOMAS GODFREY

COSTA Coffee bosses have hired bouncers to protect their food and drink — as the shoplifting epidemic hits a new low.

Security guards have been deployed in stores where items are stolen by brazen thieves multiple times a day, including in London and Manchester. One Costa customer said yesterday: "They've clearly hit the tipping point."

Full Story — Pages 4 and 5



# 26 TOURISTS ARE INJURED

# BRIT DEAD IN HOL ISLE BUS HORROR



Holiday tragedy... coach carrying British tourists lies on its side after falling down ravine yesterday



## Plunge down ravine in Canary Isles

**By ANDY ROBINSON**  
A BRIT aged 77 died and 26 others were injured after a tourist bus plummeted down a ravine in the Canary Islands yesterday.

The driver reportedly told police his brakes failed so he tried to stop the runaway vehicle by veering onto a dirt track. Pictures showed the smashed coach lying on its side after plunging 30ft down a mountainous hillside in La Gomera. Firefighters helped rescue trapped passengers, including three children, from the wreckage near capital San Sebastian de La Gomera. Emergency services said 27 British tourists and the local driver had been on board the bus, which was bound for a ferry to Tenerife. A 77-year-old man died while three people were seri-

ously injured in the crash, which happened at around 2pm local time. Two were airlifted to hospitals in Tenerife. The rest were taken for treatment at a local hospital. The busload of Brit holidaymakers were staying at the El Balcon de Santa Ana apartment complex in the resort of Playa de Santiago. A receptionist said: "They had left the hotel to head to Tenerife on the ferry. They were all British." The Gov-

ernment of the Canary Islands declared an "alert situation due to a multi-casualty accident". Angel Victor Torres, minister for territorial policy and democratic memory, said: "Tragic news in La Gomera, with the confirmation of one person deceased. "Very attentive to the actions in these first moments of the emergency services and the healthcare personnel. "With a heavy heart. May

there be no more victims." Canary Islands President Fernando Clavijo Battle posted on X: "Following the accident of a bus reported in La Gomera and the work of the emergency teams who are intervening at this moment. My support to the victims and their families." Civil Guard officers were seen speaking to witnesses and inspecting skidmarks on the bend where the vehicle left the road. Last May, a woman, 73,

died and 11 other people were injured when a public bus overturned on a nearby stretch and fell down a hill. Gomera Tours, which arranged yesterday's excursion, insisted all its vehicles are "up to date". A Civil Guard spokesman said: "The man who died in the bus crash in La Gomera is a 77-year-old British national." He was unable to offer information on the other Brits. *andy.robinson@thesun.co.uk*



Legal action... Prince

## Harry is sued by charity

**By TOM WILKINSON**

PRINCE Harry is being sued for libel by a charity he co-founded. The Duke of Sussex, 41, set up Sentebale in 2006 to help young people living with HIV and Aids in southern Africa. But he and co-founder Prince Seiso of Lesotho stepped down as patrons in 2025. It came after trustees quit following a public dispute with chair Dr Sophie Chandauka. It was revealed yesterday that Sentebale had lodged a defamation claim against Harry at London's High Court. His close friend Mark Dyer, a trustee, is also named. The charity filed a "co-ordinated adverse media campaign" which caused "operational disruption and reputational harm". A spokesperson for Harry and Mr Dyer said they categorically reject the "offensive" claims.

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## Dabs for EU trips

BRITONS now need to give fingerprints and a photo the first time they cross the EU border. But once registered the process only needs to be renewed every three years. Experts have warned Brits to allow extra time at airports in hotspots such as Spain and France. The new set of rules for the Schengen Area came in fully yesterday. Kids under 12 will not be fingerprinted but records will still be kept.

## SICK PORN BAN

PORN depicting incest or adults pretending to be children will be banned, ministers have announced. Those producing or possessing such videos face up to five years in jail. Images showing step-incest, where relatives or foster relations who are not related by blood have sex,

are also set to become illegal. The crackdown, part of the Crime and Policing Bill, could also see tech chiefs jailed if their platforms do not remove non-consensual intimate images. Victims minister Alex Davies-Jones said: "We will stamp out misogynistic and harmful content online."

## FARAGE ON POWER TRIP

**NIGEL Farage turned up to a street with a giant cheque yesterday and a vow to pay each household there up to £3,500 for a year's energy bills. A couple in St Malo Road, Wigan, won Reform UK's prize draw which was designed to highlight the party's energy policy.**

## NHS UNION RAP

HUNDREDS of NHS staff are spending most of their worktime on trade union activities, figures show. Taxpayers have splashed out £100million since 2020 on paid "facility time" off for health service staff. Cabinet Office data showed more than 300 NHS employees had permission to

spend more than half their time on union work. Shadow Health Secretary Stuart Andrew yesterday accused Labour of "appealing union leaders". A Department of Health and Social Care spokesman said it expected "a reasonable balance" from staff on work and union activities.

### Sun WEATHER

**TODAY:** Rain in North-West and South-West England, cloudy in the East and South-East. Mostly dry in Midlands and London with light winds.

**TONIGHT:** Rain showers in Northern England, mostly cloudy in Central areas. Clear skies in Southern regions with light south-west winds.

**OUTLOOK:** On Sunday, mostly cloudy and rainy in Western England with clearing skies later. Monday sees rain showers across southern areas, turning cooler.

SUN 14° MON 14° TUE 15° WED 16°

### SEKUTA

PLACE the numbers 1-9 in the spaces so the number in each octagon is equal to the sum of the four surrounding spaces. Solution on Puzzles page.

	22	14	
5	29	25	6

PUZZLES: PAGES 41-43

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### TODAY'S BIRTHDAYS

SUN columnist and TV presenter **JEREMY CLARKSON, 66**, left, singers **JOSS STONE, 39**, **CERY MATTHEWS, 57**, and **LISA STANSFIELD, 60**, right, model **ALESSANDRA AMBROSIO, 45**, ex-England and Spurs footballer **DELE ALLI, 30**, and radio presenter **BOB HARRIS, 80**.

# SWIFT NAMES

# WEDDING DATE



White wedding ... Taylor in New York this week and, right, engagement post

# TAY'S BIG DAY



NFL star ... fiancé Travis Kelce and, left, Taylor on stage

By JACK HARDWICK

**THE countdown to pop superstar Taylor Swift's wedding is officially on — with guests told to keep July 3 free.**

And Taylor was this week wearing white after sending out "save the date" cards for the summer extravaganza.

The 36-year-old was in a long ivory skirt and black top, with a £3,000 Dior handbag, for a dinner date in New York.

She is expected to marry fiancé Travis Kelce, 36, in a lavish Big Apple bash after dropping initial plans for an intimate ceremony.

Fans had speculated that Taylor and Travis would get hitched at her mansion in Rhode Island.

But she has ties to New York and owns a number of properties in the city. In 2014 she bought two neighbouring penthouses in Manhattan's Tribeca district.

After converting them into one, she also bought the townhouse next door and a 35,000sqft loft in the same building.

The wedding guest list would no doubt include a string of stars, with Ed Sheeran and Selena Gomez both tipped to attend.

Helpfully, Ed, a friend of Taylor since 2012, has a gap in his Loop Tour schedule on Friday July 3.

He is due back on stage in Denver the following day.

Taylor and Kansas City Chiefs tight end Travis met in 2023.

The couple confirmed their engagement last August in an Instagram post which attracted more than 30million likes.

Taylor included a song called Welcome to New York on her hit album 1989, released in 2014.

And Travis has previously spoken of his love for the city.

The American Football star said: "It's cool to just kinda vibe around the city."

"I think it's one of my favourite things to do in New York, just be one with the city and just kinda walk the streets and feel the electricity, feeling everybody doing their own s\*\*\* and meeting a few new people along the way."

jack.hardwick@the-sun.co.uk

Picture: THE IMAGE DIRECT

# PETER ANDRE is ABS FAB

EXCLUSIVE Our Clemmie Moodie meets a showbiz legend



PAGES 14&15

# EXCLUSIVE: COSTA COFFEE



# Drop the all-day breakfast wrap and step away from the fridge!

By THOMAS GODFREY  
and RYAN PARRY

**COSTA Coffee has been forced to hire bouncers after shameless shoplifters kept plundering its unguarded fridges, a Sun investigation reveals.**

Thieves strolled out of their high street stores several times a day with items including juice, wraps, sandwiches and croissants – with no risk of being stopped.

Security guards now patrol some of its most high-risk outlets, in yet another damning indictment of Sir Keir Starmer's lawless Britain.

Britain's biggest coffee chain last night confirmed it had hired "additional support" to ensure stores are safe for its staff and customers.

It comes after similar thefts at Greggs revealed by The Sun last year, thought to be costing the bakery millions of pounds a year.

One of the worst-hit Costa stores is in Denmark Hill, South East London.

Situated on a high street near a busy train station, a full-time security guard now protects the fridges.

One regular said: "The area's got quite bad in general but it's shocking to see it spread to Costa. It was always a bit of a safe haven."

"They've clearly hit the tipping point where the cost of hiring a new full-time staff member is cheaper than continuing to lose money to thieves every day."

"It's a real shame – it shows the area is a mess and shoplifters face no punishment."

Customer Adam Cherry added: "Couldn't buy a coffee from Greggs just now because they were busy dealing with a guy who was trying to loot all the sandwiches."

"Went to Costa instead, where they now have a bouncer standing next to the fridge." Another guard

has been deployed to deter brazen shoplifters at a Costa store in Croydon, also in South London.

However, another branch – in Manchester city centre – is still falling victim to thieves despite hiring protection.

Items regularly pinched from the bustling Market Street store include £5.10 cheese and ham toasties and £4.10 stuffed croissants.

It borders the city's Piccadilly Gardens, which have become a hot-spot for anti-social behaviour.

One Costa staff member said:

"We're in Piccadilly so anything can happen here. We've had a few incidents in here but there's also been quite a bit of shoplifting."

"They take things from the fridge – like toasties as well as orange juice and croissants. It's crazy – nothing is safe these days."

Costa Coffee has a 26 per cent share in the coffee shop market, making it the country's most popular cafe chain.

It is not known how many of its 2,700 stores have guards but it is thought to be dozens. Retailers have

been forced to bring in extra security measures amid a shoplifting epidemic, with staff routinely warned about confronting thieves.

Greggs adapted some of its stores so all products are behind the counter. It has also deployed security at some outlets, as has McDonald's. M&S has issued staff with body-worn cams while Sainsbury's last year introduced a check-out camera that records would-be

thieves failing to scan items and plays it back to them.

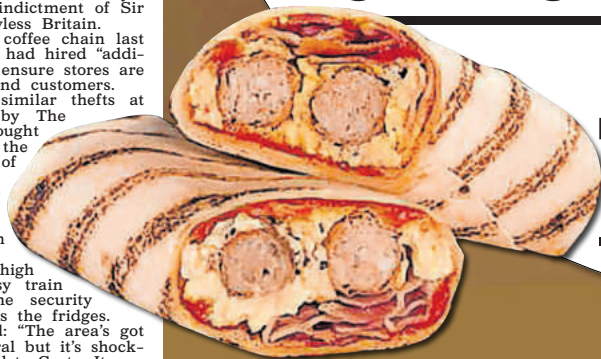
The Heart of England Co-op

group, which has 38 stores across the UK, has said chocolate theft alone cost it £250,000 last year.

Government figures reveal there were 519,381 shop thefts across England and Wales in the year to September 2025, up five per cent from 492,660 in 2024.

However, some chains have stopped reporting incidents, with just 46,000 prosecutions last year.

Lucy Whing of the British Retail Consortium, told The Sun: "Retailers have invested over £5billion in the last five years to tackle theft

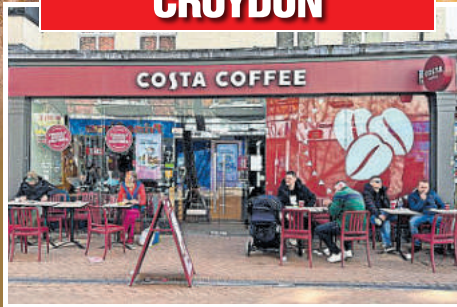


# Ready for some

# BOUNCERS GUARD SARNIES



**CROYDON**



**DENMARK HILL**



**MANCHESTER**



Pictures: DAN CHARITY/PAUL EDWARDS/IAN WHITTAKER/PAUL COUSANS

and crime. Ultimately such theft is not a victimless crime, pushing up the price for honest shoppers." A Costa Coffee spokesman said: "Like many retailers, we continually review security measures across our stores and, in a small number of locations, have introduced additional support where appropriate. "These measures are in place to support our teams and help ensure our stores remain safe and welcoming environments for everyone." [thomas.godfrey@the-sun.co.uk](mailto:thomas.godfrey@the-sun.co.uk) The Sun Says — Page 12

## £2.2bn THEFT EPIDEMIC

**SHOPLIFTERS** are striking an average of three times a minute, costing retailers around £2.2 billion a year. Some have installed anti-theft cages while regularly targeted items are placed in security boxes, including £2.60 bars of Dairy Milk. Last week Leah Harding, 37, was jailed for 41 weeks after swiping 64 boxes of Cadbury Creme Eggs in

By EMILY-JANE HEAP

Peterborough, and £300 of spirits later the same day. Also last week, Stuart Westwood, 38, got 22 months for threatening Southampton Asda staff with needles and a bottle. Waitrose recently sacked worker Walker Smith for tackling a thief at its store in South West London.



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TOP GRUB THIEVES GRAB

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# INBETWEENERS RETURN FOR FILM

## WHERE ARE THEY NOW

### SIMON BIRD (WILL)

AFTER playing the long-suffering swot, he became a lead character in two more Channel 4 sitcoms, Friday Night Dinner and Everyone Else Burns. Now aged 41, he will appear next year in the latest Star Wars film Starfighter. He has two kids with wife Lisa.



### JOE THOMAS (SI)

HIS character may have been unlucky in love but Joe, 41, met his actress partner Hannah Tointon on the show and they have a four-year-old kid. He had parts in sitcoms White Gold and Fresh Meat. Last year, he was on Celebrity Bear Hunt for Netflix.



### JAMES BUCKLEY (JAY)

FAMOUS for playing an outrageous lad, James, 38, is now best known for his podcast In Sickness and in Health with wife Clair, with whom he has two sons. He had roles in dramas but his biggest was as Del Boy in Only Fools and Horses prequel Rock & Chips.



### BLAKE HARRISON (NEIL)

HIS character was dopy but Blake, 40, was shrewd enough to land other roles. He played Pike in the Dad's Army movie reboot as well as acting in TV dramas. He and actress wife Kerry Lynch have two children.



### EMILY ATTACK (CHARLOTTE)

SHE had more of a supporting role yet has enjoyed great success since the show. Emily, 36, is a TV regular and is about to star in series two of Rivals on Disney+. She has a son with scientist fiancé Dr Alistair Garner.



### GREG (MR GILBERT)

THE former real-life teacher was also Sir in the show and went on to lay down the law hosting comedy game show Taskmaster. The 6ft 8in comic's other roles include fronting Sky's Never Mind the Buzzcocks. Greg, 57, dated MP Liz Kendall from 2007 to 2015.



Successful... Emily. Below, in hit telly show



Noughties comeback show? Completed it, mate

Coming of age... Joe, Simon, Blake and James as four schoolboys in E4 series

# NETFLIX BANKERS

## Multi-million pound reboot deal

EXCLUSIVE by **ROD MCPHEE**  
TV Editor

**NETFLIX will make the long-awaited revival of hit Noughties comedy The Inbetweeners.**

A multi-million-pound deal is being finalised for a movie which could be released on the streaming service next year.

The comeback of the teen sitcom, first broadcast on E4, could feature the original cast, including Emily Attack who played Charlotte "Big Jugs" Hinchliffe.

A TV insider said: "Inbetweeners fans will be thrilled and relieved because when talk of a reboot emerged last year, there were fears it might not turn out to be a telly project."

"But this deal will mean the comedy will be back on our television screens for the first time in 16 years, even though it won't be in its original home on Channel 4."

In the original shows, Simon



Motormouth... Jay bus jibe scene

Bird, Joe Thomas, James Buckley and Blake Harrison portrayed four hapless schoolmates navigating adolescence.

Memorable scenes include Buckley's immature and arrogant character Jay yelling "bus w\*\*\*\*s!" from the lads' car at people at a bus stop.

All the main actors said they would be keen to be a part of any comeback.

The insider added: "Netflix have been keen to make the project happen partly because

its enjoyed a bit of a renaissance since old episodes aired on the streaming service and introduced a whole new generation to the show.

"Now The Inbetweeners is set to go international, with the streaming service taking the comedy to households around the globe.

"The deal is on the cusp of being fully rubber stamped, with discussions still happening about production timelines, storylines and cast."

The Inbetweeners ran for three series from 2008 to 2010. It was then made into two hit movies in 2011 and 2014.

It was twice nominated at the Baftas and won three British Comedy Awards.

The Sun exclusively revealed last October that the show's creators Iain Morris and Damon Beesley had struck a new deal with production company Banijay UK which could lead to a reboot.

But it was not clear if that might just be as a podcast or a stage production.

Netflix declined to comment. [rod.mcphee@the-sun.co.uk](mailto:rod.mcphee@the-sun.co.uk)



THE STONES  
LOVE SUPREME



# CEASEFIRE ON KNIFE EDGE

Warning . . . UK airports such as Manchester may face shortages



# MAY DAY!

● Airports could run out of fuel in weeks

● Half-term flights risk being cancelled



Holiday rush . . . lengthy queues at Heathrow at the start of the Easter break

By ED SOUTHGATE

**HALF-TERM** holiday flights could be cancelled amid fears European airports will run out of jet fuel within three weeks.

Prices also look set to soar for passengers at one of the busiest times of the year for air travel. The US-Israel war on Iran is wreaking havoc with plane fuel and insurers are warning that travellers are unlikely to be covered in the event that flights are cancelled. Airports across the continent have told the EU that their stocks will run dry within three weeks unless supplies from the Middle East dramatically increase.

A fifth of the world's oil and gas usually passes through the Strait of Hormuz off the Iranian coast, which has effectively been closed since the conflict began in February.

Traffic remained limited yesterday despite a fragile two-week ceasefire between the US and Iran on Wednesday that was expected to ease flows.

ACI Europe, the lobby group for airports on the continent, told the EU's transport commissioner that fuel shortages threatened to "severely disrupt airport operations and air connectivity".

It said: "If the passage through the Strait of Hormuz does not resume in any significant and stable way within the next three weeks, systemic jet fuel shortage is set to become a reality."

ACI said the situation is worrying ahead of the peak summer season.

It warned smaller airports were particularly vulnerable, saying those with fewer than a million passengers per year were already struggling with viability "without even accounting for the impact of jet fuel shortages".

The warning raises fears that half-term holidays in May and summer getaways could be ruined.

Millions of Britons fly to Europe each year, with Spain, France and Italy the top three destinations.

Some Italian airports including Milan, Venice and Bologna have imposed refuelling restrictions.

Supplies at UK airports are believed to be more secure, but a source warned "things could get wobbly in five or six weeks".

British Airways parent company IAG said it was not aware of fuel availability problems on the immediate horizon. And Heathrow said it was operating normally.

The British Insurance Brokers' Association said flight cancellations caused by jet fuel shortages would not be covered by most policies.

Acts of war and civil unrest are often excluded.

Insurance giant Admiral also said that fuel shortages were not covered under its policy, whatever the cause.

If a cancelled flight is covered by US or European passenger rights legislation, an airline must let passengers choose between a refund for any tickets for journeys they have not been able to use, or an alternative flight if they still want to travel.

Tehran has insisted the strait reopened under a ceasefire agreement between the US and Iran. But President Donald Trump accused it of doing a "very poor job" at reopening it.

Normally around 140 ships should pass through the strait per day. But crossings yesterday remained at around 90 per cent below levels before the US-Israeli strikes, with no significant increase seen since the ceasefire.

A source at a major carrier said: "If we do start getting fuel-availability issues, it's going to vary country to country, airport to airport and airline to airline. Those carriers that have stronger contacts with suppliers are going to come into their own."

"The bigger, stronger airlines would still be able to access fuel but it's a question of what the costs look like."

Martyn James, consumer expert at Resolver, said even if the conflict ends "the knock-on effects are going to be felt by travellers for some time".

Some European airlines such as Scandinavia's SAS and Poland's Lot have already axed flights in response to soaring fuel costs.

Ryanair boss Michael O'Leary warned last week that his budget airline could cancel up to ten per cent of flights in May, June and July if the war continued to hit jet fuel prices.

edward.southgate@the-sun.co.uk



Tight security . . . Pakistan's guards for negotiations in Islamabad, publicised on billboard, right

# AHEAD OF PEACE SUMMIT



Flown in . . . Sir Keir and Qatar's Minister of State

## PM vows Nato 'will do more'

By NOA HOFFMAN

SIR Keir Starmer yesterday vowed to "do more" to bolster Nato as US threats to quit the alliance intensified.

The PM said he has been "making the argument" for higher defence spending "for the best part of two years".

It comes after officials close to Donald Trump suggested he would audit Britain and other European members to decide if they should be punished for failing to support the US in its war efforts.

White House sources said each Nato member's contribution would be assessed before a decision was made.

President Trump is considering the removal of US troops from countries seen as unresponsive — a move that would deal a major security and economic blow.

In Qatar on the third and final day of a Middle East tour, Sir Keir said: "We're very strong supporters of Nato and I've arguing for some considerable time that we need to do more."

"Do we Europeans need to do more? Yes." He added: "It is in America's interests, it's in European interests."

He said Nato had kept us "much safer than we would otherwise have been".

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## Chagos to be shelved

BRITAIN'S deal to hand over the Chagos Isles is set to be shelved until Donald Trump comes on board with it.

Labour had planned to cede sovereignty of the Indian Ocean isles to China-friendly Mauritius — and then lease back the airbase on Diego Garcia for 99 years at a cost of up to £30 billion.

But the US leader called it an "act of great stupidity".

Since then, relations with him have become further strained by the Iran war.

The Bill will not be in the King's Speech next month, The Sun understands.

Ministers are now expected to formally put the legislation on hold indefinitely as they work out a way forward.



# VANCE TO IRAN: DON'T PLAY US

US VICE President JD Vance warned Iran not to "try to play us" ahead of their high-stakes peace summit today — as the ceasefire teetered on the brink.

He jettied to Pakistan on Air Force Two to lead negotiations, saying President Donald Trump had given him "pretty clear guidelines" on how talks on the Middle East war should go.

And Mr Vance, left, warned Tehran's negotiating team: "If the Iranians are willing to negotiate in good faith, we're willing to extend the open hand."

"If they're gonna try to play us, then they're gonna find the negotiating team is not that receptive." As the truce

By PAUL SIMS

hung by a thread, Iran said a ceasefire in Lebanon and the release of its blocked assets must happen before negotiations even begin.

It cast doubt over today's crunch talks, which are likely to focus on the reopening of the Strait of Hormuz.

Tehran said the 24-mile wide waterway — which transports a fifth of the world's oil and liquefied natural gas — would remain closed until Israel's bombing raids stopped.

Mr Trump fumed: "Iran is doing a very poor job, dishonourable some would say, of allowing oil to go through the Strait of Hormuz. That is not the agreement we have!"

He ordered Iran to loosen its chokehold on the strait immediately. In another post on his Truth Social platform, Mr Trump wrote: "There are reports Iran is charging fees to tank-

ers going through the Hormuz Strait. They better not be and, if they are, they better stop now!"

Earlier this week he pushed Iran to reopen the strait, threatening: "A whole civilization will die tonight, never to be brought back again."

The \$2million-a-ship "Tehran Toll-booth" was announced by the Islamic republic as it continued to hold world economies to ransom. Only 18 vessels have crossed the strait since the ceasefire was announced on Tuesday.

Today's talks are the first time leaders from either country have met face-to-face in more than a decade.

Iran has not officially named its delegation. Its Supreme Leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, was wiped out in the opening hours of the war.

Ending his three-day Gulf visit yesterday, PM Sir Keir Starmer said he is "fed up" with bills rising "because of the actions of Putin or Trump".

# FASHION STAKES RAISED AT



Challenger for win... Twig

## Outside bet for a £1million prize pot

By RYAN PARRY

A HORSE that cost just £100 could win the Grand National and £1million for his owners today.

Twig, a bay gelding, won one of three trial races to earn a shot at the bumper pay day from bookie William Hill.

The 11-year-old 40-1 shot will double the first place prize money if he comes home at Aintree.

Twig is ridden by Beau Morgan, 21, owned by the jockey's mum Georgia and trained by Ben Pauling.

But the family, who own a scaffolding company near Bath, could not have dreamt of winning the world's most famous steeplechase when they bought Twig five years ago.

Beau said: "He'd never jumped anything but we sent him away to a local point-to-point trainer, Matt Hampton.

"During the summer he was turned out and strengthened up.

"Matt said, 'This is a good horse' and I laughed and said we've heard it all before - but to be fair he was right."

Twig finished tenth in the National last year.

Beau added: "I'm sure he's in better form this time. His trainer says he has a sporting chance."

## Tragedy as winner put down

A WINNING horse had to be put down at Aintree yesterday after suffering a broken back on its way past the finish line.

Gold Dancer dragged his back legs through the final fence as he won the Mildmay Novices' Chase by four lengths.

But rider Paul Townend immediately dismounted the bay gelding after he crossed the line.

Screens were erected as course vets treated him, but the seven-year-old, trained by Willie Mullins, had to be put to sleep.

Owners Gigginstown said: "He broke his back. It's terribly sad."

A spokesperson for Aintree racecourse said: "Our heartfelt condolences are with his connections."



Pulses racing... all action at Aintree Ladies Day

DON'T MISS 20-PAGE FAVOURITE INSIDE

# RACEGOERS GUZZLE 36K BOTTLES OF BUBBLY

# BETTING FOR GRAND NATIONAL HITS £250M



# AND THEY

By RYAN PARRY

## GLAM racegoers packed Aintree yesterday for Ladies Day — as crowds are set to down 36,000 bottles of bubbly over the famous Grand National Festival.

Some guests were clearly out in front in the contest for £10,000 of fashion prizes.

But all appeared more than happy to raise a glass or two, whatever the outcome on or off the track.

Over the three days, 22,000 bottles of Prosecco and 14,000 bottles of Champagne will be guzzled by a total of 150,000 punters — along with 62,000 shots of vodka and 390,000 pints of Guinness.

Also in high demand are beauty products, with local salons predicting a 60 per cent rise in tanning lotion sales and a 65 per cent hike in fake eyelashes.

Charlotte Hawes, 32, from Wallasey, Wirral, said: "It's the Scouse Met Gala, as they say. All the girls of Liverpool are so stylish." Scot Leanne Kelly, 41, from Perth, wore a huge floral and feathered headpiece and said: "It's all about the hat."

VIP racegoers included Princess Anne's daughter Zara Tindall, wearing a classy cream trouser suit with matching hat.

Ex-rugby star husband Mike said: "They never let you down at Aintree. That's what I love about racing — everywhere is just so different."

Actress Helen Flanagan said she was so keen to attend Ladies Day that she had it written into her Easter panto contract.

The former Corrie star said: "I finish in Mother Goose on April 20th, but I had to have the day off to go to the races, because I can't miss this. I just love the races. This is one of my favourite days of the year."

Former Emmerdale star Natalie Ann Jamieson — Amy Wyatt in the soap — said: "We all really go for it on Ladies Day because we think we're on the turn of the summer here. It's lush."

"It's a different dress code to Cheltenham. They sell flip flops for charity near the train station, which I think is a top idea."

Liverpool football greats Ian Rush, Steve McManaman and Jamie Carragher were there, as was ex-Manchester United star Steve Bruce.

Rush said: "Aintree is very good. It's nice to see the sun out."

"The people and the atmosphere is great. It's like being at a Liverpool game. The people are so friendly and it just makes it special. I've caught up with Steve Bruce and Steve McManaman already and I'll have a drink with Sir Alex Ferguson."

Hannah Smith, 29, from Edinburgh, was named best dressed, winning a £4,000 Ibiza trip and Ladies Day tickets for next year. Euan Perryman, 22, of Liverpool, had the best suit and Sarah Williams, 46, from St Helens, best hat.

More than 50,000 fans packed Aintree to make it the biggest Ladies Day attendance since 2012. And all tickets have sold for today's big race — watched by 600million on TV around the world.

Betting on the festival is set to total £250million, with Ladbrokes saying bookies took 100,000 bets a minute yesterday.

ryan.parry@thesun.co.uk

# AINTREE FOR LADIES DAY



Picture: PETER BYRNE/PA WIRE



Plenty of bottle ... glam fan among guests enjoying a tippie



VIPs ... Zara Tindall and Helen Flanagan have a laugh



Visit ... Oliver and 2012 winner

## Big race treat for 'runner' Oliver, 5

By RYAN PARRY

BRAVE youngster Oliver Christie has been named an "honorary runner" in today's Grand National.

The five-year-old, born with life-limiting congenital heart disease, is too sick to attend the world's most famous steeplechase.

Instead, Aintree chiefs will take the big race to him at Alder Hey Children's Hospital, Liverpool. Organisers at the Jockey Club plan to screen the race for the horse-loving lad and friends in the hospital's cinema.

Oliver has hypoplastic left heart syndrome, which means one side of his heart is severely under-developed. He had his fifth surgery on March 9.

Mum Amelia Christie, who works at Aintree, said: "The Jockey Club have always been so supportive. "Hopefully next year Oliver will be able to attend the Grand National, once he's fully healed."

An honorary runner has been named annually since 2017 to highlight the work of Alder Hey.

Oliver met jockeys and the 2012 winning horse Neptune Collonges there yesterday during an annual hospital visit.

## Racy disc jockey's nightclub

By RYAN PARRY

AINTREE had its first Ibiza beach club dance party yesterday.

Thousands of racegoers packed into the course's own O Beach - the Mediterranean isle venue launched by Gary Lincker's brother Wayne.

Dancers in Moulin Rouge-style costumes gyrated on stage to club anthems between races.

Some punters partied along to the tunes, while others lounged around on beach chairs.

The racing action was shown on a giant screen at the venue.

EastEnders star Dean Gaffney, 48, who is known as a party animal, was there in a VIP box.

# 'RE QUAFF



## States of mind

**SIR Keir Starmer may think comparing Donald Trump to Russian tyrant Vladimir Putin will help him win a few left-wing votes from the Greens.**

But where does it leave the rest of us? The Prime Minister's handling of the Iran war has been guided by one mission only: to keep his anti-Trump MPs onside and hope that, post the May local elections, they will decide against trying to do him in.

But the consequences of him plunging the Special Relationship into the deep freeze could be hugely costly for years to come.

Does anyone now expect Starmer to be able to strike a massive trade deal with the US, so vital for our post-Brexit economy?

Trump is threatening tariffs on Nato countries who failed to offer military support and is especially furious at Britain for denying access to our bases.

Any Presidential punishment will make the cost of living in the UK even worse.

Rejoicing the economically flat-lining EU won't help either – if that's Starmer's real plan.

Meanwhile, it's no use the PM moaning about Trump's impact on our energy bills when he has refused to over-rule Ed Miliband on North Sea drilling.

If drilling had been allowed, we wouldn't be so exposed to energy shocks – and the US giant OpenAI might have held off pulling out of the UK over soaring electricity costs.

Starmer seems to have taken umbrage at Trump's ridiculing of the state of our Armed Forces.

But, on this, the President is right. Years of underfunding have left us shorn of the ability to play any meaningful role in the conflict, even if Starmer had wanted to.

A very harsh light has been shone on our lack of ships, in particular.

Indeed, it's a national humiliation that HMS Dragon is still to reach Cyprus, more than a month after a British military base was attacked.

As for Putin, we are allowing him to do pretty much as he pleases in our waters.

Starmer's human rights champion Lord Hermer has ruled the Navy cannot intercept Putin's shadow fleet of illegal oil tankers – because it might "breach international law".

The Russians must find it all hilarious. **The rest of us can only hang our heads in sorrow...or shame that appalling political choices have reduced us to this.**

## Costa cops

**COSTA Coffee shops being forced to hire bouncers to stop thieves is another depressing loss in the war on thuggery.**

Waitrose has already given up the fight by sacking a staff member for tackling a shoplifter.

**Is it too much to ask for cops to return to the High Streets they so stupidly abandoned years ago?**



**WHILE** Sir Keir Starmer hopes playing the statesman will save his skin back home, Donald Trump's redrawing of the world order is causing the PM a world of pain domestically.

He's accused of being too focused on problems abroad, as even some of his most loyal supporters worry the home front is not just being overlooked but made harder to manage as the fallout from Iran ricochets

back. And the cracks are beginning to show. The week started with Trump demanding the "crazy bastard" Iranians open "the f\*\*\*ing Strait" or face "living in Hell". But it was his threat to wipe out "a whole civilisation" that sparked fresh calls to kick POTUS out of the White House, on grounds of insanity.

Meanwhile First Lady Melania Trump gave an astonishing and unexpected press conference declaring she "never had a

relationship" with paedo Jeffrey Epstein. The President claims, somewhat inconceivably, the had no idea his wife's shock intervention was coming. But given the White House has spent months trying to get Epstein off the news agenda, it does not suggest all is well behind closed doors.

America was promised a golden age with Trump's re-election, but it's in danger of slipping into a golden rage.

# Irrelevant PM in a world of delusion

**"WE have just reached this ceasefire," boasted Sir Keir Starmer on his whistle-stop tour of the Gulf.**

But there was no "we" about it. Instead, his sad victory tour highlighted just how irrelevant the PM now is, watching global events unfold around him as a mere spectator.

So far, as so often with this Prime Minister, his big solution to the problem is...to hold another meeting.

At times, the rhetoric coming out of Starmer's mouth seems delusional. It's as if the PM genuinely believes he is good at this stuff.

Endless lectures as if he has reinvented the wheel, as if he is the first world leader to suggest that conversations with other world leaders are a good idea. He acts like he is the first British PM to work out that speaking to both the Europeans and the Americans is probably a neat idea.

But that's the very bare minimum required.

It's the outcome of these meetings that matters, not the fact they happen.

And so far it's just yapping.

### Pearls of wisdom

Take his interview with ITV from a sandy beach somewhere hot this week, where we received such pearls of wisdom as: "I believe you have to build those relationships... a lot of it happens face to face."

By Jove, I think he's got it – he's just invented diplomacy!

But as the white knight of other people's wars desperately attempted to insert him into the narrative – pledging an "action plan" to reopen the choked-up Strait of Hormuz – the obvious question to ask is: "You and whose army?"

Like his dash to proffer up non-existent battalions to police a non-existent peace in Ukraine, the PM is writing cheques Britain under him can simply not cash.

Our limping aircraft carrier is reliant on a GERMAN escort to the Arctic for Nato duties.

The French carry our water defending our base in Cyprus.

Heads should roll over why HMS Dragon is laid up again more than a month after it was meant to be patrolling the Med.

Promised rises in defence spending have yet to materialise as more and more meetings



**YOU** know what, I don't really care that a politician takes a holiday, but it's the hypocrisy I can't stand. Defence Secretary John Healey – normally a level-headed fella – dashed back from an Easter break in the South of France just in time for peace to break out in the Middle East.

I like the idea of our leaders taking downtime but, unfortunately for Healey, he hasn't always been so forgiving of others.

Especially those evil Tories. When then-Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab was found loitering by a Greek pool the week that Kabul went kaput back in 2021, guess which fuming Labour figure accused him of "letting Britain and Afghans down".

in less than two years of tinned political eunuchism – what did the PM decide to do this week?

Only compare the democratically elected leader of our closest ally to the dictatorial tyrant in charge of our greatest nemesis.

Genius! Let's trash the Special Relationship – in which we are very much the winner – even more than we have already damaged it in recent weeks.

To be fair, the PM has been taking pelters from Donald Trump for weeks over Britain pulling the rug from under Uncle Sam by blocking use of our shared bases to strike Iran.

But to compare him to Putin seems remarkably daft, especially given how much our hollowed-out defences rely on the United States – in the skies and on and under the seas, as well as for manufacturing our missiles and bombs.

All required to fight... Putin. And it was a little bit rich of this Government to accuse anyone else of driving up British energy bills when they are more than capable of doing that all by themselves back home.

But is the PM delusional or just desperate?

Historically despised at home, staring at an absolute ballot-box thumping next month, this is the last roll of the dice for a desperate leader.

Neutered by his backbenchers, surrounded by duds in the Cabinet, the world stage is all the Starmer premiership has left. Yet it turns out he's not very good at that, either.

Oh well, I'm sure another meeting will fix everything.

are held about this week, Britannia in red-tape chains looked the other way while Putin laughed in our faces.

Meanwhile, not far away, yet more migrants died in the Channel with the Starmer Government both impotent and unwilling to stop the ceaseless tide of dinghies.

We couldn't send in the Navy now to stop the boats, even if we wanted to.

So, with all the exquisite political nous that Starmer has shown back at home – spaffing a 165-seat majority up the wall

**HARRY COLE SAVES THE WEST**



Watch his show on YouTube



# Zen thinks outside box

**THE vest is yet to come for Zendaya — as she announces the launch of her own athleisure wear line.**

The *Euphoria* actress, 29, posed to show off the collection after designing it with her long-time stylist Law Roach for Swiss brand On.

And she exercised her creativity by sharing a quirky photo of herself in a box-shaped

By **OLIVIA MONK**

outfit to promote the collection, *right*. She captioned the odd snap: "The things I do for fashion."

The range is out next Thursday and promises "versatile", elevated sportswear. It marks Zendaya's return to clothing design after a hit 2019 collaboration with Tommy Hilfifer.



## EXC-LOO-SIVE

# ALAN CARRZI



Blockage . . Alan on *Celebrity Traitors*. Wet wipe culprits, inset right

## Chaos as workmen discover giant fatberg under house

**TV funnyman Alan Carr was plunged into crisis after workmen discovered a giant fatberg beneath his multi-million pound London pad.**

The *Celebrity Traitors* winner, 49, was contacted by the council after the huge blockage was reported in the sewers.

Carr, speaking on his aptly-named *Bottoms Up!* podcast, revealed: "Council have been in touch. There's a fatberg under my house . . . which is blocking up the pipe."

"Someone's been putting wet wipes down my toilet. I don't know who it is. I don't have wet wipes in my house so they're bringing them in."

"I'm going to have to do a stop and search when people come in because someone is doing it. It's

By **PAUL SIMS and WILL BARKER**

costing me a fortune. We've all got to chip in, the whole row of houses . . . because there's a fat load."

The fatberg is likely to be the least of his problems when he moves into Ayton Castle, one of the UK's finest baronial-style homes, in Scotland.

He bought the pile, near Eyemouth in Berwickshire, after taking a fancy to Ardross Castle, home to *Celebrity Traitors*, further north.

His new pad has 16 bedrooms, 160 acres of gardens and parkland and a miniature railway. He plans to transform it into a luxury hotel and spa, a process Disney+ will film after he signed a big-money deal with them.

The reality show is likely to be similar to his BBC renovation projects in Italy, Spain and Greece with Amanda Holden.

[paul.sims@the-sun.co.uk](mailto:paul.sims@the-sun.co.uk)

Picture: ON

**SURVIVE WORST EVER HAY FEVER**  
See Page 34

# PETER ANDRE EXCLUSIVE: EVER



Paedo . . Aliev, 50

## Migrant sexually attacked train girl

By MIKE SULLIVAN

A MIGRANT who sexually assaulted a lone schoolgirl on a train is facing years in jail. Abdulmanon Aliev sat opposite the 13-year-old and attempted to speak to her using a translator app on his phone. She moved to another seat but 50-year-old Aliev followed, sat next to her and subjected her to a prolonged attack. The girl was only able to escape when the train arrived at its final stop, London's Fenchurch Street station, on June 16 last year, a court heard. Aliev, from the Central Asian republic of Tajikistan, denied sexual assault and attempted rape at Inner London crown court. He claimed he only touched himself in front of her because he has a skin condition. But Aliev, now of Peckham, South London, was found guilty yesterday. Sentencing is on June 17.

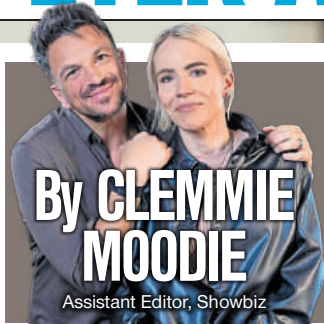


'Mandate' . . Ms Powell

## Deputy warns off Starmer plotters

By MARTINA BET

LABOUR'S deputy leader has warned plotters not to drag the party into a leadership war after next month's local elections. Lucy Powell said a bid to oust Sir Keir Starmer would be unpopular with members, especially with the Iran conflict raging. She said Britain needs sensible leadership and that trying to topple the PM would do nothing to steady the country. She told the Financial Times: "Some kind of messy, bloody internal contest isn't going to help us address these issues." Ms Powell added: "I've got my own job and mandate. I'm not saying this because I want to suck up to anyone." The Manchester Central MP also said Sir Keir's handling of the Iran war is getting the most applause at party events. Labour insiders fear heavy losses at the elections on May 7.



By GLEMMIE MOODIE

Assistant Editor, Showbiz

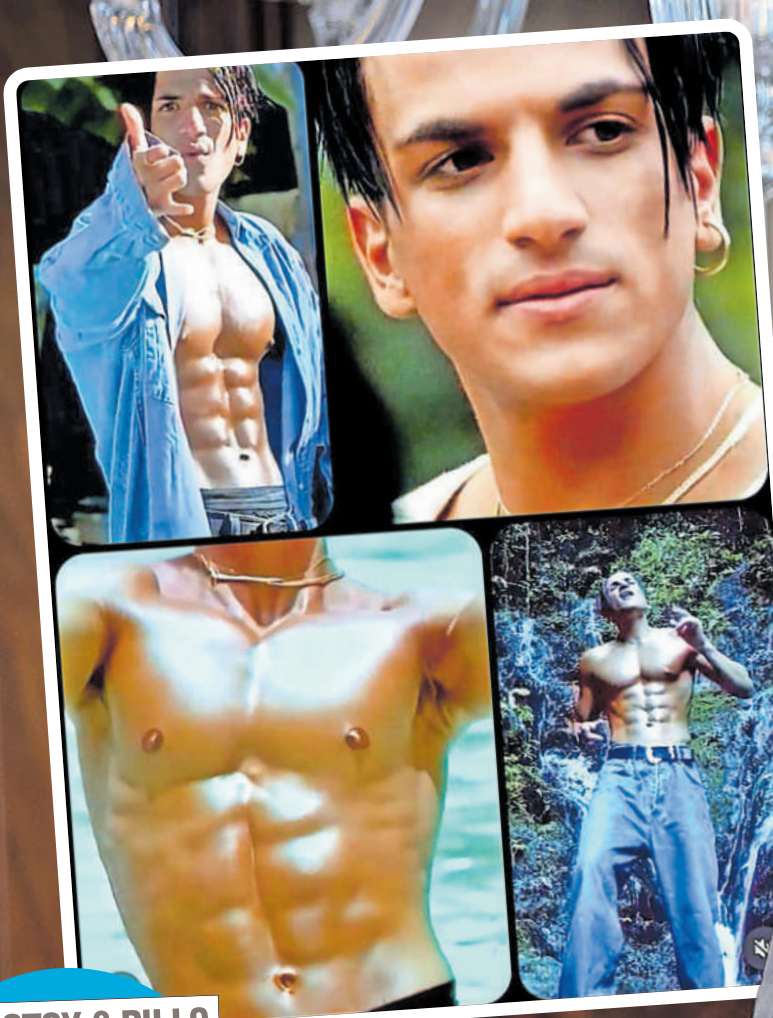
**AFTER getting consent - this is 2026, after all - I poke Peter Andre's rock-solid abs before he makes me grab his equally solid pecs. He still feels 26.**

He has also barely aged a day during his 30-year career, which is very annoying. Although this is in part down to his half-Cypriot heritage and good genes, he also trains hard in the gym five days a week and eats fresh, home-cooked meals daily. Two things he isn't doing, however, are Botox or the fat jab. Not because he doesn't want to, but because he physically cannot. A few years ago, after battling crippling anxiety and panic attacks, Pete was diagnosed with panic disorder. Characterised by unexpected panic attacks - sudden episodes of intense fear accompanied by heart palpitations and dizziness - Pete has now developed a fear of medicine. It means that as well as not taking a paracetamol in three years, he has also had to quit Botox as the thought of a foreign body entering him fills him with terror. He says with a laugh: "I'm going to throw Claire, my manager and friend of 30 years, under the bus here, but ages ago she said to me 'Pete, as your friend, you need Botox now.' "And I used to do it. But, and I have never said this publicly before, I have always suffered with horrific anxiety and have actually been diagnosed with panic disorder. "Although I largely have it under control, it has manifested itself now with medicine.

**'Kids are my world'**

"I have a fear of taking medicine, of putting something in my body that I can't get out. "That includes injections. So I haven't had Botox in about four years, I can't have flu jabs, and I will never, ever have filler. "Even when I get a headache now, I cannot take paracetamol. "So when it came to Covid and having the vaccine, it was traumatic. I had to have therapy beforehand as I was so terrified. "I describe it to someone as imagine that thing where a spider lays eggs under your skin. "Obviously, with my wife being a doctor, it is hard - she thinks I just need exposure therapy and to get on with it, basically." Pete, 53, has been married to his stunning doctor wife, Emily, for 11 years. They have three children - Millie, 12, Theo, nine and Arabella, 18 months - whose faces they do not put on social media. That's in stark contrast to his two eldest, Princess and Junior, who grew up on camera as the products of two reality TV-famous parents.

The pair are from his first marriage to Katie Price, who he met when they were in the jungle for the third series of I'm A Celebrity... in 2004. Viewers watched the couple fall in love, and a lavish OK! magazine-sponsored wedding at Highclere Castle in Hampshire in 2005 followed, as did several fly-on-the-wall reality



MUSCLING IN . . . showing off those toned abs in the video for his first big hit Mysterious Girl in 1995

**ON BOTOX & PILLS**

**'I've always suffered horrific anxiety and been diagnosed with panic disorder. I have a fear of taking medicines...and injections'**



PRICE OF LOVE . . . with then-wife Katie at the Dukes Of Hazzard movie after-party in 2005

shows. Their 2009 split was acrimonious. For years they had no contact, speaking only through intermediaries for the sake of their kids. It came as something of a shock to fans, then, when the duo issued a joint statement in February announcing a detente and pledging to "close the door on the past". In pop culture terms, this was the equivalent of President Trump knocking down his Mexican wall. "A lot of people don't know this, but many times over the last 16 years, we have been OK," Pete smiles, chatting from London's Landmark hotel. "Only four years ago, she was sitting in our garden and we were all having lunch. And I love that. "And now we're fine again and this time I really want

it to last. Because, no matter what happens, she's the mother of my kids. And those kids are my world. "It was only recently when Princess was in the kitchen and she went, 'Oh, I'll go in the other room to make this call.' "I asked why, and thought she was going to be speaking to a boy or something, but she said, 'I'm going to speak to Mum.' "I said, 'Well, put her on, and I'll say hello.' "So she came on and she went, 'Oh, this is weird isn't it' and I said, 'Actually, it isn't.' "And that's when I saw her and her husband. We had a chat, we laughed, and it wasn't weird at all." So what does he make of the former glamour model's new chap, Lee Andrews - a man she met and married within weeks? "My parents were incredibly strict with me," he says. "And one day I remember saying to my dad, 'Have you ever asked what makes me

# THE LOVING FAMILY MAN & SEXY GENT



PROUD DAD ... from left, wife Emily, with Junior and Princess and their pop star father at an awards do in 2024

## ON PRINCESS

**'It's disgusting what she gets on social media. One guy asked her to send pics of her feet. How do men think it's OK to send genitalia?'**

## ON KATIE

**'People don't know this but many times over the last 16 years we've been OK. My thing is: Is she happy? If she is, that's great'**

SOLID GUY ... Peter at hotel in central London for chat with Sun  
Photography by DAN CHARITY



TO THE POINT ... laughing while chatting to Sun's Clemmie

# Mr Abs Fab

(Yes, they still feel rock-solid like a 26-year-old's)

happy? Because as parents we tend to tell our kids what they should be doing and not listening to what they actually want.

"So my thing to Kate is, 'Are you genuinely happy? And if you are, then that's great'.

"Who am I to tell someone what they should or shouldn't be doing? Or even giving an opinion about it? I want her to be happy."

Remarkably, given they have been in the full glare of the media, Katie and Pete's two children are well-adjusted, sweet and polite kids – and it's clear the star is hugely proud of all his children.

I have known this very gentlemanly, family-orientated star for almost two decades.

And although we haven't seen each other in six years prior to this interview, when I WhatsApped him a few months ago requesting a personalised video for a very sick friend-of-a-friend, he agreed immediately.

That is the sort of man he is.

A recent clip from influencer Princess's reality show went viral after the youngster was seen showing her dad a direct message she'd received from a stranger – with Pete recoiling in horror.

It also emerged she'd been receiving unsolicited sexual content since the day she turned 16, with vile, opportunistic men relishing the fact she had "become legal".

Now the Aussie pop star is calling both for a ban on social media for under-16s, and asking schools to step up and offer greater support to parents.

Pete says: "I just don't understand at what point men think it's OK to send photos of their genitalia."

"The guy doing it, what's he thinking? I guess if you're flirting and a guy sends you a picture of him topless in the gym, you might go, 'Oh, OK'."

"But if a woman sent a picture of her, you know, (he means front bottom)... most guys are going to go, 'What the hell?' I think really

it's just men doing it. It's gross and stresses me out.

"I saw one guy was asking Princess to take photos of her feet and send them to him or something – it was disgusting."

"Why would you ask that of someone? I know Princess is 18 now and I have to let go of it and cut the umbilical cord, but it's hard."

When I insouciantly mention I received my first dick pic over Instagram a couple of weeks ago, Pete is genuinely horrified.

"What did he actually think you'd do with that?" (Not much, Pete, not much.)

He clarifies he doesn't get any unsolicited boob photos from women – which is a good job as he is very happily married.

Pete is, though, quick to hit back against accusations of nepobabyism.

He harrumphs: "The reason why the nepobaby thing doesn't work so much for me is because if you look at someone like Michael Douglas, one of the greatest actors of our time, you don't go, 'But he's only a great actor because his dad was Kirk Douglas'."

"I mean, there's Charlie Sheen, right? His dad was Martin Sheen. And Angelina Jolie – her dad is Jon Voight. Liza Minnelli, her mum was Judy Garland."

"So it's just a new thing that's been coined and isn't really fair."

Pete adds: "I know it sounds hypocritical, me calling now for a ban on social media for under-16s."

"But none of us knew where it was going to go, and how toxic it would become."

"My daughter Millie's school has banned phones, and thank God – because as parents it's almost impossible for us to stop what they can access."

"Parents need support and for more schools to step up, as well as the Government, and do this."

## Highs and lows

"It's working in Australia, so why not here?"

Of course, Pete isn't a complete Luddite and is using Instagram – fully clothed – to promote his new album, *Legacy*, which is the ostensible reason we are here today.

It is already number one in the pre-order midweeks, and new single *All About Us* has been B-playlisted on Radio 2 alongside artists including Taylor Swift, Lizzo, Jack Savoretti and Niall Horan.

Pete became a Nineties pin-up largely thanks to those abs featured in the video for his first big hit *Mysterious Girl*, and he recognises his lasting legacy will probably always be that 1995 earworm.

But he is quick to point out he's also secured three number one singles and a number one album – and reckons he won't retire until he lands one more.

He landed a World Music Award in 1997 in front of an audience including Celine Dion (who gave him a signed CD, which he lost), Lionel Richie, Ricky Martin and the Bee Gees. He went on to become pals with Robin Gibb.

Over the course of his varied career, Pete has enjoyed the typical highs and lows of fame, plus that celeb rite of passage, an appearance on *Strictly* in 2015.

He still regularly tours the world and in May will join the cast of Abba musical *Mamma Mia!* at the O2.

Today, he remains very much a devoted family man. Indeed, he is frequently hailed as "Saint Pete".

So what is the most dastardly thing Saint Pete has done?

While not quite Theresa May levels of wheat field-trotting, he cites a naked sauna with the Backstreet Boys and taking up smoking under peer pressure from – and the name seems ironic in this context – girl group All Saints.

● Peter Andre's new album, *Legacy*, is available to buy now. See [slinky.to/legacy](http://slinky.to/legacy).

# HELP IS NOT FOR HEROES

## War museums snub

**SOME of Britain's war museum sites are offering £3 tickets to benefits claimants — while troops and veterans are left paying full price.**

Reductions apply for those on Universal Credit and a whole host of other allowances.

Standard adult tickets can cost around £30 and serving and former forces personnel do not qualify for cheap entry. They are limited to free admission on specific occasions such as Remembrance Sunday.

Charges apply at London's HMS Belfast and the air museum IWM Duxford in Cambridgeshire.

The sites are run by the Imperial War Museums group. Almost half its funding comes from taxpayers, the rest from ticket sales, gifts and commercial schemes.

Its main museums in London and Manchester are free to all. But the pricing contrast at its sites which do charge has

**EXCLUSIVE by MARTINA BET**

sparked calls for change. Labour MP Luke Charters said: "If our servicepeople are willing to put everything on the line for Britain, the very least our museums can do is give them a discount."

Reform UK said: "Why are military museums treating people on benefits better than veterans?" IWM said its reduced prices increase access, and military personnel and veterans can also benefit if they are on Universal Credit.

*martina.met@thesun.co.uk*



Cut call ... Charters

# SPLASHDOWN!



To moon and back... pod lands in Pacific



Group hug... before trip home

By SEBASTIAN HAW

THE four Artemis II moon astronauts safely splashed back to Earth early today.

Reid Wiseman, Christina Koch, Victor Glover and Jeremy Hansen had a joyful group hug before hurtling home at over 26,000mph, then parachuting down to land off California at 1.07am.

Wiseman said all four were "stable" and in good condition. Their historic ten-day mission had taken them to the far side of the moon.

SNL UK

MUSIC

JORJA SMITH

HOST JACK WHITEHALL

sky | Tonight 10pm



Research... drugs test

## Drug is ovarian cancer life hope

By SAM BLANCHARD

A DRUG which was developed for a rare disease may also extend the lives of ovarian cancer patients, a study found.

Women given relacorilant alongside usual cancer treatment had a 35 per cent reduction in the risk of death.

Tests on 381 platinum-resistant ovarian cancer patients found they lived for an average of 16 months after diagnosis – compared to around a year without it.

Relacorilant is used to treat Cushing's syndrome – the over-production of the hormone cortisol.

The report in The Lancet said the results position the drug "as a new standard treatment option".

Meanwhile, separate tests using pembrolizumab – a drug that boosts the immune system – found it, along with usual treatment, helped patients live almost four months longer on average.



Storytelling... Dixon

## Alesha's backing books for kids

By ELEANOR GUNN

BRITAIN'S Got Talent judge Alesha Dixon is backing an initiative offering books to families to boost literacy levels.

Figures show one in ten kids aged five to 18 have no books of their own at home. That rises to one in six in disadvantaged communities, says the National Literacy Trust.

The Library of No Returns will give thousands of books to communities with the lowest literacy levels, and kids can keep them.

Alesha helped launch it yesterday with storytelling sessions in Walsall, West Mids – with similar pop-ups planned.

Analysis also suggests money struggles are linked to reading skills.

Credit scores in areas with low literacy levels are up to 12 per cent below the average.

Alesha said books can "inspire children's imagination and shape their financial futures".

# ● Pair smuggled hundreds of illegal migrants ● Operation run from car wash in quiet town



'Sophisticated network'... Shamo, left, and Khdir ran smuggling operation from their car wash business

# 'TRIPADVISOR' TRAFFICKERS

**TWO men behind a "Tripadvisor-style" trafficking service that brought 100 immigrants to Europe each week were jailed for a total of 38 years yesterday.**

Dilshad Shamo, 41, and Ali Khdir, 40, ran the massive smuggling operation from a town car wash, turning over £1.8million in just six months.

Hundreds of migrants, mainly from Iran, Iraq and Syria, each paid them up to £25,000 for access to Europe and Britain.

Iraqi-born Shamo and Khdir, originally from Iran, would organise boats, HGVs, taxis and cars to hide the human cargo from border checks. Migrants were then encouraged to rate their journeys in videos filmed inside lorries or boats or via social media channels including Telegram and TikTok.

One Iranian family who were smuggled to Europe posed outside an airport and said: "God bless you,

we are very grateful." A man asks in another clip: "How was the back of a lorry gives a thumbs-up. Derek Evans, from the National Crime Agency, said: "It's like 'Tripadvisor' – they were rating their service within that community."

The pair, who ran the smuggling ring under the cover of their "Fast Track" car wash in Caerphilly, South Wales, offered three payment

tiers. Top was "platinum", where migrants would get a fake passport and air travel costing £25,000. Then there was "gold", a journey by ship for £10,000. Finally, "bronze" involved an HGV and a dinghy across the Channel for £5,000.

Following an investigation, National Crime Agency officers swooped on the car wash business and seized hidden iPhones which were filled with trafficking messages.

Cardiff

crown court heard the two defendants used different methods to smuggle people into Europe.

Prosecutor Sarah Gaunt said the "Turkey route" involved migrants legally crossing there from Iran, Iraq or Syria before illegally travelling onwards by ship into Italy.

A "lorry route" would see migrants put into trucks and moved by sea or road to Italy and Germany or "onwards to other countries such as France".

Shamo and Khdir, of Caerphilly, admitted five counts of conspiring to breach migration laws in Italy, Romania, Croatia and Germany in 2022 and 2023.

Recorder of Cardiff Tracey Lloyd-Clarke said their "large and sophisticated network" trafficked "a very large number of migrants". She added: "You provided that service to almost anyone who was prepared to pay your fees."

They were each jailed for 19 years and must serve at least 40 per cent of their sentence behind bars.

alex.west@thesun.co.uk

By ALEX WEST



On dinghy... illegal migrants. Right, Khdir



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# Mercy Muroki

GUEST COLUMNIST



MOOD LIFT . . . heatwave

## WE'RE HOT BUT HAPPY

WE all know we're meant to be worried about the planet getting warmer.

And of course, nobody wants animals going extinct or our ecosystem to fall apart.

But let's be honest, the second the UK creeps past 20 degrees, we forget about climate change entirely.

This week brought one of the hottest April days in 80 years, with a high of 26.5C in London, and you could tangibly feel the national mood lift.

Do I feel slightly guilty for enjoying the rising temperatures year-on-year? Yes. Do I absolutely love it? Also, yes.

Quite frankly, the biggest obstacle to convincing people to cool the planet isn't raving Net Zero sceptics or climate change deniers. It's the rest of us – ordinary folk quietly thinking: "A few more days like this wouldn't hurt . . ."

## MANDY IN WEE BOTHER

IT was announced on Friday that disgraced former UK ambassador to the US Peter Mandelson will be fined for urinating outside George Osborne's home, which might be mildly amusing if it wasn't tied up with something far more serious.

The Jeffrey Epstein saga has taken yet another turn, with US First Lady Melania Trump issuing a surprise public denial on Thursday of any link to the financier.

At a time when there's a criminal investigation into allegations, which Mandelson denies, around misconduct in public office after he allegedly shared sensitive government information with Epstein, a sideshow about public urination is hardly what officials should be focused upon.



CLARKSON IS AWAY

# State of Britain today where a packet of Rolos needs same protection as Rolex

WE are the nation that spread the rule of law across the world.

Our justice system was once admired globally, with British courts and common law seen as the gold standard of order and fairness.

Now, calling it a clown show feels a bit too generous.

And nowhere is that more frustrating than in how we've totally normalised theft.

There was a time when stealing would make you a societal outcast and land you hefty consequences.

Now you can clear out a shelf on



any high street and stroll home without a care in the world.

I'm not suggesting we bring back the gallows or start shipping people off to Australia for nicking a cheese and ham sarnie, like we did in the 1800s.

But we've undeniably gone soft, and casual shopliftings and muggings are the most obvious day-to-day signs of a country where civility has truly gone down the drain. Shoplifting in

England and Wales is now at its highest level since records began more than two decades ago. According to the latest official stats, there were around 531,000 offences in the year to March 2025, up 20 per cent on the previous year.

And "petty" crime is anything but petty now. £2.2billion is stolen through shoplifting every year in the UK, says the British Retail Consortium. Once you factor in security, prevention and knock-on costs, the total bill rises to around £4.2billion annually. And we all pay for it.

Every time you go shopping you are now not just paying for your goods, but extra to cover the cost of someone else helping themselves to the basket of goods you've had to work your socks off to pay for. It is becoming a hidden tax on everyday life.

*No wonder shops are turning into fortresses just to stay afloat. Costa coffee shops have started employing security guards to stop people walking off with sandwiches.*

At my local Sainsbury's, chocolates and snacks are now locked behind plastic barriers.

You have to push through them one by one, like you are cracking a safe full of jewellery worth millions, just to grab a bag of crisps.

### Circus of a justice system

We are giving Rolos and Galaxy bars the kind of protection that was once only needed for Rolexes and Gucci bags.

And why wouldn't thieves take the mick when the consequences are laughable? In England and Wales, theft under £200 is treated as a low-level offence.

Most offenders either get away with it or receive little more than a slap (or a gentle tap) on the wrist.

And this is not one-off behaviour. Theft has the highest reoffending rate of any crime, close to 60 per cent.

Once people start, they do not stop. And our circus of a justice system does nothing to make them.

Worse still, we are now in a place where those trying to stop it are treated as the problem.

Walker Smith, a supermarket worker of 17 years, was recently dismissed from his job at Waitrose after he tried to tackle a thief stealing Easter eggs. The boss of Iceland has since offered him a job: good for Iceland.

Crime should have consequences, and they should be swift and certain.

We used to understand the idea behind "broken windows" policing: it's better to deal with the small problems, as they almost always become big ones. Now, we just ignore both.

And like so much else in modern Britain, we are letting a minority take the mick while everyone else quietly pays the price.



STAR . . . Robbie as Renton

## DRUGS? HIGHLY LIKELY

THE *Trainspotting* musical – with Robbie Scott as Renton – is set to include a trigger warning over scenes of drug use, which is about as useful as a warning that *Jaws* contains shark teeth or that *Murder On The Orient Express* contains a killing.

The entire story of *Trainspotting* is built around drug addiction. It's hardly a plot twist.

If you're dim or lazy enough not to have read the blurb for the new show, or have been living under a rock for the past three decades then, yes, the fact *Trainspotting* contains drugs may come as a shock.

For the vast majority, it just feels like yet another ever-roll-worthy example of treating the audience like idiots and wet wipes.

● TYSON FURY is back in the ring tonight, and it's hard not to be impressed. At 37 – when most boxers would be retiring – he has 34 wins, two losses and a draw, with 24 knockouts, and is still at the very top. In an era of sculpted athletes, six-packs and so-called "looks-maxxing", where appearance often trumps ability, Fury stands apart. He has a regular but insanely powerful frame and a "bloke down the pub" vibe, yet he keeps winning. No filters, just pure fight. We could do with more of that in sport.



## Bump in road to AI utopia

OPENAI, the company behind ChatGPT, is reportedly walking away from a £31billion UK investment deal, which is slightly awkward for a country keen to lead the AI revolution.

But judging by my experience, the public might not be ready anyway.

For April Fools, I asked ChatGPT to create an image of me looking pregnant to post on my Instagram. It looked real. Too real, in fact.

As soon as I posted it, messages poured in – congratulations, genuine excitement.

Few people questioned it – not even my midwife friend. We talk a lot about the risk of what AI might do to us in the future.

Maybe we should be more concerned about what it could be doing to us right in front of our eyes today.



## TAT-TOO LONG FOR ME

SPARE a thought for those of us who got a tattoo in our youth, absolutely convinced we'd be happy having it on our skin for life.

It seemed a great idea at the time. A meaningful quote, something in a language you didn't fully understand, or (like me) a somewhat important date in Roman numerals on your arm when you were 18.

Fast forward a decade and suddenly you're googling "tattoo laser removal near me" at Iam. Even Victoria Beckham, left, has quietly wiped the slate clean, with son Cruz confirming she has had all her tattoos removed, including the tribute to her and David's vows, because they "weren't pretty".

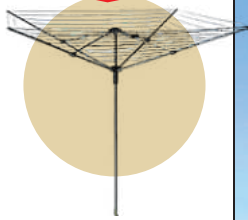
It seems "for ever" lasts ten to 20 years these days.

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**WHERE TO SEE SPRING BABIES ON THE FARM**

## Lamb hotspot!

**NOTHING** says spring has sprung quite like seeing some little lambs take their first steps.

There are many ways you can do this without getting fleeced by some of the costlier farm park prices.

*Here's our top tips...*

**FLOCK TO A FARM:** Have a special springtime experience at your local city farm, where many ask for donations rather than charging a set entry fee.

If you live far from the countryside, worry not - you may be able to spot lambs at Vauxhall City Farm in South London, Heeley

By MEL HUNTER

City Farm in Sheffield and Bath City Farm. Lots of other animals will help put a spring in your step, too.

**LAMB-TASTIC:** St Fagans Museum, on the outskirts of Cardiff, has welcomed around 350 lambs since February so there's a good chance you'll see them as you stroll around the grounds for free.

Lambs can often be seen on National Trust land, too - search "Places you can see lambs" at nationaltrust.org.uk.

It's free to visit the grounds of National Trust sites, like Erddig near Wrexham and Felbrigg Hall in Norfolk, but do check for charges in advance.

**WOOLLY WALKS:** Public footpaths often cross sheep fields, giving you a chance

to see flocks frolicking. Be sure to give them some space, though. Stay on the footpath, enjoy them from a distance and always keep dogs on leads.

**STAY AND PLAY:** Fancy a weekend away on a farm? The website farmstay.co.uk has a range of breaks on working farms, with plenty of last-minute deals.

You'll have the chance to get close to newborn lambs and other animals, and may even get the opportunity to help feed them.

● All prices on page correct at time of going to press. Deals and offers subject to availability.

**TOP SWAP**

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PERSIL non-bio detergent, above, is a top-seller, costing around £9 for 53 washes. Meanwhile, Sainsbury's non-bio concentrated detergent, below, gives you 60 washes for £3.50.

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**What's new?**

LOVE custard creams and chocolate? The Giant Outrageously Chocolate Milk Chocolate Coated Custard Cream is new at M&S. It's £5 and, ahem, "made for sharing".



**Little helper**

If this week's sunshine has got you gardening, nip along to Lidl for the 30cm green sturdy plastic planter, £4.99.



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**HOT RIGHT NOW**

IT'S fun and games in the Morrisons toy sale, with up to 34 per cent off toys including Polly Pocket, Lego and Minecraft.

# CELEB MAMAS STORM

# SINITTA GETTING SNIPPY

## Blast at edit of GC row



## DAVID WAHAYE



**DAVID Haye is back in the buff with his first naked shower of the series. The former boxer, 45, left, won new fans under the camp waterfall on his I'm A Celeb debut in 2012. This time Ashley Roberts stumbled on the sight and laughed: "The Hayemaker's buns! At least he was turned in the other direction."**

**SINITTA furiously accused I'm A Celebrity bosses of editing her showdown in camp with Gemma Collins as their bust-up rages on.**

**By FELICITY CROSS, Deputy TV Editor**

The women clashed in Thursday's episode of the all-stars series over their parts in the musical Chicago, with Sinitta branding Gemma "a joke".

one else. We actually bonded over discussing Chicago. I didn't call her a joke, I said I thought the announcement was a joke at the time as I had not been aware that she sang and danced etc."

Both were cast as matron Mama Morton in UK tours of the show but the GC pulled out in May 2022 after injuring her knee.

Former Towie star Gemma, 45, had hit back: "I don't think you'd get cast as Mama Morton in Chicago if you didn't pass the audition. I am not a joke." We revealed last month the GC accused Sinitta of leaking stories from the cast's WhatsApp group.

In response to a fan backlash, Sinitta said on I'm a Celeb's official Instagram page: "You are all being genuinely nasty here because you love her, I get it. But they edited out us speaking amicably."

Meanwhile, Sinitta opened up in last night's episode on dating Simon Cowell "on and off for 40 years".

The singer, 62, added: "I'm a very kind person who would never be horrible to Gemma Collins or any-

She told the camp: "He wasn't a faithful boyfriend. He wouldn't mind me saying coz he knows."



**Clash ... Gemma, left, and Sinitta**

Late arrivals Jimmy Bullard and Harry Redknapp join the South African camp as the ITV series continues on Monday at 9pm.



Start me up ... Keith

## Keef: My guitars sex wish

**By JACK HARDWICK**

ROLLING Stone Keith Richards says he loves his collection of 3,000 guitars so much he could have sex with them.

But the rocker, 82, said he played less these days because of arthritis.

He told Guitar World magazine: "I tell you what, at my age, what I find most interesting about the guitar is you can compensate for certain disabilities and nimbleness and find other ways of getting around the problem."

It still teaches you another thing. You never stop learning with the damn thing. I love it, and it's my friend forever.

"If I had to, I'd f\*\*\* it. I just look at it (a guitar) and I say 'we've got nothing else to do, come here, I love you'."

Keef explained he plays only about 15 of his guitars regularly - and his favourite is a battered black Gibson acoustic made in 1936.

## 'Killer' in no-show

A SUSPECT accused of murdering a father of four in 2008 refused to attend a plea hearing in court yesterday.

David Harrison, 76, opted not to appear on a video-link from HMP Frankland, Co. Durham.

He is charged with shooting dead Harun Khan, 39, in Tipton, West Mids, wounding in a separate shooting and two firearm possessions with intent to endanger life.

Not guilty pleas were entered at Wolverhampton crown court. A trial was set for November.

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# Death fall bike quiz

A MAN has been arrested over the death of a girl of 13 who died after falling off an e-bike. The suspect, 32, was quizzed by police on suspicion of perverting justice and traffic offences before being bailed pending further inquiries. It is understood a line of inquiry relates to the age of the girl, who was under the legal limit to ride an e-bike.

She died in hospital after falling off the bike on Tuesday in Elizabeth Street, Corby, Northants. Police are asking anyone who witnessed the incident, or who has CCTV or dashcam footage, to contact them.

# Teacher castled

A TEACHER was sacked after he ran a chess club while on sick leave, a tribunal has heard.

Ferris Lindsay was also tutoring kids and was even working as an internal quality assessor.

The London Borough of Newham, where he worked for 12 years, fired him for gross misconduct.

Lindsay, who had an autoimmune disease, sued for unfair and wrongful dismissal but lost.

Judge Stephen Povey told the East London employment tribunal that Lindsay "had represented to the [council] that he was unfit for work and then proceeded to work for others".

ONLY IN **THE Sun ON SUNDAY** TOMORROW

# NIKKI

“Trolls say I’m selfish to have baby at my age”

PICK up a copy of tomorrow’s Sun on Sunday, where Fabulous cover star Nikki Sanderson reveals how cruel trolls branded her selfish for announcing her first pregnancy at the age of 41. The Hollyoaks actress is expecting a baby boy with her partner, actor Anthony Quinlan, 41, and admits the abuse “does hurt and upset me”. She says: “Some people also said that if there’s anything wrong with our baby, I’m to blame and I should feel bad for it. It’s so hurtful. Why would anyone say that?” Nikki also discusses her birth plans and why she is in no rush to tie the knot. Plus there is TV Soap for all your telly gossip and The Favourite for the best racing tips. Don’t miss out – all are FREE with The Sun on Sunday.

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# ANGLER RECRUITED ONLINE TO FIGHT FOR RUSSIAN ARMY



John ... at ceremony

## Bafta in race slur errors at awards

By ROD McPHEE

BAFTA has admitted to weaknesses in its event organisation following the broadcasting of a racial slur during February's Film Awards ceremony.

Tourette's campaigner John Davidson was heard involuntarily shouting the N-word at Sinners actors Michael B. Jordan and Delroy Lindo.

The slur was broadcast on the BBC, despite a two-hour time delay.

Bafta said an independent review found flaws in "planning, escalation procedures and crisis co-ordination arrangements" - but found there was no malicious intent.

The board apologised to both the black and disabled communities.

In a statement it said: "Bafta's planning and processes have not kept pace with its diversity and inclusion goals."

A separate probe found the BBC had breached editorial standards.



Suspect ... Vincent

## Hunt for fugitive killer of Rijkaard

By MIKE SULLIVAN

POLICE have launched a fresh appeal to find a murder suspect - two years on from a vicious alleyway stabbing.

Three men attacked Rijkaard Siafa, 23, in Croydon, South London, on April 12, 2024.

He was stabbed at least 13 times in 20 seconds.

David Walcott, 36, and Rammon Mali, 34, were jailed for life last year, but Jordan Vincent, 29, remains at large.

After the attack, Vincent was seen going into The Spread Eagle pub with the other two.

They bought three pints with a £20 note.

Scotland Yard's Det Chief Insp Samantha Townsend, leading the investigation, said: "My team will work tirelessly to bring all those responsible to justice."

Rijkaard's mother Has-sanatu Bah said: "No family should have to go through this. We just want answers and justice."



**BEFORE GROOMING**

With Union Jack & fish, below



**IN MOSCOW THIS WEEK**

Townsend, Minnis and Stimson



Turncoat ... Townsend

EXCLUSIVE by PAUL SIMS  
Special Correspondent

## A KEEN Brit angler has turned traitor to fight for Russia in Ukraine.

Bradley Townsend was groomed online into joining Vladimir Putin's troops by fellow mercenaries Aiden Minnis and Ben Stimson.

Townsend, who has no military experience and spent his days fishing for carp, rang his worried family earlier this week to say he was in Russia.

And in a pic posted online he is with Minnis and Stimson in Moscow's Victory Square.

Townsend, 33, previously seen posing with a Union Jack, and the others are in front of a monument dedicated to the UK, US, French and Russian forces which defeated Nazi Germany.

And in a video, Townsend of Barnsley, boasts: "I'm just a normal working class lad from Yorkshire. I came with the idea that I probably wouldn't be able to go home. I'd definitely get persecuted if I went back."

"But this was my own decision. I wasn't pushed into anything. I'm not here for a suicide mission, but I understand that's what can happen."

Townsend left the UK on April Fool's Day. In the video Minnis gloats: "This guy has more balls than most internet warriors because he's putting his money where his mouth is and you've got to respect that whether you're ideologically of the same persuasion or not."

Townsend's family are said to be distraught to hear he was in Russia. A close friend said: "He told them he was travelling to Romania. They have no idea why he would do this."

"This is a normal lad, who has no military background, and is one of three children."

"But, for some reason, he got this crazy idea in his head and they're worried sick."

"You bring your children up and they are doing really well, and suddenly, this. He's not a fighter and they've got no idea where this has come from. He's just a normal kid. Why?"

Townsend, like Minnis and Stimson, faces jail for terror offences if he returns home.

Minnis, 39, fled Britain in 2022, joining a motorised rifle regiment. The thug, who served a four-year jail term for a racist attack, has a Russian passport and a gallantry medal.

He has been disowned by his family in Chippenham, Wilts.

Stimson, 50, of Oldham, joined Russian-backed forces in the Donbas in 2024.

He was jailed in the UK in 2015 for joining pro-Russian separatists in eastern Ukraine.

paul.sims@the-sun.co.uk



# CATFISHED BY PUTIN



Autocrat ... Russia's Putin

# DERM'S SO KEANE ON HIS MAIN MAN

DERMOT KENNEDY has a surprising role model in his music career – football great ROY KEANE.

His inspiration during gigs is the memory of Man United hero Keane playing against Juventus in 1999. Despite being yellow-carded, the captain put in a blistering performance that took them to the Champions League final.

Dermot, *above*, whose album *The Weight Of The Woods* became his third No1 last night, said of Roy: "If you ask about the way I sing, it's

purely him. He has a thing in his book where, when he was younger trying to get spotted, he would play a match to 100 or 200 people, and he developed the skill of

creating the atmosphere in his head. "I think I have that in music. If I play to ten people, I will rip it because I don't care how many people are there."

Dermot also shares a love of football with Roy, *right*, once playing for Dublin's Crumlin United. He said:

"I'm a far better person when I'm playing football regularly. Whatever feeling everyone thinks I get from music, I get it from football. It's the one time my mind is clear."

But Dermot has another reason to be inspired after his wife Aisling Finnegan gave birth to their daughter.

Asked how long they have been together, he told the *And The Writer Is...* podcast: "I would have been eight years old. We went to school together. What age did I know? Early twenties, probably."



## SINGLES

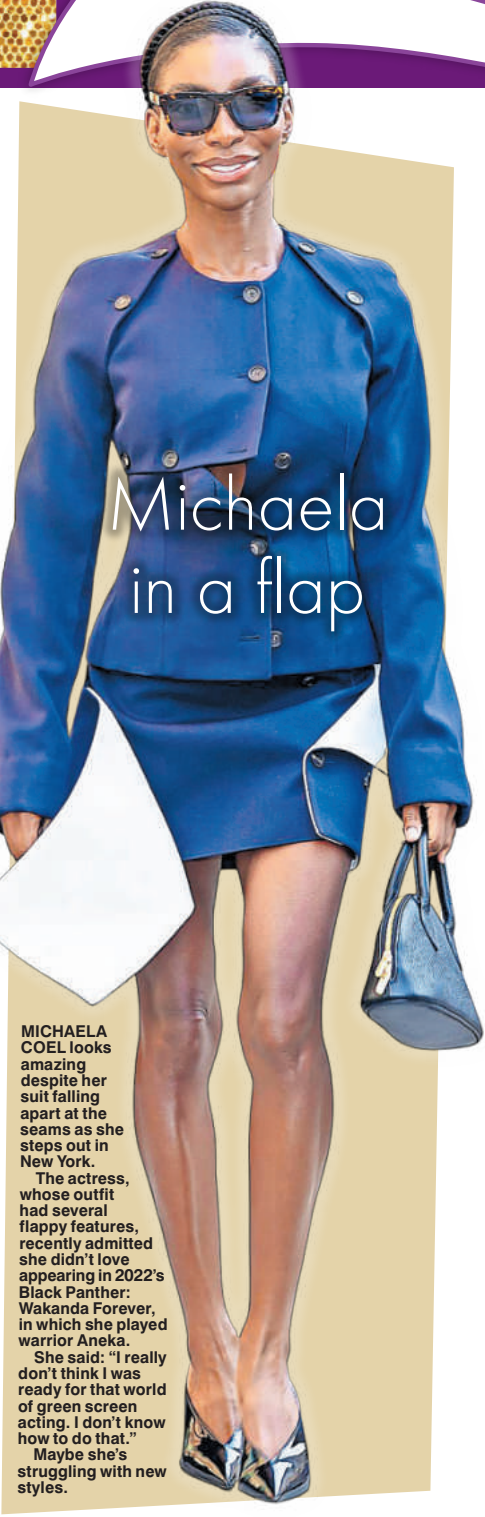
1. Rein Me In – SAM FENDER & OLIVIA DEAN
2. iloveitiloveitiloveit – BELLA KAY
3. Dracula – TAME IMPALA
4. Lush Life – ZARA LARSSON
5. Fever Dream – ALEX WARREN
6. Homewrecker – SOMBR
7. Babydoll – DOMINIC FIKE
8. American Girls – HARRY STYLES
9. Man I Need – OLIVIA DEAN
10. White Keys – DOMINIC FIKE

## the charts

THERE'S no movement in the top three – but it's good news for American singer DOMINIC FIKE who lands two tracks in the Top Ten with *Babydoll* and *White Keys*. DERMOT KENNEDY has his third No1 album with *The Weight Of The Woods*, knocking RAYE's second album down to No2.

## ALBUMS

1. *The Weight Of The Woods* – DERMOT KENNEDY
2. *This Music May Contain Hope* – RAYE
3. *The Art Of Loving* – OLIVIA DEAN
4. *Kiss All The Time. Disco, Occasionally* – HARRY STYLES
5. *Arirang* – BTS
6. *50 Years: Don't Stop* – FLEETWOOD MAC
7. *The Essential* – MICHAEL JACKSON
8. *+---x (Tour Collection)* – ED SHEERAN
9. *Man's Best Friend* – SABRINA CARPENTER
10. *The Highlights* – THE WEEKND



Michaela in a flap

MICHAELA COEL looks amazing despite her suit falling apart at the seams as she steps out in New York. The actress, whose outfit had several flappy features, recently admitted she didn't love appearing in 2022's *Black Panther: Wakanda Forever*, in which she played warrior Aneka. She said: "I really don't think I was ready for that world of green screen acting. I don't know how to do that." Maybe she's struggling with new styles.

It could be yoooooou

Lotto

Your numbers

02 24 31 40 58

08 11 19 29

06 15 24 37 45

Lotto

Rules & Procedures apply. Players must be 18+ and physically located in the UK/IOM.

## NINETIES EXHIBITION SHINES THE SPOT LIGHT ON SCARY'S CATSUIT

THE famous leopard print catsuit MEL B wore when the SPICE GIRLS performed at the Brit Awards in 1997 is going on display. Former *Bizarre* editor DOMINIC MOHAN has curated the exhibition, 1996: 30 Years On, and managed to get hold of the catsuit which was worn to perform their debut hit Wannabe. Mel, *right*, said: "It was all a crazy Nineties whirlwind but, in my leopard print, I knew I could take on anything. This outfit is sexy, naughty and bold, which pretty much sums me and the Nineties up." Also on display will be EMMA BUNTON's dress from the same performance, GERI HALLIWELL's Union Jack boots and a signed LIAM GALLAGHER tambourine. It opens on Thursday at the Barbican Music Library in London and runs until September 19. Dom will be launching his four-part show *Cool Britannia* on Virgin Radio tomorrow from 6pm.



GOT GOSSIP? CALL OR WHATSAPP THE

ELLIE HENMAN'S

# Carrie



**GARY LINEKER** can add movie star to his CV, as his upcoming film will be screened at Cannes Film Festival. He is voicing and appearing in *El Partido*, meaning *The Match in Spanish*. It tells stories from the 1986 World Cup game between England and Argentina. The match featured **DIEGO MARADONA's** infamous "hand of God" goal. **JOHN BARNES** and **PETER SHILTON** also appear. It will hit Disney+ later in the year.

## MASTERCLASS BY B-SIDE BOYS AS JANGLING MARR ATTACKS

THERE aren't many acts that can pull off five sell-out shows by promising only B sides, album tracks and no hits.

But the **PET SHOP BOYS** did, without breaking a sweat.

I'd happily listen to **NEIL TENNANT** sing the back of a crisp packet, but he and **CHRIS LOWE** had something more special in store here in Camden, North London.

They whipped out guest **JOHNNY MARR** early on, who added some excellent guitar jangling on *Up Against it* from 1996 and 2003's *I Didn't Get Where I Am Today*.

They might be synthpop's finest duo,



**CAUGHT LIVE**  
Pet Shop Boys  
Electric Ballroom  
★★★★

but they can rock out too. With a back catalogue spanning more than 40 years, you can forgive Neil for needing lyrics printed out for the more obscure numbers, and being overjoyed at a stool, joking: "Ooh, I can sit down now, like **WESTLIFE**."

They finished by teasing the launch of their upcoming musical, *Naked*, performing a song from it called *I Dream Of A Better Tomorrow*. Right now, that's a mantra we can all get behind.

ELLIE HENMAN

# STONES PLAY IT SMARTY

## They sign up Gen Z fave Supreme actress Odessa for music video

**THE ROLLING STONES** continue to champion new talent, this time signing up **Marty Supreme** actress **ODESSA A'ZION** for their next video.

The wise old rockers previously cast **SYDNEY SWEENEY** in the vid to accompany 2023 comeback single *Angry*.

Now they are hoping to repeat that success, as I can reveal they have got one of Gen Z's buzziest names on board. **Odessa** filmed the visuals during a hushed-up two-day shoot at Battersea Arts Centre in South London last week.

I'm told loads of extras of all ages and styles were brought in to reflect the Stones over the years.

An on-set source said: "The video represents the Stones through the ages.

There's a lot going on. They brought in lots of extras to represent subcultures and sonic histories.

"The idea is it blends everything from blues souls and punk kids with old school rockers and Northern Soul dancers.

"Then there's a load of glam rock attitude and DIY chaos to echo the legacy of the Stones.

"Odessa is at the centre of it all.

"The video should look really impressive when it's

all tied together." The return of the Stones has been talked about for a while, but there isn't long left to wait at all.

The band is expected to drop a new song today, as I revealed on Wednesday.

**MICK JAGGER, KEITH RICHARDS** and **RONNIE WOOD** have been teasing their return under the pseudonym *The Cockroaches*.

They are coming back with their 25th album, believed to be titled *Foreign Tongues*, which is largely being touted as their final record together.

It is a follow-up to their 2023 album *Hackney Diamonds*, with the tracks mainly being written and recorded during the same sessions.

Unfortunately for their fans, I've been told there are no immediate plans for the band to hit the road again just yet.

But I live in hope the band will rethink that – when they see just how many people snap up this new album when it drops later in the year.



NEW SINGLE... Stones Ronnie, Mick and Keith

## Zara up to finny business

**ZARA LARSSON** is poised for action as she lifts a dummy dolphin over her head.

She dazzled in a sequined skirt split to the waist and a tiny bikini top while fronting Spanish label *Desigual's* *Life's A Beach* campaign.

Zara has signed a major deal with the clothing brand for a new range inspired by her Y2K look.

Meanwhile, her US tour ends tomorrow in Houston, Texas – then she'll focus on a deluxe version of her 2025 album *Midnight Sun*, due out next month.

Zara has remixed tracks with female collaborators. **TYGA, MADISON BEER** and **JADE** are among stars expected to be involved.

The record originally peaked at No36, but with Zara enjoying a popularity surge, I predict a massive leap up the charts.

Picture: DESIGUAL

# £5m faith police lift

POLICE in London and Manchester are to get an extra £5million for patrolling places of worship.

It comes after Jewish charity ambulances were torched last month in the capital's Golders Green and a Manchester synagogue attack in October.

The extra funding will go towards Project Servator, deploying specialists trained to spot suspects preparing serious crimes.

It builds on £73.4million already committed for Jewish, Muslim and other faith sites for 2026-27.

Security minister Dan Jarvis said it would help "keep people safe in the places where they live, work and worship".

# Runner's extra mile

A LONDON Marathon runner has vowed to do an extra 80 miles on top of the event's 26.2.

Chris Asher, 50, says he will cross the finish line on April 26 - then run from the capital to Margate, Kent, the next day.

The challenge has raised nearly £2,500 for Prostate Cancer UK so far. It will be a tribute to the quantity surveyor's dad, who died of the disease in 2023.

Experienced distance runner Chris said: "I'll be thinking of him, the whole way through."

He advised: "If you get checked for prostate cancer and it's picked up early, it's treatable."

# WE TEST NEW FOOD CRAZE...PUDS WITH CRUST

## STICKY TOFFEE

YOU could call this fusion - an English classic combined with an Italian one.

Sticky toffee pudding on pizza might be going viral but it's new to me - I love gooey steamed pud but wouldn't say it's a good pizza topping. Sponge on a dough base is stodgy so it was very filling. It tasted OK - I added cream and cherries - but it's not how I like to eat pizza.

I would prefer this pud in a bowl - but each to their own. **3**



## TIRAMISU

THIS is a very good combo - it tastes like an amazing chocolate gateau.

I love a traditional tiramisu with its coffee-soaked Savoiardi sponges. The pizza base just gives some extra crunch.

You can use a ready-made tiramisu but if you make your own, bake the base then fill with cream afterwards so it doesn't curdle.

It's delicious, and I'm a coffee addict so this is for me. I'd put this on my menu. **5**



## JELLY & CUSTARD

WIBBLE, wobble, this might be the weirdest thing I've put on a slice. I would never have thought of this combo.

Be careful with the temperature - cook the base and let it cool before adding the custard, so it doesn't curdle.

Panettone would be nice if you want to go full Italian, but this is the English version. Maybe add hundreds and thousands, or strawberries.

Custard-and-dough mix is oddly good. **4**



## CHOCOLATE SPREAD

CHOC sauce on a dough slice is a classic sweet pizza - it's been done in Italy for decades. It's a dessert at pizzerias, with a chocolate and hazelnut condiment. It's also a popular *merenda*, or snack. My mum gave it to me after school - what else could a kid want!

Use a very thick layer of spread on top of a pre-heated, ready-made base, then add marshmallows, choc chips... anything. **4**



## COOKIES & CREAM

SWEET biscuit on a savoury slice seems a tasty combo, if a bit unbalanced.

If you use a cookie-dough packet, you can mix it with water, roll it and press it down to bake on the base. It's fun to do with the kids. For this one, the thinner the base the better. Add cream or sweet mascarpone then sprinkle with chocolate. Maybe add liqueur if it's for adults. Not my favourite, but nice with a cuppa. **2**



## STRAWBERRY CHEESECAKE

I DO like a cheesecake - but generally not on a pizza base.

I put cream cheese and fruit layers on the base then sprinkled digestives. Use any ready-made cheesecake, whether it is made with Italian soft cheese or a basic cream cheese.

The bite of the biscuit bits is nice but I don't think this pud is perfect for pizza. If you love cheesecake, just have it as it comes - not on your pizza. **1**



# Sticky toffee pizza? Doughno about that!

## JAM DOUGHNUTS

A DOUBLE-dough delight. Doughnuts are eaten in the morning in Italy, stuffed with custard, so I wouldn't normally put them on pizza. But the combo appeals.

I spread a thin layer of strawberry jam on the base to add moisture, before then scattering the beignet pieces.

It looks like something that you would be served at a fancy afternoon tea. **4**



## BORED by cheese and tomato? How about adding a dessert topping to your pizza instead?

A sticky toffee slice has gone viral after London restaurant Circus Pizza offered bases stacked with the caramel-and-sponge pudding classic for a tenner.

But do pudding pizzas taste bellissimo? We asked Italian celebrity chef ALDO ZILLI to try some, and give marks out of five.

● See casa-zilli.com.



ICK CRUST... Aldo looks unsure about this one

Pictures: OLIVIA WEST

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First try... Francesca

## Coroner warning on killer cocaine

By ALEX WEST

A CORONER has issued a warning about cocaine after the death of a wife who took the drug for the first time.

Francesca "Franki" Phillips and her husband Darren snorted a gram to celebrate New Year's Eve, an inquest heard.

But hair salon owner Francesca, 34, died from a cardiac arrest linked to the cocaine.

The coroner has now warned users cannot know what substances may be mixed with it.

Recording a conclusion of misadventure at the Isle of Wight inquest, Caroline Sumeray said: "It is an utterly tragic tale of a previously fit and healthy woman."

"That is the risk everyone takes when they take cocaine. Drugs kill, and we don't know what we're taking."

Darren told the hearing he fully regretted buying the cocaine and urged others: "Just don't do it."



Article... Sgt Cooke

## Ex-cops fed chief is probed for posts

By PAUL SIMS

A FORMER chairman at cops' "union" the Police Federation is under investigation for alleged gross misconduct.

Sgt Richard Cooke is being probed over posts on social media.

The investigation is said to be linked to complaints made by a woman who reported an officer for harassment.

Sgt Cooke reposted a news article about her claims, adding: "Many officers' lives are also destroyed by false and malicious allegations."

He was West Midlands Police Federation chief.

West Midlands Police said: "A serving police sergeant is under gross misconduct investigation following complaints from members of the public relating to social media posts."

It said the officer had not been suspended and Lincolnshire Police were managing the probe.

# Reality star has 40 identical plain white T-shirts because they act as her 'safe place'



Picture: BACKGRID

EXCLUSIVE by STEPHEN MOYES  
Associate News Editor

**CHRISTINE McGuinness** has amassed 40 identical plain white T-shirts and will be buying more — because they calm her down and act as her "safe place".

The TV personality and model, 38, who has been diagnosed with ADHD and autism, says pulling one on helps to ease the stress she feels when she has to make a decision.

Christine, who is separated from her TV star husband Paddy, 52, but lives with him and their three autistic children, admits that she has too many tees but cannot stop herself from buying them.

She told a podcast: "I struggle to make decisions, with clothes in particular, what to wear or what fabric I can tolerate that day, because I do have quite sensitive skin."

Christine added: "A plain white T-shirt is my go-to safe place. 'If I'm having a day where I'm really, really overthinking what I look like or what I'm wearing, a plain white T-shirt always makes me feel fresh and clean."

"It's comfortable, kind of matches everything. I've got 40. It's something that I'll probably keep doing... buying white T-shirts. I've definitely got far too many. I just don't really know how to declutter."

Christine also says she cannot decide what clothes to buy and keeps looking even when she has found something she likes.

She told tidying expert Dilly Carter's Sort Your Life Out Unpacked podcast: "I was talking to my mum about this and she said, 'I'd take you to ten different shops and we'd end up back in the first one getting the first outfit'."

"In my mind it's like I have to look at everything. I have to try on every outfit, see how it all feels."

"But I'll spend so much time doing it when really if I just clear my mind, take a minute and go 'OK, I'm wasting time there — let's just put a white T-shirt on'. And then I can carry on with my day."

stephen.moyes@the-sun.co.uk

**'FRESH & CLEAN'**

Christine relaxed, & on night out, above. With Paddy, right



# PRISTINE MCGUINNESS

# HUSBAND JAILED FOR WIFE SUICIDE

**AN abusive husband found guilty of killing his wife after she jumped from a bridge has been jailed.**

Lee Milne, 40, got eight years for culpable homicide in a landmark court case.

His spouse Kimberly, 28, killed herself after being subjected to sustained domestic violence.

A court heard that in the 18 months prior to her death, Milne had choked Kimberly, knocked her

By MIKE SULLIVAN

out and punched and bitten her. He also coerced her into marrying him, cut her off from family and friends and controlled her finances.

On the day of her death in July 2023, Milne left Kimberly terrified during a high-speed car ride. She was killed when she leapt from a bridge on to the A90 in Dundee and was hit by a lorry.

Milne was found guilty last month at the High Court in Glasgow. He was jailed for eight years yesterday and will be supervised in the community for a further three after release.

Judge Lady Drummond said: "You must bear responsibility not only for your abusive acts, but for causing her death."

It is the first time an offender has been held criminally responsible for a partner's suicide.



Abuse... the Milnes

# 11 YEARS AFTER



By **ROB PATTINSON**

**BRANDISHING his shotgun, 71-year-old farmer Chris Gadsden is so fed up with illegal migrants invading his fields, he is taking matters into his own hands.**

The great-grandad – dubbed The Farminator over his tough approach – has long been plagued by stowaways who cross the Channel in lorries, then escape when they stop at motorway services near his home.

Last week, Chris found six Iraqis on his property – the first he has ever encountered from the Middle Eastern country.

But he fears more will come as families flee the ongoing tensions in neighbouring Iran.

*The migrant issue is one which has rumbled on for decades.*

In 2015, we told how – despite being more than 100 miles from the coast and in the heart of the Bedfordshire countryside – Chris and his dogs regularly stumbled upon asylum seekers who had leapt from trucks at Toddington Services.

It is often the first stop for drivers heading north on the M1 after arriving at UK ports, including Dover.

In the past, frustrated Chris had to brandish his gun in moments of panic and even tie people up until cops arrived to arrest them.

Sometimes, he would even deliver them to police in his own van.

Now, as a fresh influx of illegal migrants swarms his 15-acre farm, he says he has no choice but to resume his one-man patrol – despite age no longer being on his side.

**'System is broken'**

"I am not a young man any more," he said. "I have had one knee replacement, I'm waiting for the other, and I've got high blood pressure too."

"But if I don't do something, who will? The Government clearly isn't about to, so I will have to step up again. It's out of control."

"I just see it as doing my bit. I am doing what I can to help the country. I'm definitely not getting any younger, but this is really important."

*"So yes, The Farminator is back."*

Chris's property, where he lives with wife Lianne, 67, backs directly on to the lorry park at Toddington Services. The dad of four has been waging war on immigrants since buying the place in 1987.

But Chris – who has also found men travelling from Somalia, Afghanistan, Syria, Albania and Vietnam on his land – does not enjoy having to take such a tough approach.

He insists he only does it to keep his loved ones safe, and is prepared to wield his shotgun again.

Chris said: "I didn't like having to arm myself before, but if someone has sneaked into the country in a lorry, you don't know what their intentions are or what they might have on them."

"And they are always young men. The only time I have ever seen a woman was with the Somali group, years ago."

"It's a question of protecting my family, and I'd do the same again."

Chris has also come across clothes and supplies hidden on his land, possibly stashed in advance by people-smuggling gangs.

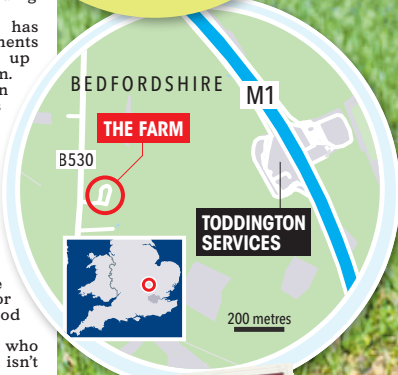
In just one week in 2015, he helped police catch more than 30 suspected Somalians and six Vietnamese men who ventured on to his farm.

Since then, he reveals, as many as 300 migrants have escaped across his fields. In fact, on 30 different occa-



GET OFF MY LAND... Chris in 2015 brandishing illegal caught on his farm

**'Around 300 migrants, dropped at the M1 services, have escaped across my fields. I don't do something who will? The Government isn't about to'**



FRONT PAGE... Sun in 2015

sions last year, he spotted groups of up to ten men, but could not act as he was recovering from his knee op and assumed police would find them.

However, he reckons cops are failing to adequately address the problem, so he is left feeling obliged to do it himself.

Chris explained: "It is getting worse. Last week was the first time I have had immigrants from Iraq. It seems to me it is going to snowball, especially with what is currently going on in the Middle East."

"Word has got around the migrant communities in France and Germany that we are a soft touch here in England, that there are freebies on offer – free accommodation and free food. That is why they come."

"It is not ideal, and I can't exactly go charging around the fields like I

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# ...ON THE TRAIL OF MIGRANTS AGAIN



**FACING DANGER...** Chris Gadsden says he is having to step up to protect his family

Photography by SIMON JONES



**NABBED...** cops with four migrants caught on Chris's property last week



**EXPOSED...** Chris's farm in the heart of Bedfordshire



**MOTORWAY MADNESS** ... services on M1 where lorry stowaways escape



**PATROL...** police speaking to migrants

# THE FARMINATOR I'M BACK

used to. And, sadly, the dogs I would once walk the land with, who could sniff people out, have passed away.

"But I will be keeping my eyes and ears open. I am doing this for my children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren, to ensure they have a future. The system is completely broken.

### 'We are all human'

"To be honest, I feel like going down to the Houses of Parliament and telling them what is going on in places like this."

The most recent migrant lorry dash interrupted Chris's peaceful Easter bank holiday weekend.

The grandfather of nine, who also has two great-grandkids, recalled: "We got back home in the car and could see the police helicopter above the services, so we knew

something was up. Then the police arrived at the farm gate.

"My son let them in, then went with the officers to find the migrants, who were in the corner of the field. It was six lads – four were Iraqis, two aged in their 20s, and two who looked about 16. The other two got away – I don't know what happened to them.

"The police brought them up to the farm, and they just sat on the grass, very subdued, and claiming they couldn't speak English.

"They had phones and euros on them, chocolate and sweet stuff. It is clearly well-organised.

"But there were five or six police cars and two ambulances that came out – all at a big cost to the taxpayer. Then they will go off to hotels while their claims are processed." Insisting migrants are often treated better than UK citizens,

Chris said: "They were likely taken to Luton And Dunstable Hospital and would have been taken straight in to be checked over, ahead of the people in the waiting room. I went there recently and had to wait from 8pm until 3.30 in the morning before I was seen. And then it was a two-day wait to get a bed. What is right in that?"

Chris believes the UK needs to rethink its priorities and start looking after its own before migrants.

He said: "I have worked all my life, and I just don't agree with it. "My pension is rubbish, our Winter Fuel allowance has been cut. It is a disgrace.

"I was supposed to have a gall bladder operation this week, but it was cancelled because of the doctors' strike. It all seems so unfair."

Chris insists that despite wanting the trespassers off his land, he

looks after their basic needs until authorities get there.

He said: "I did give the Iraqi lads some water. We are all human, at the end of the day.

"But if you have come here illegally, you are not our guest.

"You should return to your country of origin. If you genuinely need asylum, it should be done in the right way – not like this."

### Small boats

Bedfordshire police confirmed that six men were nicked in connection with the incident. The driver of the lorry was also lifted after being stopped some 45 miles away at Watford Gap Services and has since been bailed.

The arrested men have now been handed over to Immigration Enforcement Officers.

The Home Office does not specify

the number of migrants arriving here in lorries, but it does publish "recorded detections in the UK" – essentially, if people have been caught in a vehicle at a motorway services or at the port of Dover.

Arrivals at UK ports decreased 83 per cent in the eight years to December 2025, to 181 people.

But during the same period, small boats became the predominant way to enter Britain illegally.

A Home Office spokesman said last night: "We have pledged to scale up the removal and deportations of illegal migrants and we will do whatever it takes to secure our borders.

"Nearly 60,000 illegal migrants and foreign criminals have been removed or deported from the UK since the 2024 election – up 31 per cent on the 19 months prior."

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**THE Sun**

**HOLS FROM £9.50**

## FOOTIE FAN HITS THE BACK OF THE NET WITH A GREAT FAMILY GETAWAY

**WHEN it comes to heading off on a family Sun Holiday, lorry driver Martin Sneath has no problem getting behind the wheel again.**

The Chelsea fan, who drives up and down the country delivering plants and trees, says he scored a brilliant bargain when he first came across our Hols From £9.50.

On their latest break, 51-year-old Martin took his wife Jean, 50, and their 15-year-old daughter Sophie to South Bay Holiday Park in Brixham, Devon.

"It was a really relaxing stay," says Martin, who reckons the family from South Croydon, London, picked a winner as the picturesque park overlooks the town's beautiful bay on the English Riviera.

Martin, who also has three sons, adds: "We've enjoyed Sun Holidays for years, but this was the first time it was just the three of us as

our boys didn't make the trip. It was so good just to be able to chill out and enjoy quality time together. "Sophie loved swimming and once in the pool she didn't want to get out of the water.

"The coastline is stunning and, when the weather is sunny, it's lovely

to be able to get down on the beach and make waves in the sea.

"We also took time out to visit local attractions and the nearby town of Dartmouth."

School cook Jean agrees with her husband that our Hols From £9.50 are incredible value for money.

And she gave an emphatic thumbs up to the varied selection of food choices on offer at the parks.

The Sneaths, who have enjoyed many excellent holidays along the south coast and the Isle of Wight thanks to their favourite newspaper, might head to parks in other countries next.

They agree: "The parks in France and Italy look like a lot of fun and they have all still got The Sun's stamp of unbeatable value."

All in all, Martin says: "Sun Holidays – they're miles better than any others!"

What are you waiting for! Bag a fantastic family break with us, details of how to book are on the right.

By LAURIE STONE

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Sun Savers members can book via the Sun Savers app or at [sunsavers.co.uk](http://sunsavers.co.uk).



Go to Offers, click Start Collecting on the Holidays From £9.50 page, then enter five Sun Savers codes to unlock booking, which is now open.

Today's codeword is FOAM and you can find the Sun Savers code on Page 20.

Or join Sun Club at [thesun.co.uk/club](http://thesun.co.uk/club) for £1.99 and get automatic access to Hols From £9.50 – as well as a host of other offers and giveaways – with no need to collect codes or codewords.

IT'S A WINNER... Martin, Jean and Sophie on their Brixham break

Picture: WAYNE PERRY



Chase . . . police

## Banned driver 48 points on licence

By ED SOUTHGATE

A DISQUALIFIED driver who repeatedly flouted bans had racked up 48 penalty points on his licence, a court heard. Zakaria Kayat, 43, was caught behind the wheel illegally four times in just five months.

The last time, in January, he led cops on a 14-minute chase through red lights and at 80mph in a 40mph zone.

Kayat narrowly avoided two head-on crashes.

A court heard at one point he had totted up 48 points on his licence for offences of driving while disqualified in Dewsbury, West Yorks, and having no insurance cover.

Kayat, of Bradford, admitted the latest charge at the city's crown court and got 14 months in jail and an 18-month ban.

Judge Geoffrey Marson told him: "At one point you had 48 points. How that came about is beyond understanding."



Cubs . . . yesterday

## Hope as zoo giant otter has 3 babies

By ALEX WEST

GIANT otter triplets have been born at a UK zoo raising hopes that the endangered species can be saved from extinction.

Fewer than 5,000 are thought to survive in the wild due to deforestation, water pollution and illegal hunting, say experts.

Chester Zoo has long been part of an international effort to boost numbers of the South American tree munchers.

It welcomed the triplets eight weeks ago and said the two males and single female are thriving.

Rachael Boatwright, the zoo's assistant team manager of carnivores, said: "The cubs will now begin to venture outside with their parents, Bonita and Manu, who will introduce them to the water."

Kirsten Pullen, the zoo's chief conservation officer, added: "Every birth represents genuine hope for this highly endangered species."



# Stephen & Cam's day at the office

By HOWELL DAVIES

HOLLYWOOD star Cameron Diaz seems to be making a short film with *The Office's* towering Stephen Merchant.

The 6ft, 7in Brit comedy actor was seen hugging his 5ft, 7in co-star and grinning, below, as they shot new movie *The Sham* in New York.

The romcom sees the pair falling in love after they fake a marriage to keep up appearances.

Cameron confirmed the project last week, saying of Stephen: "Gosh, he is the best." She has returned to acting after an 11-year pause.

Picture: MEGA

## LARA PIN-UP THING OF PAST

# TAME RAIDER

EXCLUSIVE by SAM BLANCHARD

**FEMALE** characters in video games are not as sexualised as they used to be, including Tomb Raider pin-up Lara Croft, researchers claim.

They have become more realistic and sensible due to feminism and criticism from parents, academics and media, a study suggests.

More women and girls also play and create games, causing a change in "gender stereotypes".

Researchers at Wuhan University in China pinpointed the shift after studying 795 female characters in 188 video games between 2011 and 2022.

They said females used to wear revealing outfits and had "disproportionate bodies". But now even big-busted 1990s icon Croft - whose portrayal by Angelina Jolie was voted sexiest film character - is plainer. Study author Wenqi Pan said:

## Female game leads 'sensible & less sexy'

"Female characters in early games were generally highly sexualised. As well as the early Lara Croft, female characters in the *Batman* and *Grand Theft Auto* series also exhibited high levels of sexualisation.

"In contrast, Lara Croft in recent games has become less overtly sexualised and female characters in *The Last of Us*, *Horizon* and *Spider-Man* series generally exhibit lower levels of sexualisation."

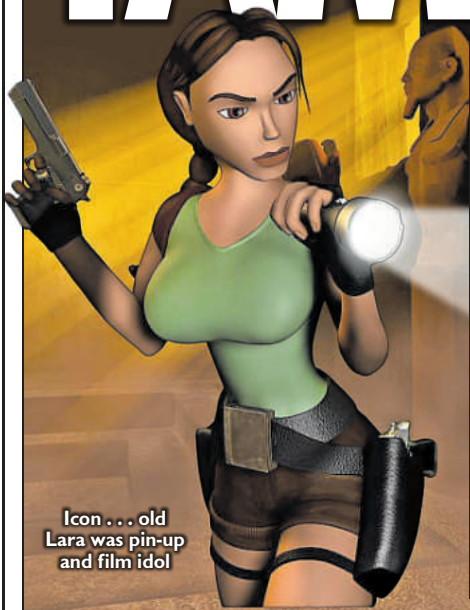
Analysis of 125 hours' gameplay showed female roles are also more important, like Alex Chen in

*Life is Strange*. Older games often only had women in bit-parts where they needed rescuing, or had no females at all.

It mirrors the trend in Hollywood, where a record 42 per cent of top films had a female lead in 2024.

Writing in the journal *Entertainment Computing*, Ms Pan said: "Criticism from parents, media and academia, along with the influence of feminist movements, may also contribute to these positive shifts."

"This may lead to a reduction in sexism and gender stereotypes."



Icon . . . old Lara was pin-up and film idol



Plain . . Alex in Life is Strange

# IS DAVID SELLING OUT? THERE'S



Family choice... Rajan

## BBC star says kids better off in India

By AMIR RAZAIVI

UNIVERSITY Challenge host Amol Rajan is considering moving his family to India as England has "big, big problems". The Kolkata-born BBC broadcaster said he will take his four kids there when they are old enough so they can decide.

Rajan, 42, said: "I can't tell you how much I love my country, by which I mean England, but I'm very worried about it."

"I think we've got some big, big problems that need addressing, and one of the things is whether this is the best place for my four kids to grow up."

He said it is no longer a place where "history is being made", as it was in the 1960s and 1970s.

Rajan told the Rosebud podcast: "India is the young country, 1.4 billion people, it adds one million people to the workforce every single month."

"It's extraordinarily exciting and energetic."



Conduct... police

## Cop's jail for notes to raped girl of 14

By MIKE SULLIVAN

AN ex-cop who sent a 14-year-old rape victim inappropriate drunken messages was jailed for 18 months yesterday.

Detective Constable John Hamilton, 55, developed an "unhealthy interest" in the teenage girl during an investigation.

He turned up at her school unannounced and offered to take the upset victim on a drive near where she was attacked.

Hamilton, who worked for Northumbria Police, was convicted of misconduct in public office at Teesside crown court.

Judge Francis Laird KC said he breached the trust of a very vulnerable girl who "had turned to the police for help".

In mitigation, it was said that his messages were not "sexual, threatening or obscene".

The Independent Office for Police Conduct said Hamilton will face a gross misconduct hearing.



### ADIDAS

A LIFETIME deal with the sports brand in 2003 earned Becks a cool £15million. His relationship with the firm began in 1996 when he promoted its boots, leading to a number of adverts. A 1998 ad for Adidas charted his rise to stardom at Man U.

### BOSS

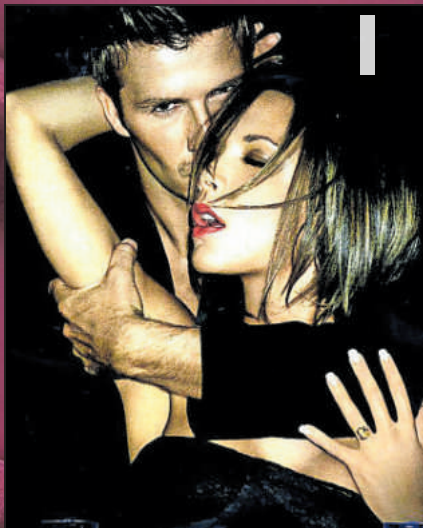
TONED David happily stripped last year for a Boss underwear ad campaign. In 2024 he partnered with the luxury brand as a "creative style director". Boss later launched a menswear collection co-designed by the star.

Picture: BOSS/SMERIT & MARCUS



### COCA-COLA

IN 2012, David was in a tug-of-war between Coke and Pepsi - after both used him for ads. His face appeared on Coke bottles, prompting Pepsi to say: "We're surprised they've put one of the most famous Pepsi drinkers on the neck of a Coke bottle."



### INTIMATELY BECKHAM

THE Intimately Beckham fragrance became a hit after launching in 2006, with saucy ads starring David and wife Victoria. In January, he secured a £292million deal with Interparfums which could earn him a sweet-smelling £20million a year.



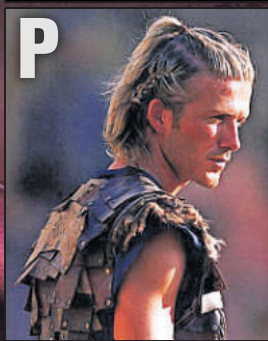
### JAGUAR

AFTER partnering with Jaguar in 2014, David fronted big campaigns in China, launched the F-Type and bagged himself a £140,000 Project 7 motor. He also splashed out on a \$500k blue vintage Jag for his now estranged son Brooklyn's wedding gift.



### MASERATI

THE Italian luxury car company snapped up David as a global brand ambassador in 2021. For his first campaign, he drove its Levante Trofeo SUV. Becks said the brand "shares my appreciation for the very best innovation and design."



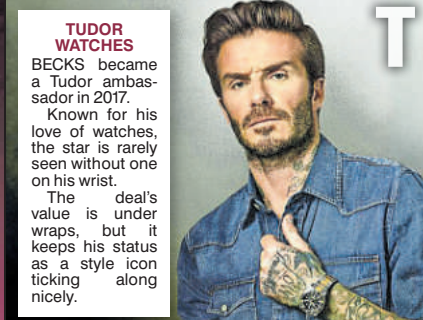
### PEPSI

MORE than 20 years after first teaming up, Pepsi and Becks reunited for the "Thirsty For More" campaign. In one ad he was shown riding a motorbike. In the Noughties, a £2million-a-year deal with the soft drink giant made him the face of the brand.



### QATAR

THE ex-England star became the face of the 2022 World Cup, promoting tourism and culture in the host nation Qatar. The megadeal earned him £150million - but many were outraged by it due to the emirate's poor human rights record.



### TUDOR WATCHES

BECKS became a Tudor ambassador in 2017. Known for his love of watches, the star is rarely seen without one on his wrist. The deal's value is under wraps, but it keeps his status as a style icon ticking along nicely.



### UBER EATS

DAVID and wife Victoria stole the show in a 2024 Super Bowl ad for Uber Eats, which poked fun at his Netflix docuseries. Packed with A-list cameos, their deadpan humour in the clip showed Becks does not mind being the punchline.

WHEN it comes to selling products, no one can brand it like Beckham. He inked a deal with Adidas as a 21-year-old Manchester United midfielder in 1996, followed by a £4million contract to be the face of Brylcreem - and he hasn't looked back since. Over the past 30 years Becks has earned a fortune from big-money tie-ins with Gillette, Pepsi, Hugo Boss, Stella Artois and many others. Insiders revealed last month that David has filmed a campaign for electronics brand Lenovo - with the advert focusing on his love of



### VERIZON

CASHING in on America's growing love of football, shrewd David signed a deal with the US telecoms giant ahead of this year's World Cup, which will be hosted in nations including the States. Verizon said it plans to offer fans exclusive experiences.



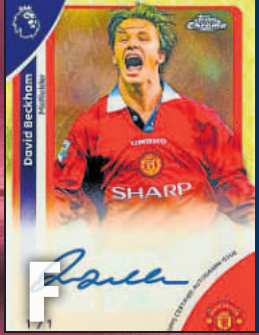
# The A to Z of

# NOT MUCH LEFT FOR HIM TO ADVERTISE!



**D**

**DB EYEWEAR**  
THE ex-footballer launched his own eyewear brand in 2020 with Italian firm Safilo. Blending British style with Continental flare, Becks' shades sell for up to £250. In 2023, he posed in retro-inspired shoots, proving he still has serious model credentials.



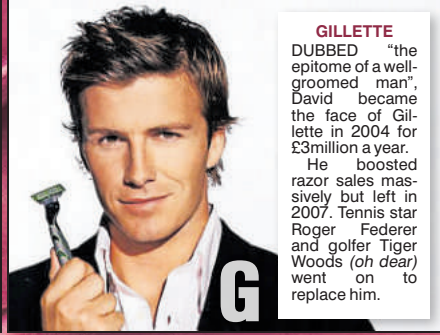
**F**

**FANATICS**  
IN February, David signed a multi-year deal with sports merchandise firm Fanatics, bringing out exclusive trading cards, autographs and memorabilia. His first collectibles launch was Topps Premier League Chrome cards signed by him.



**G**

**GILLETTE**  
DUBBED "the epitome of a well-groomed man", David became the face of Gillette in 2004 for £3million a year. He boosted razor sales massively but left in 2007. Tennis star Roger Federer and golfer Tiger Woods (oh dear) went on to replace him.



**H**

**HAIG CLUB**  
WHISKY brand Haig Club was founded by David and drinks giant Diageo in 2014. He later became its global ambassador and his stake is believed to be worth £50million. In ads he toured Scotland, while social clips showed off his cocktail skills.



**K**

**KENT & CURWEN**  
THE historic British luxury fashion company made Becks co-owner and face of the brand in 2015. Inspired by Peaky Blinders, the label promised a £3.5million return in the first year – but it had £18million losses in 2019 and David exited early.



**EMPORIO ARMANI UNDERWEAR**

**L**

**L'OREAL**  
THE lifelong champion of male grooming signed a deal with French cosmetics giant L'Oréal in 2018. He partnered with L'Oréal Luxe to launch his own male grooming brand, House 99, which proved so popular that it soon expanded to 19 countries.



**N**

**NESPRESSO**  
JOINING George Clooney as an ambassador for the coffee giant in 2023, David appeared in an ad to promote Melozio pods and Vertuo Creatista machines. In 2025 he took a turn serving customers in the firm's Covent Garden store in London.



**O**

**OOREDOO**  
THE Qatari telecommunications giant snapped up Becks with a huge multi-million-pound deal in 2022. David wore a bizarre robot suit in one campaign. He has since attended Ooredoo events in its home country, including the Qatar Grand Prix.



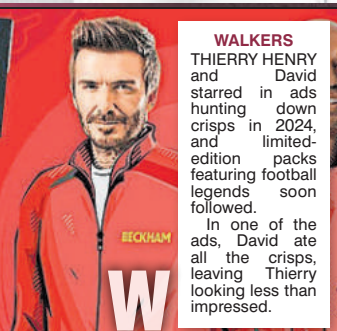
**R**

**REAL MADRID**  
HIS £24.5million move to Real Madrid in 2003 shook up football and super-charged brand Beckham. A unique image rights deal boosted his earnings – and with Adidas and more brands on board, endorsements earned him £12.5million.



**S**

**STELLA ARTOIS**  
THE beer giant's 2024 A Taste Worth More campaign featured Matt Damon as Becks' long-lost twin in a Super Bowl ad. The comedy commercials showed David being overlooked in bars – proving the pint takes centre stage over celebrity.



**W**

**WALKERS**  
THIERRY HENRY and David starred in ads hunting down crisps in 2024, and limited-edition packs featuring football legends soon followed. In one of the ads, David ate all the crisps, leaving Thierry looking less than impressed.



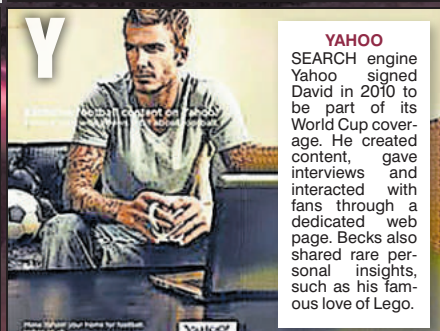
**X**

**ALIEXPRESS**  
AS the global ambassador for the online marketplace's Euros campaign, David featured in playful ads in 2024 offering prizes and discounts. The light-hearted clips showed his fun side as he helped boost the China-based multinational brand.



**Y**

**YAHOO**  
SEARCH engine Yahoo signed David in 2010 to be part of its World Cup coverage. He created content, gave interviews and interacted with fans through a dedicated web page. Becks also shared rare personal insights, such as his famous love of Lego.



**Z**

**Zzzz IM8 SLEEP SUPPLEMENTS**  
THE health and wellness brand, which David launched in 2024, has a range of supplements. Its daily essentials powder helps regulate the body to aid sleep. The company made £45million in its first year.

# brand Beckham

# HOW TO SURVIVE 'WORST YEAR EVER'

## STRIP OFF

FIGHT back against mutant pollen spores by showering as soon as you get home. It's vital if you've been in urban or high-traffic areas where these supercharged, troublemaking particles are most common.

Mutated pollen will adhere to your hair, outfits and even handbags and pets. So, washing it off your body and clothes is a frontline daily defence.

The spores are highly potent, especially in cities where they combine with airborne irritants such as fumes and other pollutants to cause more persistent allergic reactions.

Strip off as soon as you go indoors. Wipe shoes, coats, even pets and bags, then shower and wash your hair.

Wash bedding and towels if windows have been open. And never dry washing outside.



## DOSE UP

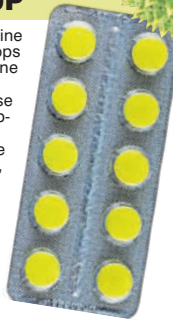
OVER-the-counter antihistamine tablets, nasal sprays and eye drops are still the most effective first-line treatments available.

Start taking them now, because preventive use may slash symptoms by as much as 70 per cent.

As pollen becomes more potent and symptoms worsen, you may need to increase the dosage or try different options, especially if you live in a city where pollution levels are higher and air quality poor.

Some people only need a daily antihistamine, while others may need a mix of treatments for maximum relief. Ask your pharmacist or GP for advice.

If you are using a nose spray, ensure you are using it correctly. Don't tip your head back and spritz – instead, tilt your head forward. This way it will coat your nasal passages properly.



## EAT TO BEAT IT

BATTLE mutant spores by eating foods such as garlic, onion, apples and berries, which are rich in a natural compound called quercetin.

Such foods have anti-inflammatory and histamine-reducing properties, so adding them to your diet, or taking them as a supplement, could suppress stronger allergic reactions.

Zeolite is another popular natural treatment – usually consumed in the form of capsules or powder. It's available in health food outlets and is said to lower histamine levels in the body.

Don't be too quick to dismiss it, on the basis that there's little clinical evidence about it.

This may be because no one has done the research studies yet, not because it doesn't work.



## NO ENTRY

USE "barrier layers" to physically block mutant spores from entering your body, especially when walking, running or cycling around cities.

Obstruct obvious access points with sunglasses, a face mask, wide hat or a layer of petroleum jelly wiped around your nostrils. And close all windows, at home or on transport. Wrap-around shades are excellent for helping to prevent spores reaching the eyes.

Hats and masks stop particles sticking to your face or reaching the airways.

Coating the nose with a thick barrier cream creates a sticky layer to trap mutant strains before they enter the nose, throat or airways.

Check the pollen forecast regularly. If exercising, you may wish to stay inside until air quality improves.



## VITAMIN C

DOSING up on oranges is best known as a dietary defence to beat winter colds – but it could also help to ease hay fever reactions by lowering histamine levels and breaking down histamine faster.

The antioxidant enzymes found in vitamin C are known to have a mild natural antihistamine effect.

This can dampen allergic reactions in the bloodstream. As well as easing typical hay fever symptoms, such as sneezing, runny nose and itching, it can reduce inflammation everywhere in the body.

Consuming vitamin C in foods such as kiwi fruit or lemons, or taking it as a supplement, offers great support for the body's immune system generally.

It is helpful for all-round immunity protection.



# ATTACK of the mutant hayfever spores!



By LAURA STOTT

SCIENTISTS predict this could be the worst year EVER for hay fever thanks to an increase in so-called mutant pollen strains.

These extra-potent particles combine with other pollutants such as traffic fumes, allowing them to penetrate deeper into airways and causing greater misery for sufferers.

Increased emissions and earlier flowering seasons mean some pollen levels are set to rise this summer by as much as 60 per cent.

As the Met Office issues a red alert for pollen, here TV doctor HELEN WALL offers advice on the best ways to beat the mutant strain.

## FILTER IT OUT



ELIMINATE mutant spores before you can breathe them in by using air purifiers such as Hepa filters in the home, car, office or added to your vacuum cleaner. These can make a noticeable difference, especially in polluted urban areas.

The devices trap airborne pollens and dust to eliminate them from the environment before they can trigger allergic reactions. They are particularly effective when a specific type of spore is in season and causing symptoms, for example birch pollen currently.

Some higher-efficiency filters claim to remove as many as 99 per cent of irritants and pollutants. They're not cheap, but they are worthwhile when mutant strains are present and symptoms persist in the airways.

## RED LIGHT

INSERTING small, hand-held, red light nasal devices (from around £8, amazon.co.uk) into your nostrils for a few minutes daily could help you fight back against powerful mutant strains.

With the supercharged spores already proving more resistant to typical hay fever medication, these gadgets could provide useful additional daily support for worsening nose-based irritations.

Especially helpful for city dwellers who are most likely to suffer with nasal sensitivity and inflammation, as plant, weed and tree spores stick to higher volumes of other pollutants – such as fuel fumes from busy roads – and irritate the nasal passages.

These anti-inflammatory low-level lights are aimed at easing nose symptoms only.



## BUZZ OFF

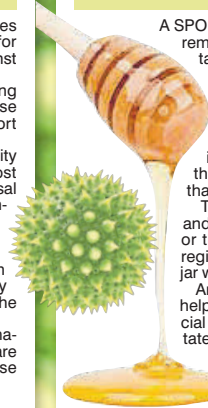
A SPOONFUL of raw honey is believed to remove the sting of symptoms, and taken daily could help you battle this year's strain. It's believed consuming condiments produced by local bees dampens the immune response to pollens in your area.

As it's made from nectars growing locally, it helps to desensitise the body to the same plant blooms that trigger issues.

The honey must be unprocessed and, whether you live in the city or the country, must be made in your region – a standard supermarket jar won't work.

Anecdotal, plenty of people find it helpful and as honey has other beneficial properties, such as soothing irritated throats or airways, it's worth giving it a go. Preparation is key.

Start taking now to get ahead of summer symptoms.



Adventures... Ted

## King chat war hero Ted dies aged 101

By PAUL SIMS

A WORLD War Two veteran so renowned for his charm he was chosen to sit next to the King at a VJ Day banquet last year has died aged 101.

Ted Hadfield fought the Japanese in the Far East as a lieutenant in the 8th Punjab Regiment.

He said last year: "I tried to join the RAF with two mates but failed because I'm colour blind."

"Both my mates were shot down and killed."

"I've never really had the opportunity to speak about my time in the war – I didn't think anyone would be interested."

One war highlight was his front row seat to see Vera Lynn in Burma.

After the war, Ted, originally of Chesterfield, Derbys, joined the family butchers' business, then ran a hotel and a pub.

Ted, who outlived both his wives, lived in Rotherham. He said: "My mum and dad lived until their 90s, so maybe I'm lucky."



'Soothing'... caffeine

## Bedtime coffee to stop you stirring

By SAM BLANCHARD

A TOP doctor says that contrary to popular belief we should drink coffee before bed to relax.

Dr Eleanor Bryant reckons despite caffeine's reputation as a stimulant that will scupper a good night's kip, it could help many sleep like a baby.

The associate professor of psychology at Bradford University explained: "Some people are less sensitive to caffeine."

"If you have a faster metabolism, you may not feel its stimulating effects as strongly. A coffee later in the day won't necessarily keep you awake."

"It acts as a psychological marker – a signal to slow down."

She said it can be tested by drinking coffee in the evening to see how the body reacts.

"Those who do not feel 'alert, jittery or restless' may be less sensitive to it and more likely to enjoy its calming effects."

# IT'S A GUM RAP

## Drug dealer is nabbed after 'Turkey teeth' selfie

**A GRINNING drug dealer was caught after sending a pal a selfie showing off his new "Turkey teeth".**

Coran Davies, 23, revealed his gleaming gnashers in a snap from the dentist's chair after getting them whitened abroad on the cheap.

He also sent fellow pusher Dale Howell messages about

By **ALEX WEST**

cocaine and cannabis. But Davies was unaware that police had accessed his mate's phone.

South Wales Police said: "Coran Davies was arrested after officers used retrospective facial recognition technology on an image he'd sent to his drug dealer friend's phone.

"The image was of him on a dentist's chair, having just had treatment for new teeth in

Turkey and further messages referenced supplying cocaine and cannabis.

"Little did he know, his friend's phone was already being analysed by detectives as part of an ongoing investigation."

The pair, both of Porth, near Cardiff, were arrested on March 7 after Davies returned and officers spotted them driving through Tonypany.

They were found to be in possession of cocaine, cannabis and

thousands of pounds in cash. A property linked to Davies had been searched last September, where police found cocaine, cannabis and drugs paraphernalia. Davies and Howell pleaded guilty to drugs offences and criminally acquiring cash.

Davies was jailed for 48 months and 25-year-old Howell got 36 months at Merthyr Tydfil crown court.

Dentist's chair pic... Davies



**£392k in hols pay**

A REAL estate boss won £392,000 after he racked up 827 unpaid holiday days over 25 years. Busy Mossadek Ageli agreed to accept money instead of taking leave and cash them in later.

But he was sacked with no explanation by a new board of directors.

He won an unfair dismissal case against Libyan-owned Sabtina Ltd at a Watford employment tribunal, plus £105,000 compensation.

### SQUIDS IN

A prototype action figure of Star Wars' character Squid Head is tipped to make £22,500 at auction in Pennsylvania, US.



## IT'S A BUM RAP

Pictures: MISS SIXTY

By **HOWELL DAVIES**

**NEWLY-single model Bella Hadid puts her ex behind her in a mini denim playsuit.** The 29-year-old was promoting her latest collection with Miss Sixty following her split from cowboy tycoon Adan Banuelos, 37, at the beginning of the year. Bella said: "I love denim. When I'm not working, it's always jeans, my belt with my buckle on it, and a button-down (shirt)."



Meningitis hell... Olivia

## Killer bug twice in two years

By **OLIVIA MONK**

A TEACHER was stricken with deadly meningitis twice in two years.

Olivia Griffiths, 30, was found to have a bacterial strain of the brain bug in 2022 after suffering severe head and neck pain.

She said: "I thought I was going to die."

Olivia spent weeks in hospital and was left with profound hearing loss and chronic fatigue syndrome.

In 2024 Olivia, who had just returned to full-time teaching, felt similar symptoms so had a lumbar puncture at hospital.

She said: "To everyone's surprise, it confirmed meningitis again."

Olivia, of Sheffield, felt her immune system had been weakened by stress. She now has a pilates and nutrition coaching business and is running the London Marathon on April 26 for the Meningitis Research Foundation.

Olivia said: "I count my blessings every day."

## Skipper's icy scare

A POWERBOAT skipper was treated for possible hypothermia after an hour in the sea trying to free his propeller.

He untangled a hose before climbing back on board his 18ft vessel - but then started feeling the effects of exposure to the cold water.

A lifeboat raced to the scene off Poole, Dorset, on Wednesday and took him on board, keeping him under observation "in the warmth of the wheelhouse". The unnamed man was then handed to the Coastguard "in better spirits".

### HUGE SAVINGS

Cigarette cards of 50 early footballers, including 1900s 24st goalie William "Fatty" Foulke, got £1,080 in Arborfield, Berks.

## PERFECT DAYS PRESENTED BY ALL the MUSIC

**SPECIAL CD OFFER TO SUN READERS**



**ONLY £9.99 INCLUDING P&P**

### The Perfect 66 Track 3CD Collection That Makes Every Day ... The Perfect Day!

This 66 track collection, which is compiled exclusively from 60s and 70s releases, just goes to demonstrate why we believed this was a "golden era" for popular music and includes some of the best and biggest hits ... **EVER. Elvis Presley: The Beach Boys: Diana Ross: Bill Withers: Dionne Warwick: Frankie Valli & The Four Seasons: Lulu: Simon & Garfunkel: The Commodores** and not forgetting **Lou Reed**. You will find fabulous music to suit your every mood on all three of these quality CDs. **Perfect Days** is a must for your CD collection.

- |  |   |  |
|--|---|--|
| <b>Disc 1</b>  | 8 Gloria Gaynor - I Will Survive                  | 16 Dionne Warwick - (They Long to Be) Close to You               |
| 1 Simon & Garfunkel - Bridge Over Troubled Water                             | 9 Candi Staton - Young Hearts Run Free            | 17 Jackie DeShannon  |
| 2 Elvis Presley - Always On My Mind  | 10 Donna Summer - I Love You                      | 18 Barry Manilow - Daybreak                                      |
| 3 The Beach Boys - God Only Knows  | 11 Aretha Franklin - Respect                      | 19 Jack Jones - The Impossible Dream                             |
| 4 Ben E. King - Stand By Me  | 12 Four Tops - Reach Out I'll Be There            | 20 Matt Monro - Born Free  |
| 5 Jackson 5 - I'll Be There  | 13 Andy Williams - Can't Take My Eyes Off You     | 21 Perry Como - And I Love You So                                |
| 6 Marvin Gaye & Tammi Terrell - You're All I Need To Get By                  | 14 Dusty Springfield - Wishin' And Hopin'         | 22 The Everly Brothers - All I Have to Do Is Dream               |
| 7 Diana Ross - Aint No Mountain High Enough                                  | 15 Sandie Shaw - Long Live Love                   | 23 Louis Armstrong - What A Wonderful World                      |
| <b>Disc 2</b>  | 7 The Hollies - The Air That I Breathe            | 15 Captain & Tennille - Love Will Keep Us Together               |
| 1 Bill Withers - Lovely Day  | 8 Art Garfunkel - Only Have Eyes For You          | 16 Barry Manilow - Daybreak                                      |
| 2 John Paul Young - Love Is In The Air                                       | 9 Shirley Bassey - Something                      | 17 Liverpool Express - Every Man Must Have a Dream               |
| 3 The New Seekers - I'd Like to Teach The World To Sing (In Perfect Harmony) | 10 Elkie Brooks - Sunshine After The Rain         | 18 Minnie Riperton - Lovin' You                                  |
| 4 Scott Fitzgerald & Yvonne Keeley - If I Had Words                          | 11 Andrew Gold - Never Let Her Slip Away          | 19 Deniece Williams - Free                                       |
| 5 John Denver - Annie's Song   | 12 Bread - Make It With You                       | 20 The Bay Brothers - Summer Breeze Pt. 1                        |
| 6 10cc - The Things We Do For Love   | 13 Commodores - Three Times A Lady                | 21 Smokey Robinson & The Miracles - I Second That Emotion        |
| <b>Disc 3</b>  | 14 Carole Bayer Sager - Come in from the Rain     | 22 Stevie Wonder - For Once In My Life                           |
| 1 Lou Reed - Perfect Day   | 7 Love Affair - Everlasting Love                  | 15 Frankie Valli & The Four Seasons - Working My Way Back to You |
| 2 Harry Nilsson - Without You  | 8 Sonny and Cher - I Got You Babe                 | 16 The Drifters - Up on the Roof                                 |
| 3 Bob Dylan - The Times They Are A-Changin'                                  | 9 The Stylistics - You Make Me Feel Brand New     | 17 The Temptations - My Girl                                     |
| 4 Scott McKenzie - San Francisco (Be Sure to Wear Flowers in Your Hair)      | 10 Rose Royce - Wishin' on a Star                 | 18 Mary Wells - My Guy   |
| 5 Mama Cass - Make Your Own Kind of Music                                    | 11 The Three Degrees - Woman in Love              | 19 Percy Sledge - When a Man Loves a Woman                       |
| 6 The 5th Dimension - Aquarius/Let The Sunshine In (The Flesh Floures)       | 12 Lulu And The Luvvers - Shout                   | 20 The Walker Brothers - No Regrets                              |
| 7 Diana Ross - Aint No Mountain High Enough                                  | 13 The Foundations - Baby Now That I've Found You | 21 The Temeloes - Silence Is Golden                              |
|  | 14 The Searchers - When You Walk In The Room      | 22 Gerry & The Pacemakers - You'll Never Walk Alone              |

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Empire... Minghella

## Eddie the ice cream of crop dies, 104

By **ALEX WEST**

ICE cream-selling pioneer Eddie Minghella has died at the age of 104. The Scots-born dad of five had begun Minghella Ice Cream from the back of a cafe in 1950 on the Isle of Wight, after serving in World War Two. As the business grew he and wife Gloria ran a small fleet of ice cream vans on the island. British-Italian Eddie expanded sales of his frozen treats into luxury outlets including Harrods and Fortnum & Mason. His children included Oscar-winning director Anthony Minghella, who died in 2008 aged 54. Eddie and his wife Gloria had a number of cameos in Anthony's movies – including *The Talented Mr. Ripley* and *Cold Mountain*. Gloria, who Eddie married in 1951, died in 2014 at the age of 83. Eddie died on Sunday after being admitted to hospital following a fall.



Favoured... the stag flag

## Forest's dwellers pining for own flag

By **ALEX WEST**

A CAMPAIGN has been launched to give a celebrated national park its own flag. New Forest residents in Hampshire say they feel no connection to the rest of the county. Once crowned the best national park in Europe, it is famed for its ancient agricultural traditions. A favoured flag design is an ancient one of a golden stag against a green field with an arrow and stirrup representing William II's hunting accident death there in 1100. Unlike counties, national parks do not have their own flags. But parts of New Forest District Council will come under a new Mid-Hampshire Council in an unpopular local shake-up. Councillor Jack Davies, leading the campaign, called for an official New Forest flag, saying: "Councils are temporary, the forest is eternal."

# TOO MANY YOUNG NOT IN EDU



By **GRAEME CULLIFORD**

**WITH its steel foundries and shipbuilding, Middlesbrough was once a boom town dubbed the iron smelting centre of the world.**

Now the former industrial heartland in the North East – which boasted 100 per cent employment before its industries collapsed – is fast becoming the UK's jobless capital.

It is a place where honest work is frowned upon by some and where unlucky kids have more chance of being arrested than carving out a career. Across the country, one in ten young people are classed as NEETs – meaning not in education, employment or training – and the problem is particularly acute on Middlesbrough's Thorntree Estate.

When The Sun visited the once-thriving housing estate, we heard stories of drug addiction and violence, and a workless culture so entrenched that even the local jobcentre encourages residents to claim benefits.

Mike Milen, 63, is CEO of the Community Ventures scheme, which offers tuition and helps find work for young people on the estate. He said: "There is just as much talent here as there is anywhere else in the country, it's just not being nurtured and supported and given opportunities."

"For those who fall through the cracks, it is really difficult to turn it around. The amount of drug use here is off the scale – crack cocaine and prescription drugs are sold on the black market. Cannabis doesn't even count as a drug here. People will tell you, 'I don't take drugs', and they'll be smoking a spliff."

"What I will say is people here are working really hard and trying their best – they are just not employed."

### 'Levels of abuse'

"We have plenty of young entrepreneurs, but they are selling fags and drugs instead of running a legitimate business."

"Out of the people we see, about 80 per cent are out of work and everyone is on some sort of benefit."

"The stories we hear from people coming in, the levels of abuse... there are teenage girls who think it's acceptable for their male partners to beat them up."

Even on a sunny day, a walk through the estate can chill you to the bone – not just because of the breeze blowing off the River Tees.

When my photographer and I arrived just after 2pm, several teenage girls could be seen pushing prams past the gates of the local school.

Hooded youths on bikes charged up and down the street leading to a bleak parade of shops that would have appeared derelict if not for the adults loitering outside.

Most of the people I approached refused to be interviewed, with more than one issuing a blunt: "F\*\*\* off."

One man in his 20s shouted: "You're brave standing there – I bet someone tries to sell you drugs."

Mike, whose organisation has offered jobs renovating houses, said: "You would not believe the challenge in getting people to turn up for five days of work just because you are paying them."

"A lot of jobs here are temporary, which can cause more problems for people than not working because of all the expense – and then your benefits stop. The jobcentre doesn't want you on the unemployment list, it wants you on some kind of benefit. The system encourages people to claim."

"The council has a whole team that works on helping people maximise their benefits income and there are families with eight, nine or ten children. It's mind-blowing. We have

a former tenant who is 36 with two kids and she has only left the estate twice in her life – once to go to prison and once aged three when she went to a holiday camp north of Hartlepool. There's a lot of negativity bred into people because they feel the system has let them down.

"We had three big employers – British Steel, shipbuilding and the chemical firm ICI – who looked after their staff well.

"They had their own social clubs and football teams and, if you lose that, it's not just your job you've lost



**TOUGH JOB**... Mike Milen runs community scheme to help youths find work



**GRITTY**... graphic designer Emma Tweddle came for university

## MIDDLESBROUGH WAS ONCE A DRUGS AND VIOLENCE. WORK CENTRE ENCOUR



Photography by GLEN MINIKIN

# Depriv town N



**HITTING HOME**... boarded-up house on one of the city's run-down streets



**VIOLENCE**... right-wing group confronts police in Middlesbrough in 2024

– it's your social connection. Everything that makes you has just disappeared."

The latest figures from the ONS, or Office for National Statistics, show 957,000 people aged 16 to 24 – which is 12.8 per cent of all young people in the UK – were classed as NEETs in December, a rise of 11,000 on the previous quarter.

In the 18 to 24 age group, the proportion increases to 15.2 per cent, and there is a fast-rising group of young women no longer in education, employment or training.

ONS figures also show more than half of NEETs aged 16 to 24 (547,000) are classed as economically inactive, with 303,000 of them young girls.

Research by non-profit organisation Impetus found that Middlesbrough,

which has a population of around 150,000, had one of the highest proportions of NEETs in the UK last year. The only town ahead of it was Knowsley, Merseyside.

Middlesbrough was once so central to British industry that it was among the first places bombed by Germany during the Second World War.

But the decline of the Teesside steelworks, which at its peak boasted 91 blast furnaces, caused thousands of job losses. By the early 1990s only one furnace was left, with the final one ceasing operations in 2015. In 2019, British Steel went into liquidation, putting another 5,000 jobs at risk.

ONS figures show that almost one in three of Middlesbrough's working-age population was "economically inactive" by 2023. The problem is reflected in schools, where the 28 per

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# EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT OR TRAINING



**HABIT** ... pregnant mum-of-one Demi Finley wants to beat her crack addiction



**FRESH START** ... cleaner Abbi Sharpe turned her life around after difficult times



**LOT OF EFFORT** ... mental health worker Claire Harrison

AN INDUSTRIAL STRONGHOLD. NOW IT IS BLIGHTED BY  
 CRIMINAL CULTURE IS SO INGRAINED, THE LOCAL JOB  
**CRISIS** DRIVES RESIDENTS TO CLAIM BENEFITS

TOMORROW  
 in the  
**Sun**  
 ON SUNDAY  
 How to get a  
 NEET start



**TROUBLED WATERS**  
 ... transporter bridge across River Tees

# Overlooked Northern town putting the blame in Neets

exclusion and suspension rate is  
 times the national average.  
 The mum of six we spoke to  
 says that too many children are  
 sent off before they have a chance.  
 She also claimed to have been  
 identified as long-term sick despite  
 objections.  
**'Prison was like detox'**  
 The 56-year-old, who did not want  
 to be named, said: "For most kids  
 sent here, by the time they turn 16  
 I've already got criminal records  
 for stupid things like antisocial  
 behaviour.  
 So when they become adults, they  
 are completely unemployable. On the  
 streets where I live, only three of us  
 out of the 40 people work.  
 I'm classed as disabled and

unemployable as I have kidney disease.  
 But what am I supposed to do - sit  
 around and watch daytime TV all day?  
 "Not a chance. I've started my own  
 little business making funeral flowers."  
 Mum-of-one Demi Finley, 28, is  
 couch-surfing on the Thorntree Estate  
 and admits she has never even  
 applied for a regular job.  
 Eight months pregnant, her main  
 goal has been beating her addiction  
 to crack cocaine.  
 I spoke to her days after she  
 completed a ten-day sentence for  
 smuggling drugs into prison in 2023.  
 Demi said of her spell inside: "It  
 was like a detox. I want to stay clean  
 for my son, but I've never looked for  
 a job on the books.  
 "I don't have any qualifications and  
 I dropped out of school when I was  
 13. I went through the care system

and then I had my daughter ten  
 years ago. I've been homeless ever  
 since I found out I was 23 weeks  
 pregnant with my second child.  
 "We were staying with my mum  
 until she died, but I couldn't afford to  
 pay the rent. She was only 53.  
 "The autopsy said it was with-  
 drawing from tablets like [sleeping  
 pill] zopiclone that killed her."  
 "I'm 37 weeks pregnant. I live off  
 £444 a month Universal Credit and  
 I've lost my child support money  
 because my daughter is staying with  
 my auntie. So what is the  
 Government doing to help me?"  
 Cleaner Abbi Sharpe offers a ray of  
 light as one of the few Thorntree  
 Estate residents who has managed to  
 find work. Abbi, 20, said: "My mother  
 had struggles with her mental health  
 so she wasn't working. My dad was a

druggie and we didn't have contact  
 with him. I ended up in a behavioural  
 school because I was getting bullied  
 and I started acting out. The  
 mainstream school said I was  
 unteachable. We didn't get any  
 careers advice. We didn't get any help  
 with jobs at all. I don't think school  
 prepares you for the outside world.  
 "But I've just moved into my own  
 flat and I'm working part-time as a  
 cleaner. I hope the future will be  
 brighter for me and my children  
 when I have them."  
 Graphic designer Emma Tweddle,  
 from Middlesbrough, said: "I'm 36 but  
 I came to uni here and stayed  
 because I love the area. I was born in  
 Redcar. It's gritty and it's not perfect  
 but there are opportunities."  
 And mental health worker Claire  
 Harrison, 55, of Stockton-on-Tees,

said: "Middlesbrough has a lot of  
 deprivation generally, poor educational  
 standards and child poverty. People  
 don't get the start here they would in  
 some other areas, but there is a lot of  
 effort going into trying to get people  
 into work and get them job-ready.  
 The council are investing in it too."  
 A Middlesbrough Council spokes-  
 man said that while NEET rates are  
 much higher in areas like the  
 Thorntree Estate, "the percentage of  
 16 to 17-year-olds not in education,  
 employment or training in  
 Middlesbrough is 4.1 per cent  
 compared to the North East average  
 of five per cent.  
 "We continue to work with a range  
 of partners to develop opportunities  
 and support our young people to  
 achieve positive outcomes that are  
 right for them."

# Fab DAILY

Edited by  
**JOEL COOPER**

**THE FAB DAILY TEAM:**  
Digital Commissioning Editor  
**Claire Dunwell**, Senior  
Feature Writers **Natalie  
Clarke**, Feature Writer  
**Yasmin Harisha**, Fashion  
Editor **Abby McHale**, Stylist  
**Emily Regan**

## CAPPY DAYS, ONE 'N' ALL

HAVING a bad hair day, or just want an easy, off-duty finish to your look? Baseball caps are firmly back in fashion, and the quickest way to add instant cool. Fashion Editor **ABBY McHALE** picks the best on the high street from £4.50...



Coral, £14,  
Next



Denim, £13,  
M&S



Pink heart,  
£19, River  
Island



Dark green,  
£17, Katie  
Loxton at  
John Lewis



Brown, £4.50,  
Primark



Cream, £32,  
Anthropologie



Pink slogan,  
£16,  
Accessorize

By **LYNSEY HOPE**

**SHOPPERS** stare as I struggle to steer my trolley stacked with boxes and a pack of 140 toilet rolls through the aisles.

But the lure of incredible savings pushes me on.

Even if not everything works out cheaper than the local supermarket, there are definitely some bargains to be had – and I am grabbing them all.

By the time I lug my haul home, however, I am beginning to realise I do not have the space to store half of it.

My first visit to Costco – which offers money-saving bulk deals to its members – has been quite the experience.

There are inflatables hanging down from the ceiling, rows of porcelain toilets for sale and I spot tools, T-shirts and even a section for Michelin tyres.

It is wall-to-wall with shoppers pushing giant trolleys nearly as big as me. I feel overwhelmed.

*What should be a quick family shop feels like a serious mission.*

I struggle to spot the fridges at first. Instead, I am met with towers of crisps, sweets and cleaning products, all sold in bulk.

It is like a ramped-up version of the middle aisle at Aldi or Lidl.

A friend even told me she once saw grand pianos for sale.

Food-wise, you cannot buy one of anything – it all comes in bulk.

I had to drive about 45 minutes to find my nearest branch of the wholesaler in West Thurrock, Essex, and I am about to find out if it was worth the journey.

First on my list is toilet paper, and the smallest pack contains an incredible 140 rolls. I have no idea where I am putting them when I get home, but they are a good price, working out at just 11p each.

That means 16 rolls would come in at around £1.77, much cheaper than any of the Big Four supermarkets – Tesco, Sainsbury's, Asda and Morrisons. In fact, the closest competitor is Morrisons, where you can pick up a 16-pack for £5.50.

There is a handy shelf on the bottom of my huge trolley, so I stick them underneath and plough on.

### Last longer

I stock up on beer, wine, baked beans, soft drinks and washing-up liquid. It will take me an age to get through the six 900ml bottles of Fairy, but they seem good value compared to the supermarkets, working out at £2.16 each.

Some of the biggest bargains are on washing powder and fabric conditioner. I managed to buy 160 Ariel 4-in-1 washing pods for £22.49. Most supermarkets sell them in packs of 22, which can cost more than £5.

Break it down and 22 at Costco works out at just £3.09. And I've got enough to last for months.

A trip to Costco will inevitably cost you more upfront because of the quantities you are purchasing.

But buying in bulk can save you money in the long run – and also last you longer.

Costco is great value if you prefer big names. But if you are happy with supermarkets' own-brand products, it's not quite such good value.

Two 500ml bottles of Tesco's own washing-up liquid, for example, will only cost you £1.24 – so cheaper than the Fairy I bought at wholesale.

It is a similar picture with baked beans. I had to get 24 tins of Heinz beans at Costco, which set me back £13.79, equalling 57p a can. This is cheaper than Heinz at the Big Four, but you could get own-brand beans for less, maybe as little as 38p a can.

I picked up a bag of 12 apples, more than I'd usually buy, but when I checked later, they were dearer than the main supermarkets. The £7.49 frozen Crosta Mollica pizzas struck me as being a bargain when I spotted them – but they were also more expensive than elsewhere, as was rose wine.

For just one bottle, the Big Four are more expensive, but take into account any promotions you might get on Tesco's Clubcard, Sainsbury's Nectar scheme or bulk buys and supermarket wine is cheaper.

There are some undeniable savings, though. My two huge bottles of Heinz tomato

## LYNSEY'S SHOPPING LIST

### COSTCO WHOLESALE

Heinz baked beans (1 tin)	57p
Comfort Pure fabric conditioner (80 washes)	£2.39
J20 orange and passionfruit (4 x 250ml cans)	£1.72
La Vieille Ferme rose wine (750ml bottle)	£5.83
Royal Gala apples x 6	£2.49
Ariel Original 4 in 1 Washing pods (22 washes)	£3.09
Cathedral City Mature Cheddar cheese (550g)	£3.85
Sesame seed bagels x 5	£1.86
Pip & Nut peanut butter (1kg)	£5.39
Fairy Platinum antibacterial washing-up liquid (Eucalyptus)	£2.16
Cruzcampo Sevilla lager (12 x 330ml bottles)	£8.98
Walkers Crisps (60 bags incl. Quavers, Wotsits & Monster Munch)	£8.99
Anchor unsalted butter (200g)	£1.59
Weetabix x 48	£3.99
Aberdeen Angus steak mince (500g)	£4.99
Chipolata sausages (340g)	£2.07
Heinz tomato ketchup (50% less sugar and salt, 880g)	£1.24
Own-brand semi-skimmed milk (4 pints)	£1.40
Own-brand toilet paper (16 rolls)	£1.77
Hovis Soft White medium bread (800g)	99p
Muller Corner x 6	£2.79
Crosta Mollica frozen pizzas x 2	£7.49

**TOTAL COST**  
**£75.64**

**SUPER-SIZED SHOP...** Lynsey pushes her giant trolley filled with goodies bought in bulk

ketchup worked out at £1.24 each compared to around £4.50 in supermarkets.

If you have a big family like mine and get through one a week, it's a good deal.

Twelve bottles of Cruzcampo Sevilla lager cost £8.98, and were more than £1 cheaper than the nearest rival. A pack of six Muller Corner yoghurts was £2.79, more than a quid cheaper than Tesco and Sainsbury's. I struggled a little with fresh fruit and veg as everything was in such big packs and I worried it would go off.

However, the meat selection was incredible. It looked fantastic quality but, again, you have to dig deep on the day. More than 3kg

of mince cost me more than £33, but it will last. I'll just split it into bags and pop it in the freezer.

It was the same with sausages, which you could only buy in packs of 32.

By now, it is taking a lot of strength to push the trolley.

### Fascinating experience

At the checkout, staff are so friendly and you do not need to unload bigger items. They will just reach over to scan them.

My total bill was £219.36. This is much more than my standard weekly shop, which would probably be around £140. But a lot of the goods will last weeks, if not months.

When you break it down to comparative sizes, Costco offers a good saving against all of the Big Four supermarkets. A single tin of



# I SAVED MORE THAN £1K A YEAR BY BULK SHOPPING AT COSTCO

**(But make sure you've got room to store it all)**

Heinz beans works out at 57p at the wholesaler, compared to 87p for the same brand at Asda.

Overall, it is still better value, even when you take into account Clubcard prices, Nectar prices and bulkbuy supermarket deals.

But Costco's headline prices famously exclude VAT, which is whacked on at the till (currently 20 per cent, though most food is exempt).

The true price is usually in smaller writing at the bottom of the sign on the shelving, so don't forget to factor it in.

Costco membership starts at £42, including VAT, or £30 for businesses.

But you do need to be a current or retired employee of certain professions including banking, education, the health service or police – or qualified professionals



**I'M GOING TO NEED A BIGGER HOUSE... the battle to pack it all away**

## HOW IT COMPARES WITH THE BIG 4

	TESCO	Sainsbury's	ASDA	Morrisons
Heinz baked beans (1 tin)	75p	70p	87p	75p
Comfort Pure fabric conditioner (80 washes)	£4.75	£4	£4.74	£4.75
J20 orange and passionfruit (4 x 250ml cans)	£2.08	£2	£3.44	£2.50
La Vieille Ferme rose wine (750ml bottle)	£5.83	£5.43	£5.25	£6.37
Royal Gala apples x 6	£1.59	£1.80	£1.50	£1.89
Ariel Original 4 in 1 Washing Pods (22 washes)	£5.25	£5.50	£5	£6.16
Cathedral City Mature Cheddar cheese (550g)	£4.50	£5.50	£5.54	£5.75
Sesame seed bagels x 5	£1	£1.90	£1.85	£1.35
Pip & Nut peanut butter (1kg)	£6.50	£7.50	£6.44 <small>Whole Earth as Pip &amp; Nut unavailable</small>	£7
Fairy Platinum antibacterial washing-up liquid (Eucalyptus) 820ml	£3	£3.50 900ml	£2 820ml	£3 820ml
Cruzcampo Sevilla lager (12 x 330ml bottles)	£10.75	£10	£10	£12.50
Walkers Crisps (60 bags incl. Quavers, Wotsits & Monster Munch) 4 bags less	£13.22	£12.97 4 bags less	£11.84 8 bags less	£13.50
Anchor unsalted butter (200g)	£2.60	£1.70	£2.44	£2.45
Weetabix x 48	£5.50	£4.57	£5	£5.33
Aberdeen Angus steak mince (500g)	£6	£4.62 <small>Unavailable, nearest equivalent</small>	£6.27	£6 <small>Unavailable, nearest equivalent</small>
Chipolata sausages (340g)	£2.18	£1.79	£2.32	£3.15
Heinz tomato ketchup (50% less sugar and salt, 880g)	£4.55	£4.50	£4.48	£4.50
Own-brand semi-skimmed milk (4 pints)	£1.65	£1.60	£1.60	£1.60
Own-brand toilet paper (16 rolls)	£8.35	£6.66	£9.33	£5.50
Hovis Soft White medium bread (800g)	£1.39	£1.39	£1.39	£1.25
Muller Corner x 6	£4	£4	£2.50	£3
Crosta Mollica frozen pizzas x 2	£4.75	£5.75	£6 <small>Unavailable Asda own brand</small>	£5.75
<b>TOTAL COST</b>	<b>£100.19</b> £24.55 more than Costco, £1,276.60 over a year	<b>£97.38</b> £21.74 more than Costco, £1,130.48 over a year	<b>£99.80</b> £24.16 more than Costco, £1,256.32 over a year	<b>£104.05</b> £28.41 more than Costco, £1,477.32 over a year

\*Costs have been adjusted so that sizes are comparable. Supermarket totals take into account Clubcard prices, Nectar prices and bulk buy deals, such as three for £10. Prices correct at the time of purchase.

been at Sainsbury's – the cheapest of the Big Four for the same items.

Over a year, that is an incredible saving of £1,130.48, which easily makes up for the drive to Costco, the time spent inside and the fee.

For me, the biggest downside is storing the excess.

With three children, my cupboards are already full to bursting, so the extra packs of crisps are, for now, on the side in my home office, while the surplus washing-up liquid and drinks are in the loft.

Shelling out for bulk goods upfront is also a factor – but once I get into the hang of budgeting, the savings will be worth it.

It is fair to say my first Costco trip was a positive and fascinating experience.

I'll definitely be heading back when current stocks run low.

such as solicitors and accountants. Some firms have set up access for employees. You can search for your company on the Costco website, or ask your HR department.

Current members can refer a friend, which will earn them a £10 voucher, but they still need to meet the membership criteria.

An executive membership is £84, but you also get two per cent cashback on purchases. With this, I would have earned £4.38 cashback on that single shop.

Even if I went once a month, that is more than £52.

Given the savings, I will earn my membership fee back with ease.

My weekly shop worked out at £21.74 less than it would have

# dear deidre



Edited by **SALLY LAND**

Team:  
JANE ALLTON  
HILARY FREEMAN  
KALLY LEWIS  
CATHERINE THOMAS  
KATE TAYLOR

No matter what the issue, I answer every single problem

## Fantasy crush has ended our affair

stories

deidre's photo casebook

LAURIE GETS BLINDSIDED: DAY 6



OH GOSH. THANK GOODNESS IT'S YOU

I'M REALLY SORRY, BUT THE LANDLORD IS DEMANDING AN EXTRA £100 THIS MONTH

I DON'T SUPPOSE I COULD BORROW IT?

OF COURSE. NO PROBLEM



I KNEW YOU'D BE AMAZING IN BED

YOU'RE ALL I'VE BEEN ABLE TO THINK ABOUT

WHAT WOULD I DO WITHOUT YOU?

SPEAKING OF WHICH, SORRY, BUT I'VE GOT TO DASH

Clothes by boohoo and boohooMAN

CONTINUES TOMORROW

Dear Deidre

**SLEEPING with my long-term crush should have been such a great experience, but it has messed up my life.**

The problem is that we are both married. Now she's ended it, and try as I might, I can't get over her.

We're in our late thirties and have known each other since we were students.

I was madly in lust with her back then, and we did once kiss at a gig. But we never got together properly. We graduated, moved to different cities and both got married. I never forgot about her. She was "the one who got away".

Six months ago, we reconnected at a mutual friend's party and I found her as gorgeous as ever. Drunkenly, I confessed that

HERE TO HELP YOU



IF YOU are worried about anything please get in touch with my team of counsellors and we will do our best to help you. Every email receives a personal response.

deardeidre@the-sun.co.uk

I'd had a crush on her since she was 19. She said she'd always liked me too. But, as we were both married, nothing could ever happen.

We started messaging each

other. And over the following weeks, we grew closer and closer. It was an emotional affair before it became a physical one.

One night, she told me her husband was going away for the weekend.

We both knew why she was telling me.

The next night, I made up a lie, went over to hers for dinner and we ended up having the best sex of my life.

After that, we had a full-blown affair, meeting whenever we could. We even confessed our love to each other.

I thought it was just a matter of time before we'd leave our respective spouses.

But a month ago, everything changed.

She suddenly went cold on me and stopped messaging.

When I pushed for answers she said she didn't love me "like that" any more. She was anxious her husband would find out

and she needed to repair her marriage.

She's blocked me and I don't know what to do. I don't think I can live without her.

I don't understand how she could change her feelings for me overnight.

Sometimes, I wonder if any of it was real to her.

**DEIDRE SAYS:** The sudden end of a relationship is like a death, and you are grieving. Your affair was the fulfilment of a fantasy, which made it particularly intense.

I'm sure her feelings for you were real. But she clearly still cares about her husband, and in the end the guilt and fear of being discovered were too strong for her to ignore.

Her blocking you is for the best. Time will make this easier. Reading my support pack, *Moving On*, should help too.

Now you need to decide if you do still love your wife and want to work on your own marriage.

Dear Deidre

I CAN'T help feeling resentful of my brother, who has been taking advantage of our mother for years.

I've always stood on my own two feet, yet I'm the one who always loses out. I'm a 51-year-old man. My brother is 57, and our mum is 85.

I left home at 18, paid off my own debts, and through years of being careful on an average salary, I managed to pay off a £300,000 mortgage.

I've always lived alone and never had financial help.

Meanwhile, my older brother has never moved out of our mum's house, never paid rent, and hasn't worked in more than 20 years.

He even refuses to claim benefits as it's "too humiliating", so my mum has supported him.

He's capable of working, he just doesn't want to.

Mum has recently become more vulnerable after illness. Her home is worth around £900,000.

When she dies, I can't see him ever leaving or agreeing to sell. But a fraction of that money would ensure I don't have to work until I drop.

It feels like he'll get rewarded for sponging, while I am punished.

**DEIDRE SAYS:** You've worked hard to be self-reliant, so it's natural to feel resentful of your brother, who hasn't lifted a finger.

But there's no guarantee he'll get your mum's home. If she hasn't made a will, intestacy rules may apply, and he may not have the right to stay in the house indefinitely. Talk to [citizensadvice.org.uk](http://citizensadvice.org.uk) for legal guidance, and contact [familylives.org.uk](http://familylives.org.uk) for emotional support.

And talk to your mum about how you feel. She probably appreciates you more than you realise.

THANK YOU FOR...

HELPING ME DEAL WITH BULLY BOSS

Dear Deidre

WHEN my manager called me a derogatory name and I reported her to HR, I was desperately worried about how we'd keep on working together.

She claimed it was a joke but it was part of a pattern of behaviour that left me feeling bullied.

If I asked for annual leave she would shout at me, and every time I came back from lunch she would look at her watch – even though I only took 20 minutes.

I'm a 45-year-old woman and she is in her late thirties. You confirmed that she was bullying me and reassured me I did the right thing in reporting her.

You helped me to feel more confident and to accept I wasn't to blame. I

took your advice to keep a detailed diary of any inappropriate comments or unprofessional behaviour so I would then have a clear record if further issues arise.

I also really appreciated you directing me to [acas.org.uk](http://acas.org.uk) (0300 123 1100). Knowing there is free, confidential and independent advice available on workplace bullying was so reassuring.

In addition, you sent me your Standing Up For Yourself support pack, which helped me to be assertive. I feel empowered and better able to handle the situation now. Thank you.

**DEIDRE SAYS:** I hope your manager will now realise that she has to treat you with respect as a co-worker and that you won't stand for any further derogatory comments.

BOYFRIEND'S CREEPY PORN LESSONS WITH HIS FATHER

Dear Deidre

MY partner's dad showed him porn to teach him about sex, and now I'm worried he's been sharing intimate details of our love life with him.

He thinks it's normal that his dad has always been open about sex, but I find it weird and creepy.

My boyfriend and I have been together for two years, and are in our late twenties. Recently, he admitted that when he was a teenager, his dad had shown him porn movies so he knew what to do with women.

I find this boundary-crossing deeply inappropriate. To me, openness means discussing consent and contraception, not watching adult films together.

What's more, my partner told me that before we met, he told his father about an ex-girlfriend who accused him of flirting.

His father's immediate advice was to "get rid of her".

Now, I can't stop feeling anxious about this. If they are this open, has my partner shared details of our relationship and sex

life with his dad? I'm starting to feel like there's a third person in our bedroom, and it's giving me the ick.

While it's nice that he's close to his dad, I don't want him discussing what we get up to in bed, or any personal issues we have.

I love him, but I didn't sign up for a relationship with his dad.

**DEIDRE SAYS:** Some families are very open about sex and relationships. It sounds like your partner and his dad have no boundaries at all.

On the one hand, it's good that – unlike many men – your partner doesn't find it hard to talk about personal issues. But on the other hand, it's understandable that you want to keep your relationship private.

Tell him how you feel. Explain that you think it's inappropriate to share everything with his dad, and ask that he keeps your intimate secrets to himself.

TEENAGE TROUBLES

Dear Deidre

THE fear that the girl I've fallen for might cheat on me is stopping me asking her out.

My ex slept with another guy while we were together, and broke my heart.

Now I'm too scared to trust again. I'm 19 and a student. The girl I like is the same age.

I can't stop thinking about her, and whenever she messages me my mood lifts.

**DEIDRE SAYS:** Being cheated on is a horrible betrayal, which can make it difficult to open yourself up to someone again.

But not all girls are the same. Although there are no guarantees in love, if you don't take a risk, you'll never know what might be – and regret it. If you really like this girl, take it slowly. Build a friendship before you get involved romantically, so you feel you can trust her.

My support pack, *Learning To Love*, should help.

hot topic

SOME people self-harm as a way of coping with intense emotional pain when feelings become overwhelming or hard to express.

They may feel a sense of control, a release of tension, or a way of managing distressing thoughts, but it can become a harmful cycle.

It takes many forms, including cutting, burning, scratching or hitting. If you are struggling or worried about someone, my support pack *Understanding Self-Harm* can help.

GET IN TOUCH

If you are worried about something, my team is here to help. Please contact and follow us. Online: [thesun.co.uk/deidre](http://thesun.co.uk/deidre) Instagram: @dear.deidre Facebook: @DearDeidreOfficial X: @DearDeidre Post: Dear Deidre, The Sun, 1 London Bridge Street, London, SE1 9GF

# Sun puzzles

**3 PAGES**

start here

double **Sun DOKU**

**TEASER** Call 0905 757 0156 for clues or solutions  
Cost £1 per minute plus network access charge

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

**TOUGHIE** Call 0905 757 0152 for clues or solutions  
Cost £1 per minute plus network access charge

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

## YESTERDAY'S SOLUTIONS

**EASY**

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

**TEASER**

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

**TOUGHIE**

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

Calls cost £1 per min from landlines plus network rates

## SUNDIAL



See how many words of four or more letters you can "dial" using the one at the centre in each word.

You can make at least one word using all of them.

Don't use the letters more than once in any word.

No proper names or plurals ending in 's'. Words from Collins Concise Dictionary.

BRILLIANT: 28  
EXCELLENT: 24 GOOD: 17  
GREAT SCORE FOR KIDS: 13

**YESTERDAY:** Fining, finito, fino, font, ginny, info, ingot, into, nifty, notify, noting, tigon, ting, tinny, tiny, toning, toying, tying, yogini, NOTIFYING.

Check today's answers by calling 0905 757 0155 before midnight.  
Calls cost £1 per minute plus your phone company's network access charge.

## WIN! £50 WORDSEARCH

The 16 items listed below are all to do with olives, but which one isn't in the grid?

H	U	E	M	B	G	Y	K	X	S	BLACK
S	O	H	E	R	U	A	M	S	O	EXTRA-VIRGIN
T	C	A	E	R	N	S	Y	N	O	GREECE
A	A	E	B	R	T	L	H	I	U	GREEN
N	C	P	B	L	A	C	K	G	S	GROVE
E	O	A	E	T	Y	C	D	R	S	ITALY
L	L	L	I	N	R	S	M	I	T	KALAMATA
I	N	I	T	R	A	M	N	V	U	MARTINI
E	A	S	O	L	D	D	O	A	F	OLIVE OIL
T	S	R	A	E	G	L	E	R	F	PICHOLINE
F	P	D	T	I	V	R	E	T	E	PITTED
H	A	T	U	A	N	I	E	X	D	SALAD
S	I	E	V	O	R	G	L	E	E	SPAIN
P	N	O	C	D	R	T	I	O	N	STUFFED
A	P	I	C	H	O	L	I	N	E	TAPENADE
										TREE

How to enter for a chance at the £50 prize: See puzzle page 3

## MINDBENDER

What words are spelled out if you replace the names of the chemical elements with their chemical symbols?

- [a] Iron, Astatine, Hydrogen, Erbium  
[b] Fluorine, Oxygen, Rhenium, Protactinium, Tungsten  
[c] Scandium, Holmium, Lanthanum, Sulphur, Titanium, Carbon

Answer tomorrow.

## PATHFINDER

Beginning with the letter I in the shaded square below, follow a continuous path in the grid to find 20 items to do with jelly. The trail passes through each and every letter once, and may twist up, down or sideways, but never diagonally.

C	U	S	T	R	I	E	A	G	A	R
E	B	E	W	S	F	L	H	S	E	N
G	N	E	E	G	P	A	T	Y	I	
R	A	T	F	N	S	E	A	R	P	T
O	D	I	R	I	T	T	P	T	O	A
E	G	L	E	P	A	C	K	E	T	L
O	B	B	E	B	A	R	I	L	S	E
W	D	L	R	P	S	E	M	S	S	G
A	M	U	R	Y	W	B	D	E	E	N
E	M	O	I	S	A	E	Y	T	R	O
R	C	E	C	T	R	R	L	E	M	

- AGAR  
CUBES  
DESSERT  
FRIDGE  
GELATINE  
ICE CREAM  
LEMON  
LIME  
MOULD  
ORANGE  
PACKET  
PARTY  
POTS  
RASPBERRY  
SETTING  
SHAPE  
STRAWBERRY  
SWEET  
TRIFLE  
WOBBLE

## ANAGRAM

Correctly solve the anagrams (there may be more than one option) to fill in the grid and complete the crossword.

1		2		
			3	
4				
		5		

**ACROSS**  
1 SPAR  
4 GREET  
5 DO WE

**DOWN**  
1 RUDE  
2 WREST  
3 DUST

Calls for extra clues and answers last no longer than two minutes (Sundial answers may vary). Helpline: 0333 202 3390 (9am-5.30pm). Service provider: Spoke, W1T 4HD

ALL YOUR FAVOURITE BRAIN-TEASERS PLUS  
**£200 CASH TO BE WON!**

# the BIG quizword

### ACROSS

- Formal decision agreed at a meeting (10)
- Highest Scottish mountain (3,5)
- 'Big Apple' borough (5)
- Hot-tempered tennis star turned commentator (7)
- Christmas visitor (5)
- Surname of Sex And The City actress Kim (8)
- Ethiopian capital city (5,5)
- Author of A La Recherche Du Temps Perdu (6)
- Nickname of U2's lead guitarist (3,4)
- Variety of apple originating from Japan (4)
- First name of Runaway singer Mr Shannon (3)
- Charity concerned with the welfare of older people (3,2)
- Lake known in German as Bodensee (9)
- One of three components of the mind, according to Freud (3)
- City on Chesapeake Bay (9)
- La Traviata, eg (5)
- Former governing body of a summer sport (inits)(3)
- Cluedo murder weapon (4)
- Horse race held every year at Doncaster (2,5)
- Surname of the actor who portrayed Basil Fawlty (6)
- Australian kingfisher (10)
- Austrian city with an annual music festival (8)
- Inhabitants of North Africa and the Middle East (5)
- Mozart's 'middle name' (7)
- Bart, Lisa and Maggie's mother in The Simpsons (5)
- Range of mountains in Northern Ireland (8)
- Resident of Ho Chi Minh City, perhaps (10)

### DOWN

- Bone from which Eve was supposedly created (3)
- Composer of Maple Leaf Rag (5,6)
- Egyptian city called Thebes in ancient times (5)
- London Tube station between Embankment and Blackfriars (6)
- Poet whose Anthem For Doomed Youth was published in 1920 (4)
- First name of vocalist Ms Sandé (5)
- Makers of the Micra (6)
- SW Pacific country consisting of a group of islands (7)
- Chinese spice (4,5)
- The Hangover actor (7,6)
- Little boy with a bow and arrow, symbol of love (5)
- Pertaining to the Bard (13)
- Soldier in a series of military novels by Bernard Cornwell (6)
- India's holy river (6)
- Grape grown in the Bordeaux region (6)
- State capital of Minnesota (2,4)
- French military moniker? (3,2,6)
- First language of most of Stellenbosch's residents (9)
- Surname of Deputy Prime Minister of the UK from 2010 to 2015 (5)
- Hydrocarbon gas (7)
- Title given to Roman emperors (6)
- Short-legged breed of hunting dog with long ears (6)
- First name of retired sprinter Bolt (5)
- Dancing fitness method (5)
- Actress Ms Hatcher (4)
- Devon river (3)

### ANSWERS TOMORROW

Check the answers before midnight: Call 0905 757 0158 for Across and 0905 757 0159 for Down. Calls cost £1 per minute plus your phone company's network access charge.

1			3		4		5		6	7		8		9		10
									11							
12					13							14				
15									16							
									17							
18			19		20					21			22			
					23								24			
25															28	
					26					27						
									29							
30										31					32	33
34	35				36							37				
					38							39				
40										42			43			
										44						
45									46					47		48
49																

Buy the latest Sun Puzzle Books, including crosswords, wordsearches & sudoku, for as little as £4.99 from harpercollins.co.uk or phone 0141 306 3100.



# CASH TO BE WON!

## ARROWWORD

Complete the puzzle and rearrange the letters in the shaded squares to spell out a Hollywood actress (5,5).

**WIN!**  
**£50**

**Clues:**  
 Squall, Bill of fare, Quant, Designer, Archimedes' cry, Greek holiday island, Children's board game, Faithfully, Flower part, Reddish-brown colour, Dot of land, Lima's country, Suriname of the pictured actor, Pairs, Eye sore, Popular gift vouchers (4,5), Elderly, Barrel, Golfer's starting point, Police officer, de cologne, perfume, Found a chair, Doze, Alias (inits), Head sculpture, Outer limit.

## Solutions

**Minidoku**  
 1 2 3 4  
 3 4 1 2  
 2 1 4 3  
 4 3 2 1

**Piceworks**  
 1. Raging Bull  
 2. Taxi Driver  
 3. Killers Of The Flower Moon  
 4. The Deer Hunter  
 5. Meet The Fockers  
 6. The Freshman

**Kriss Cross**  
 1. Eva Price  
 2. Anne Walker  
 3. Vera Duckworth  
 4. Shirley Linnin  
 5. Bet Gitty  
 6. Liz McDonald

**Unscramble**  
 1. Raging Bull  
 2. Taxi Driver  
 3. Killers Of The Flower Moon  
 4. The Deer Hunter  
 5. Meet The Fockers  
 6. The Freshman

**Brickwork**  
 1. Comparer  
 2. Scamper  
 3. Cramps  
 4. Pans  
 5. Amps  
 6. Map  
 7. Lamp  
 8. Palms  
 9. Sample  
 10. Impales  
 11. Miplace

**Mini Code**  
 P A S S  
 S C O P E  
 T O P E N

**Sugnum**  
 1. Eva Price  
 2. Anne Walker  
 3. Vera Duckworth  
 4. Shirley Linnin  
 5. Bet Gitty  
 6. Liz McDonald

**Initials**  
 1. Raging Bull  
 2. Taxi Driver  
 3. Killers Of The Flower Moon  
 4. The Deer Hunter  
 5. Meet The Fockers  
 6. The Freshman

**Sunraser**  
 1. Raging Bull  
 2. Taxi Driver  
 3. Killers Of The Flower Moon  
 4. The Deer Hunter  
 5. Meet The Fockers  
 6. The Freshman

**Pathfinder**  
 1. Raging Bull  
 2. Taxi Driver  
 3. Killers Of The Flower Moon  
 4. The Deer Hunter  
 5. Meet The Fockers  
 6. The Freshman

**Sejuta**  
 PAGE 2  
 Top line 431  
 Middle 782  
 Bottom 596

**Anagram**  
 ACROSS: 1. Rasp  
 4. Egret  
 5. Owed  
 DOWN: 1. Rued  
 2. Stew  
 3. Stud

## KRISS KROSS

Fit the words into the grid.

**3 letters**  
 AIL  
 AIR  
 HIS  
 ORE  
 URN

**4 letters**  
 CELL  
 PUFF

**5 letters**  
 ESSAY  
 FORGO  
 KEBAB  
 MAGIC  
 MOCHA  
 RINSE  
 SHANK  
 TORSO

**6 letters**  
 HEARTY  
 SHABBY

**7 letters**  
 AEROBIC  
 DRAINER  
 GRANDMA  
 RANCHER

**9 letters**  
 AFTERCARE  
 BODYBOARD

## MINIDOKU

Using only the numbers 1-4, fill the empty spaces so every row, column and smaller 2x2 grid contains the numbers 1 to 4.

2			4
	3	2	
		4	
3			2

	1	4	
4			2
	3		1
	2	3	

## TV Mag solutions

**Sudoku**  
 5 1 6 | 3 2 4  
 3 4 2 | 1 8 5  
 8 9 3 | 5 1 7  
 2 6 5 | 4 3 1  
 4 3 1 | 8 5 2

**Letter Box**  
 E T C H  
 A R E A  
 S I L L  
 T O L L

**Word Ladder**  
 PAST, LAST,  
 LIST, LIFT,  
 LIFE.

**Add It Up**  
 94

**Sakuro**  
 165  
 298  
 437

**Set Square Futoshiki**  
 5 - 4 + 7  
 x x x + +  
 3 + 2 + 9  
 + + + + +  
 8 ÷ 1 + 6

## Prize solutions

From last Saturday  
**Crossword**  
 AMELIA  
 DIMOLDENBERG

**Wordsearch**  
 CAMPER VAN

**Arrowword**  
 SHAUN EVANS



# Mystic Meg

with **MAGGIE INNES**

**ARIES** March 21 – April 20

You're thoughtful and full of empathy as Mercury helps you dig deeper into what makes people tick. But you also have get-it-done Aries energy that makes lasting impact at home or when you are introduced to new people. If you're single, this can include a cool passer-by who turns into a hot date. Luck circles "X".

**TAURUS** April 21 – May 21

This can be a strong, sassy Taurus Saturday as you assess what truly matters to you, so you can make smart cash choices and set new standards at home. If you start the day single, prepare for whirlwind romance with a calm, reliable core. Lucky numbers can link to your two best pals at school or in your first job.

**GEMINI** May 22 – June 21

There's unexpected adventure in your chart as the moon and Pluto connect, so make this your day to stop thinking about action and start getting things done. Mars is your networking guide to open up unusual first-time bonds that intrigue. New passion could begin where screen time reflects part of your past.

**CANCER** June 22 – July 22

This is a day to dream as Mars gets settled in your zone of highest hopes, and you start to visualise the future you could create. If lasting romance is on your to-do list, do give an outwardly sociable, but secretly shy, Pisces a second chance. In love? Resist comparing relationships as every one is unique.

**LEO** July 23 – August 23

Deals that have been delayed can start to settle, opening up rich rewards. But this is also your day to draw a firm line, especially in relationships, and limit what chances you offer or accept. Single? When you notice a distinctive fragrance, your heart can be instantly intrigued. Luck lines up "W" names.

**VIRGO** August 24 – September 22

A moon and Mars mix gives you an active transformer mind that can look at spaces, wardrobes or events and come up with smart, creative solutions to problems. So do share your thoughts as people want to hear them. In love, Venus inspires a sexy, adventurous day for love at first sight or a physical passion reboot.

**LIBRA** September 23 – October 23

Your sociable, flexible chart makes it easier to stay in control around difficult people and get challenging tasks moving forward at last. If a love or loyalty promise has been broken, you know what to do. In cash terms, instead of spending more on less, focus on what you have that represents special value to you.

**SCORPIO** October 24 – November 22

Your chart is proactive today, as Mars and Saturn both fire up your fitness self. So finding an activity you adore should be top priority. Next is pacing yourself, in love and in life. You really can have it all, but take it slow. Single? When an "almost" date from the past reappears, try not to let pride get in passion's way.

**SAGITTARIUS** November 23 – December 21

The moon and Saturn make sweet music together and you can join in all day. Let minor niggles go as you focus on what you can change and leave others to make their own choices. When a super-creative Uranus position spotlights big ideas, don't be shy. You are very special and the world deserves to know it.

**CAPRICORN** December 22 – January 20

Your loyalty levels are baked in, and everyone knows they can rely on you – except, perhaps, yourself. Today you can become your own best friend, believe in yourself and highlight your achievements. This can deepen romance, as a partner falls for you all over again. Single? A long-distance message merits a reply.

**AQUARIUS** January 21 – February 18

The family-linked area of your chart reveals you are ready to gather the right people round for the right celebration. Plus a property or family position you have admired from a distance can come much closer. Yes, friendship secrets may come out, but then fizzle out, in a moon and Saturn pact. So don't panic.

**PISCES** February 19 – March 20

Light filters into all the secret corners of your chart via the moon and Pluto. This can raise questions in a love bond. Deal with them by promising you'll keep talking, instead of turning or running away. If you start the day seeking new passion, you could find it as 1970s music is playing. Luck links to your shoe size.

## ENTER NOW TO WIN £200 CASH!

**SCAN THIS CODE**

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You have two ways to enter:  
**GO ONLINE to thesun.co.uk/prizepuzzles** (or just scan the code on your phone), register if you haven't already, then fill in the entry form.  
**BY POST** Fill in the form on the right and send it to the address at the bottom.  
**YOU** can enter for one, two or all three puzzles.

**TO ENTER**

Crossword answer \_\_\_\_\_  
 Wordsearch answer \_\_\_\_\_  
 Arrowword answer \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address \_\_\_\_\_  
 Postcode \_\_\_\_\_  
 Email \_\_\_\_\_  
 Phone \_\_\_\_\_

**POST TO:** The Sun Puzzles Competition, PO Box 3190, Colchester, Essex CO2 8GP

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Text a psychic. Just text **MEG** then a space and your question to **60016**

## thesun.co.uk/PRIZEPUZZLES

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# Sun money

## PEEKEMON UNITE UNTIE

IT may be worth having a look in your loft for retro **POKEMON** cards as some have fetched a fortune at an auction. The sale raised around £1.5million thanks to a global bidding war. One card, a PSA 9 Pikachu Illustrator from 1998 went for £832,000. The auction house, Stanley Gibbons Baldwin's in London, said it is "one of the rarest trading cards on the planet" — one of just 39. Others to sell included a PSA 10 1st Edition Base Set Charizard at £442,800.

BRITAIN'S biggest student landlord is to sell off more halls as students choose to live at home to save cash. **UNITE GROUP** said yesterday it aims to offload £300-400million of its portfolio to focus on the top universities, where demand is strongest. The FTSE 250 firm said it had reservations for 74 per cent of its 72,000 rooms before the 2026-27 academic year, compared with 76 per cent last year. Demand had fallen from both overseas and British students, it added.

# GEN ZERO DEPOSITS

### Surge in 100% mortgages

**SALES of zero-deposit mortgages surged to a five-year high last year as aspiring homeowners struggled to save.**

Lenders agreed 574 of the 100 per cent loans in the first nine months, up from 402 for the same period in 2024, says data from the Financial Conduct Authority watchdog.

These mortgages, normally aimed at first-time buyers, do not require a deposit but tend to come with a higher interest rate.

They could cost buyers an additional £30,000 compared to a mortgage with a five per cent deposit, said **COMPARE THE MARKET** and **L&C**, which used a Freedom of Information request to obtain the figures.

Charlie Evans, of Com-

By **BLATHNAID CORLESS**

pare the Market, said the rise in zero-deposit mortgages indicated that rents, bills and everyday expenses were making saving hard.

He said: "First-time buyers have been turning to 100 per cent mortgage loans to get on the property ladder." He said demand last year was strongest in the North West and South West.

David Hollingworth, of mortgage broker L&C, said: "If it is possible to get a deposit together, it will help to broaden the mortgage choices and improve the interest rates on offer.

"Typically, the bigger the deposit, the better the rates will be, which will make monthly payments more affordable."

The comeback of zero-deposit mortgages follows a dip in popularity in 2022 after then-PM Liz Truss's mini-Budget.



Tricky... buying home



### SHARE PRICES

21st Cent Fox Inc A4713%	-	Next	13445	+ 10
21st Cent Fox Inc B4355%	-	Pennon	5663	+ 1 1/2
Aberdeen Group* 201	+ 2 1/2	Persimmon	7152	-
Anglo American* 3501%	+ 43 1/2	Prudential*	1144	- 6 1/4
Asco Br Foods... 1915	+ 16 1/2	Rank Group	91	+ 0 1/4
AstraZeneca... 15242	- 34	Reckitt Benckiser*	5172	- 8
Aviva* 627	- 3 1/2	Rentokil*	496	+ 0 1/2
BAE Systems 2205	- 64	Rightmove	2750	- 7 1/4
BP 572%	- 8	Rio Tinto Ltd*	9009	- 30
BT Group 215%	- 0 1/4	SSE	351	- 1 1/4
Barclays 441	+ 7 1/2	Rolls-Royce	1264	- 15 1/4
Barratt Redrow* 263%	+ 1	Sainsbury's	381	- 1 1/4
Bco Santander SA 915%	+ 15	Severn Trent	3259	+ 7
British American Tob 4343	+ 7	Shell	3412	- 36 1/2
British Land 627%	- 2 1/2	Smith&New*	1249	+ 22
Bunzl 244	+ 10	Smiths News	69	+ 1 1/4
Burberry Group 1158%	+ 25	Standard Chartered*	1735	+ 26 1/4
Carnival 2062	+ 26	Tesco	485	- 6
Compass 2030	- 33 1/2	The Sage Grp	820	- 15 3/4
Cunard 135%	+ 1 1/2	Unilever*	4313	+ 5
Diageo 1448%	+ 1 1/4	United Utilities	1395	- 0 1/2
Drax Group 883%	- 14 1/2	Vanquis Banking Gp120	0	- 0 1/4
Experian 2575	- 15 1/2	Vesuvius	431	+ 5 1/4
Ferguson Ent* 8390	+ 240	Vodafone	117	- 0 1/4
FirstGroup 173%	- 0 1/2	WH Smith	610	+ 7
Fraser's Group 673	+ 0 1/2	* = ex dividend		
GSK* 2175	+ 8			

## AO POWERS UP PROFIT

ELECTRONICS retailer **AO WORLD** has reassured investors over rising energy costs, as its sales grew despite pressure on household finances. The online-only white goods maker told shareholders that profits are on track to be at the "top end" of guidance of between £45million and £50million, and are expected to have grown around 11 per cent over the year to March 31. It also said it has hedging arrangements in place that will cover around 80 per cent of forecast fuel usage and 100 per cent of electricity for the financial year, as fuel costs continue to rise due to the Middle East conflict. It comes amid a backdrop of wider concerns from firms over the impact on energy costs.



**BARCLAYS** will open more branches and bring back bank managers, its boss has promised. Chief executive officer **Vim Maru** said he does not want customers to get "stuck in some chatbot" when they need help. Since 2018, more than 800 Barclays branches have closed, leaving 206 still open around the UK,

## BARCLAYS BOOST WITH BRANCHES

according to the bank's latest annual report. Britain's main banks have shut thousands of branches in the last ten years, with many towns left with no banks. Mr Maru, who joined

us to differentiate in front of our customers. "Of course we're going to be great in digital — but we're going to be there for you when you need some help and support. "You're not going to be stuck in some chatbot trying to get out of the loop and trying to speak to someone."

**BLATHNAID CORLESS**

## KAREN SAVES £1,000s

**Car & home insurance**  
**SAVED £201**

Legal & General TO Policy Expert TO AVIVA TO AVIVA (BETTER DEAL)

**Broadband**  
**SAVED £180**

BT TO 4thUtility

**Business bank account**  
**£100 cash**

NatWest TO mettle

By **ALLEY EINSTEIN**

### BILL increases can pile pressure on struggling household finances.

But you can cut costs even as providers try to increase them. Mum **Karen Simpson's** simple trick has slashed thousands of pounds off her bills. She's even saved enough for a family cruise on the Med.

All she does is unclick a tickbox or toggle off auto renewal on her account's digital dashboard. Household bills and insurance policies are normally set to auto-renew, but you can change it. "Unticking this option is an easy way to save thousands," says mum-of-two **Karen**, a tutoring business owner from Inverness. Here's how she used this trick and AI to save thousands of pounds...

### CAR, HOME & BUSINESS INSURANCE

**KAREN** started using her easy bill trick in February 2024, when she discovered renewing insurance for her Vauxhall Astra would cost an extra £56 a year.

Her insurer **Aviva** quoted £336 to renew, up from £280, with no reason for the hike.

She says: "I wasn't being treated like a loyal customer. I was being ripped off for a clean driving record."

She unclicked the auto-renew box at the bottom of her insurer's online dashboard and set to work hunting for a better deal.

Dreading the prospect of hours on comparison sites, she used AI to do the legwork, uploading her policy to ChatGPT and asking it to find insurance and ways to save more. **Karen** ended up with a quote for £279 from another provider, which saved £57.

She then used a ChatGPT-generated script to call her insurer and get them to match the lower quote. **Aviva** agreed.

She applied the same method to home insurance.

Legal and General's auto-renew quote came in at £480.

After trawling comparison sites and asking AI to check she'd found the best deal and strip unnecessary add-ons that were already covered elsewhere, she made some smart cuts.

She cancelled breakdown cover, saving £70 a year, as she already had cheaper RAC cover, and opted out of premium key replacement, saving £40, as basic cover was already included.

Other add-ons people often forget to cancel include misfuelling cover and child-seat replacement



when their children are older. She found a new policy for £394 with Policy Expert, £86 cheaper than the renewal quote.

On family travel insurance she cut a further £40 by reducing declared valuables and adjusting the excess.

Her business insurance also dropped from £322 to £264 after ChatGPT confirmed she had more than double the recommended industry standard level of cover.

### BROADBAND

WHEN the family's broadband deal was about to end, the provider's digital dashboard had a button encouraging **Karen** to "upgrade". She ignored it. Instead, she uploaded her current bills to

AI and used comparison sites to find a better deal.

She switched from Vodafone at £40 a month to 4th Utility and now pays £24.99 — a saving of just over £15 a month. As a result, the annual bill fell from £480 to £300.

### MORTGAGE DEAL

**KAREN** secured a much better mortgage rate on the family's five-bedroom home.

When her fixed rate with First Direct was coming to an end, the lender's digital dashboard prompted her to click and review their new offer of 5.6 per cent. She used it as a trigger to search the wider market instead.

If you are on a fixed mortgage deal, lenders often let you arrange

**money talks**

By **Lucy Andrews**

I'M fed up with feeling skint. A pint at the pub costs a small fortune, my rent looks like someone added a zero by mistake, and a chocolate bar will leave me with little spare change from a fiver. Two years ago I started investing. I don't have a lot to spare, so I've followed the drip

## DRIP-FEEDING A

feed method — and I could bank £15,000 by my 50s. Drip feeding means investing small amounts regularly to grow your pot over time. It's not only affordable but experts say it is a smart move too. Small, regular amounts mean you better ride out market bumps, and you shouldn't touch investments for at least five years to allow recovery if things dip. You are also not locking away all your cash in one go. I started with a stocks and shares Isa,

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# on Saturday

Got a money query or a problem? We can advise, help fight for your cash back or challenge the way firms operate. Just email us.

**money@the-sun.co.uk**

Or write to Sun Money, News UK, 1 London Bridge Street, London, SE1 9GF



**MORE** than 3,000 customers at Halifax, Lloyds and Bank of Scotland have received compensation averaging £38 after their personal data was exposed in an IT glitch last month. Lloyds Banking Group, owner of the three brands, said up to 447,936 customers saw other people's transactions or had their

## £38 COMPO AFTER LLOYDS DATA FLAW

data shared with others due to IT problems on March 12. If you were affected you can contact your bank directly to apply for compensation. Lloyds confirmed that

no customers have so far been identified as suffering financial losses due to the glitch, which it said was caused by a "software defect" from an overnight IT update. Dame Meg Hillier, chair

of Parliament's Treasury Select Committee, said it "brings into focus that there is a trade-off" when using online banking. A Lloyds spokesman said: "The issue was quickly identified and resolved, and we've contacted customers whose transactions may have been visible for that short time."  
**OLIVIA TOMLINSON**

## WITH HER A.I.-DRIVEN SWITCHING



**QUIDS IN . . .**  
Karen was fired of being 'ripped off'

# I'm a renew woman

Mortgage  
**SAVED £5,100**



Energy bills  
**SAVED £219**



a new deal up to six months before your fix ends. ChatGPT reminded Karen she could lock in a rate early – meaning if rates rise before her deal finalises, she is protected. "It's future-proofing the offer," she says. If rates fall, you can switch to a cheaper one before formalising. In December she secured 3.74 per cent on a five-year fix with Lloyds. Three months later, rates rose to nearly six per cent. The swap saved her more than £5,100 a year in interest repayments.

uploaded three months of bills to ChatGPT and was shocked to discover she was overpaying by 27p per kilowatt during peak times, paying 34p per kilowatt, or around 35p to run the washing machine and 40p for the dishwasher. She switched providers from Shell to Octopus, which offered an overnight deal at 7p per kilowatt, setting her machines to run after midnight. Now she pays 8p per dishwasher load and 7p for the washing machine – a saving of around 60p a day, or £219 a year.

Mettle, pocketed £100, and got automated tax savings and invoice matching as a bonus.

She now keeps AI-generated scripts for negotiating insurance, broadband, phone, gas and electricity in a folder, and gets a weekly AI round-up of best deals. She has even asked ChatGPT for help finding the auto-renew button to toggle off.

It is important to manually check against any AI tool, and get any changes negotiated on the phone emailed before the call ends. She says: "When I started I spent an hour finding the right prompts and turning off auto-renew. That one simple change saves us more than £6,000 a year."

**ENERGY BILLS**  
WHEN a fixed energy deal ends, suppliers normally move you to their standard variable tariff which means your costs can vary. Karen

**BANK ACCOUNT**  
KAREN also switched her business bank account when an introductory deal was ending. She moved from NatWest to

## LITTLE TO MAKE BIG GAINS

which lets you keep any profit tax-free. My platform of choice was Dodi by AJ Bell – a super-simple app with a low fee of 0.15 per cent, recommended by consumer site Which? You can save up to £20,000 a year tax-free, but I

set up a direct debit for just £25 a month. As a risk-averse first-timer, I invested in a fund – a shopping basket of shares, bonds and gold. I chose the Vanguard FTSE Global All Cap Index, which Fidelity's Ed Monk calls the "ultimate

one-stop shop". It's a tracker fund investing in thousands of companies globally, with low fees of 0.23 per cent. Since starting, I've put in £555 and my pot has grown to £624.75 – a gain of £69.75. In a savings account at four per cent, I'd have earned

£23. Investing £25 a month for 20 years could leave me with £12,073 at five per cent growth, or £15,577 at seven per cent. Bump that to £50 a month and those figures rise to £22,489 or £28,736. My advice? Give it a go. Only invest what you can afford to lose – £25 a month is the price of a takeaway. I'm willing to sacrifice my Nando's to get richer.

## THIS WEEK...IF YOU DO JUST ONE THING

### CHECK YOUR TAX CODE

MILLIONS of workers expecting hundreds of pounds back from the tax-man will get letters in the coming days that signal whether a rebate is due. At the end of the tax year on April 5, HMRC sends out letters to let people know if they have overpaid or underpaid tax – known as a P800 letter. Even if you do not receive a P800, you should check your code to make sure you are being taxed correctly. There is a time limit of four years to reclaim overpaid tax, so contact HMRC if you think you could be owed money.



Codes show the level of tax you pay – you can find it on your payslip. If your code is wrong, you could pay the wrong amount of tax. There are different reasons for an incorrect tax code, and often it is not updated after a job or salary change. If you think you have the wrong tax code, call HMRC on 0300 200 3300. Or write to Pay As You Earn and Self Assessment, HM Revenue and Customs, BX9 1AS. You can find a full list of codes and what they mean on gov.uk.  
**LANA CLEMENTS**

## Ask ADELE



Got a problem? She'll sort it  
ask-adele@thesun.co.uk

## HOLIDAY FEE UNFAIR AFTER BEREAVEMENT

**Q** EARLIER this year I booked an apartment in Costa Adeje, Tenerife, through booking.com. The apartment had a no cancellation policy but I didn't think that would be a problem, so I went ahead and paid the full balance of £1,712 (£1,490). But my father-in-law suddenly passed away, so I needed to cancel the trip. The owner of the apartment agreed to give me a full refund, which I have received. But booking.com has taken a £288 cancellation fee. Is there anything you can do to help?  
**SALLY ELLIOT** via email.

**A** I was so sorry to read that your father-in-law has passed away and you have my condolences. You understandably decided to cancel your trip. The refund from the owner was processed on January 6 and the money is back with you. Then a mysterious £288 cancellation fee was

taken from your bank account. I thought the payment was odd as booking.com usually allows you to ignore any non-refundable policies if a close family member passes away. So I contacted the

company and booking.com looked into your account. After speaking to you, it suspects that, amid a tricky situation, you searched for and dialled a number that you believed was for booking.com customer services.

Instead, you accidentally called a scammer, who took advantage of the situation to steal £288. As it wasn't responsible for the charge, booking.com understandably said it won't refund you. But you may be able to get your money back by contacting your bank. Rules introduced in October 2024 mean banks must give you a refund if a fraudster pretends to be a legit company and tricks you into sending money to them. You have 13 months from the date of the payment to get in touch with your bank after being scammed so there is time to act. If you want to contact a company's customer services you should be able to find it on any confirmations, the company's website, app or help centre. Never hand over sensitive information on the phone such as your financial details, personal data or authentication details.



## money maker

**EVENTS** executive Lucy Taylor couldn't believe it when a phone notification told her £10,000 had landed in her account. A year earlier, the 35-year-old from Buckinghamshire had signed up for Monzo's 1p Savings Challenge, hoping to put aside some cash for a holiday to Crete.



The challenge works by automatically moving a small amount from your account into a savings pot each day. You start with 1p on day one, 2p on day two, and so on throughout the year – saving £4.96 in January, rising to £108.50 in December, with a total of £667.95 by day 365. To start, search for the 1p Savings Challenge on the Monzo app and

charge leaving her just £400 a month after bills, made sure she never dipped into the pot. "I just freaked out," she said. "It actually took me quite a long time before I was capable of telling my friends and family." She has since put £4,000 into an emergency fund, booked a luxury treehouse stay and finally booked her Crete trip. \*Name has been changed.

Lucy, who had been struggling financially, with a £3,500-a-year service charge leaving her just £400 a month after bills, made sure she never dipped into the pot. "I just freaked out," she said. "It actually took me quite a long time before I was capable of telling my friends and family." She has since put £4,000 into an emergency fund, booked a luxury treehouse stay and finally booked her Crete trip. \*Name has been changed.

# Timeless Türkiye

## Aegean gems, from ancient temples and modern marinas to secluded bays and boutique bars

### HOW do you like the sound of a holiday on the "coast of happiness"?

Welcome to Türkiye's Aegean shoreline, which stretches from Canakkale to Fethiye, with picturesque fishing villages, marina towns and Unesco world heritage sites along the way.

Here you'll find a stunning setting where life is all about simple pleasures, and idyllic mornings often start with a hearty Turkish breakfast among olive groves and vineyards.

Lunch might very well involve a huge plate of seafood served at a waterfront restaurant, watching trawlers arrive with their catch.

And later, you could find yourself exploring the local history and culture, from strolling around Hellenistic and Roman ruins to sailing on a gulet – a traditional Turkish boat.

Here are some of the best things to enjoy on Türkiye's Aegean coast...

### MESMERISING MEZE

One of the best parts of any holiday is the food – and Turkish cuisine does not disappoint.

Menus are packed with the tastiest picks: think juicy tomatoes, olive oil-drizzled veg, wild herbs from the hills and fish so fresh it's on your plate within hours of being caught.

Professional chefs and home cooks alike follow the farm-to-table approach and use only the freshest ingredients.

Even more important is taking your time over a meal – easily done over meze.

Tables quickly fill with colourful small plates loaded with zingy ezme dip, smoky aubergine, stuffed vine leaves and more.

It's carefree, friendly and made for long lunches – the type of dining that's ideal for sharing, chatting and soaking up the views.

But the real star of the show is the seafood. Plump, juicy prawns, grilled sardines, delicate sea bream... Dishes that let their top-notch ingredients do the talking.

Pair it all with local wines from the charming island of Bozcaada to the celebrated wine region of Urla, where varieties like foca karası and bornova misketi shine – best enjoyed overlooking those turquoise waters.

### JOURNEY INTO HISTORY

There are fantastic museums to visit in the cities but one of the joys of the Aegean coast is that history is everywhere you look.



MANE FEATURE ...  
a model from the  
Brad Pitt film *Troy*  
is in Canakkale



Start planning your escape to  
Türkiye's coast of happiness

goturkiye.com



Just step outside and straight away you'll find yourself in a real-life open-air museum, where crumbling ruins sit right alongside everyday life.

In Ephesus, wander the colonnaded streets paved with centuries-old polished marble and marvel at the 2nd-century Library of Celsus.

One of the seven wonders of the world can also be found nearby: the ruins of the majestic Temple of Artemis.

To the north is Troy, which inspired Homer's *The Iliad* and was the site of the most famous – and dangerous – gift horse in history.

Add in ancient Ionian and Carian cities, and you've got a coastline where antiquity steals the spotlight and is brought to life in a way that's anything but dull.

### HOTELS AND HIDEAWAYS

Stays on the Aegean coast serve up huge variety, from laid-back boho hideaways to glitzy hotspots.

Down in Kabak, expect a chilled-out vibe, yoga decks and jaw-dropping views.

Turn west and the glamour is seriously dialled up. Bodrum and Marmaris bring sleek marinas, beach clubs and stylish hotels. Both Bodrum and Goccek are perfect for gulet cruising between hidden coves and crystal-clear bays.

For buzzy charm, Alacati in Cesme has cobbled streets, cute boutiques and chic cocktail bars.

Prefer it quieter? Turunc, Selimiye and Bozburun offer peaceful bays, serene stays and lantern-lit dinners by the sea.

### DAYS ON DECK

Nothing says holiday bliss quite like a Blue Voyage – a premier sailing trip for three to seven days, along one of the world's most dazzling coastlines.

A concept first coined back in the 1940s in Bodrum, the Blue Voyage is all about slow travel, sunshine and switching off completely.

Hop aboard a wooden gulet and glide peacefully between secluded bays, pine-covered headlands and archaeological wonders that rise straight out of the sea.

Days are blissfully free: swim in the turquoise waters, tuck into a lazy lunch on deck, then glide towards another secluded bay.

No alarms, no crowds – just a gentle sea breeze and endless postcard views.

Evenings are pure magic. Think candlelit dinners under the stars, fresh seafood and the soft rhythmic sound of waves rocking the boat.

It's scenic and seriously restorative – a holiday where doing very little is the whole point.

### SLOWLY MOLY

The concept of rushing doesn't exist here – warm welcomes, unhurried mornings and easygoing days are simply part of everyday life.

The Turquoise Coast boasts the country's highest concentration of Cittaslows – slow city destinations where life moves at a purposefully gentler, more mindful pace.

You can experience it for yourself on Gokceada,

named the world's first Cittaslow island. It is characterised by organic vineyards, family-run meyhanes (taverns) and breezy beaches that all but insist on an afternoon's lingering.

Further south, Akyaka – named among the "best tourism villages" in 2025 by the UN World Tourism Organisation – wins fans with hours spent at riverside cafes and drifting along the Azmak Creek, before seafood suppers by the water's edge.

In Seferihisar – Türkiye's first Cittaslow destination – discover markets that overflow with seasonal produce, where locals still stop for tea and a chat.

Nearby, Sigacak features bougainvillea-covered houses and cosy harbour restaurants in which to toast a memorable holiday.



STONE COLD CLASSICS ...  
Bodrum Castle and  
Pergamon's Temple of Trajan

**Sun** AWARD-WINNING **travel**  
 Edited by **LISA MINOT**



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**2**  
**MORE PAGES**

**UNITED AIRLINES** has announced it will be increasing its luggage fees, as a result of the ongoing fuel crisis.

The conflict in the Middle East has affected the cost of jet fuel, meaning airlines have been looking at ways to offset this.

United Airlines has become the second airline to

consequently adjust luggage fees, after JetBlue took similar action last month.

The airline said: "United is raising first and second-checked bag fees by \$10 for customers travelling in the US, Mexico, Canada and Latin America, beginning with tickets purchased from Friday, April 3."



**ONE** of New York's newest and most exciting attractions is getting an immersive makeover just in time for summer.

Edge at Hudson Yards is the highest outdoor sky deck in the western hemisphere, sitting 100 storeys, or 1,100ft, above street level and offering fantastic views of Manhattan and beyond.

The attraction will feature a number of new multisensory

experiences, including a crystal cave where colours are altered by the sun. Additions to the space include a Pulse installation, incorporating light, sound and colour, as well as an Infinite City segment inspired by New York's skyscrapers.

The multimillion-dollar renovation will also see enhanced places to eat and drink, including a Champagne Bar and a restaurant

area serving a variety of small plates. After Dark experiences will return on May 1 on the Marquee Skydeck, with performances from MK, Benny Benassi and Gareth Emery.

"There's nowhere else in the world where you can party at this altitude," said Noah Tepperberg, of site owner Tao Group, when the idea was launched last year. See [edgenyc.com](http://edgenyc.com).



**RUSTIC... country pub**  
**THE PILSLEY INN**  
 Pilsley, Derbys

**WHAT'S IT LIKE?** In a sleepy Peak District village, this charming country pub and hotel is on the Duke of Devonshire's Chatsworth Estate. Known as The Devonshire Arms until a year ago, it has been renamed with the addition of five

new barn-conversion rooms, designed by Lady Burlington. Staff were warm, friendly and helpful.

Dogs are welcome in the pub and to stay in the farmhouse and family rooms, and there is free on-site parking.

**ROOMS ANY GOOD?** There are 18 individually designed bedrooms, either in the main inn or the converted adjoining barn and farmhouse. We stayed in one of the farmhouse rooms. Most of these rustic yet stylish spaces feature four-poster beds, rich fabrics and plush bathrooms.

**EAT HERE OR GRAB A PIZZA?** Definitely eat here. The cosy restaurant, with tables around the bar area, serves classic British fare with food locally sourced from the Chatsworth Estate. Sat near a roaring fire, we enjoyed carrot-and-coconut soup, duck breast with sweet-potato croquettes and cherry sauce and Derbyshire beef-and-ale pie, all of which was delicious and well presented.

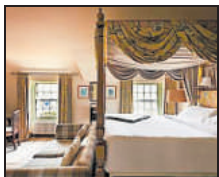
For breakfast, choose from a range of continental or cooked options.

**WHAT ELSE?** Chatsworth House, famously used as a location for the 2005 Pride And Prejudice movie, is close by and well worth a visit.

**SO YOU'D GO BACK?** Without question. It was perfect for a characterful country break.

**WHAT'S THE DAMAGE?** The Chatsworth Experience package, from £124pp, includes overnight stay, dinner, breakfast and tickets to Chatsworth House. See [chatsworthescapes.co.uk/pilsleyinn](http://chatsworthescapes.co.uk/pilsleyinn).

**MICHAEL BARRETT**



**ROOMY... four-poster**



**DREAMY... cosy bedroom**



**QUAINT... the pretty dining room offers a la carte or buffet**

**SURREY HOTEL... HOME OF WORLD'S FIRST COMPUTER PROGRAMMER**

**TASTY... breakfast and panna cotta**



**A byte to eat at the Horsley**



**PIONEER... Ada Lovelace**

**THE gentle orange glow of evening sun creeps through the stained glass windows, casting jewel-coloured light across the chapel's floor.**

The 19th-century building at the former home of Ada Lovelace – the world's first computer programmer – is now part of the De Vere Horsley Estate hotel and can only be seen by guests on exclusive tours.

While the UK is not short of historic buildings, there is very little that compares to this Surrey gem. Think French chateau meets English castle.

With dramatic towers and a flint-covered facade, Horsley Towers looks as if it has been plucked out of a period drama.

So it is hardly surprising that the manor house has been used for TV series including Call The Midwife, The Crown and Alice Through The Looking Glass.

The mansion was designed by Sir Charles Barry, the architect behind the Houses of Parliament.

By the mid-1800s, the estate belonged to the Lovelace family, who expanded it to establish the extravagant Gothic mansion it is today.

Inside, the decor is not what you would find in a usual English stately home, as there are a number of features that feel bold for the 1850s.

Expect ornate, dark wooden doors and dimly lit hidden passages. The

**GO: SURREY**

**STAYING THERE:** A double room at Horsley Place in May costs from £89 per night, including breakfast. Or a double room at Horsley Towers in April costs from £129 per night, including breakfast. See [devere.co.uk](http://devere.co.uk).

**OUT & ABOUT:** A 90-minute tour of Silent Pool Distillers costs £25 per person, [silentpooldistillers.com](http://silentpooldistillers.com).

cloisters are one of the most striking architectural features with black, beige and red-painted brick.

The design creates a dizzying optical illusion, giving the impression that the corridor stretches on for ever. Guests can explore the cloisters, along with the chapel and grand hall, during a guided tour where you retrace Ada's life at the Towers between 1845 and 1852. She lived there after her marriage to William King-Noel, 1st Earl of Lovelace.

The latest addition to the spaces that can be toured is a recently reopened, secret 19th-century underground tunnel.

It is thought that Ada had agoraphobia and used the tunnel to move around the estate, including to visit the nearby Duke of Wellington pub.

The 120-metre tunnel was originally used by servants to bring goods on to the estate and by the late 1960s, locals used it as a road.

During her time at the estate, Ada

worked on the notes and algorithms alongside her contemporary, the mathematician and inventor Charles Babbage, who is credited with creating the world's first computer.

Her work later gained her recognition as the world's first computer programmer.

In the early 20th century, Thomas Sopwith, an aviation pioneer who designed the Sopwith Camel – a British World War One single-seat biplane fighter aircraft – lived on the estate.

Today, the estate is split into two halves: The fairytale Towers and Horsley Place, the former stables now revamped into sleek modern bedrooms and conference rooms.

**Grand lake**

I stayed in Horsley Towers, where the estate's wow factor continues.

Complete with a sprawling bed and a vast bathroom boasting the same ornate features as the cloisters, it provided the ideal retreat for a dreamy night's sleep.

There is a Nespresso machine and tea supplies for your caffeine fix and lavish Penhaligon's body products.

In Horsley Place, you will also find a pool and gym, which I had entirely to myself on a quiet Friday evening. The estate grounds are made up of acres of Surrey parkland ideal for lengthy countryside strolls.

And directly in front of Horsley Towers, you will find a grand lake that adds to the fairytale image.

When it comes to food, guests can dine at the estate's brasserie restaurant in the evening. Depending on the hotel's occupancy, dinner rotates between a buffet spread and an à la carte menu.

I opted for the crispy duck salad with feta, watermelon, pumpkin seeds and rocket with a Hoisin dressing for £15. For dessert, I devoured a vanilla panna cotta with berries, coulis and shortbread, costing £9.

After dinner, head to one of the hotel's two bars for a tipple, or take the short walk from Horsley Place back to the Towers and snuggle up in the cosy library bar.

While the estate is its own haven, there is a lot to do in the surrounding area.

A couple of miles down the road is the Silent Pool Distillers, where you can sample the freshly made gin while looking out across its chalk-bed lake.

In the 90-minute distillery tour you will be immersed in the evolution of Silent Pool gin, including tales of mythical goddesses who are believed to have once graced the lake, a secret connection to crime novelist Agatha Christie and the humble beginnings of Silent Pool's copper still.

With a glass in hand, I snuggled into the corner of the distillery's bar.

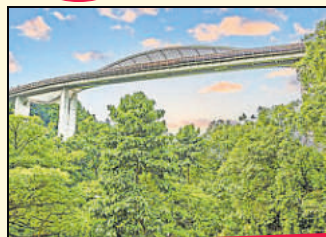
Who knew computer programming, a castle and cocktail could combine to make the perfect weekend escape?

**CYANN FIELDING**

OUR Spotlight On column shines a light on both the little known and the much-loved holiday destinations.



This week, we are taking a closer look at Singapore, a popular layover destination for long-haul getaways...



## SINGAPORE

**MUST SEE/DO:** The most fun way to get around the city is with a Singapore Sidecar (sideways.sg) where you are driven around by experienced riders. With options of different tours, one of the best takes you everywhere from the finance district to the huge murals of Yip Yew Chong, depicting scenes of traditional Singapore.

The tours include numerous photo stops, and the guides know all the answers to any questions you might have, too. Wait for night to fall and then hop over to Garden by The Bay to watch the light show.

**HIDDEN GEM:** The neighbourhood of Joo Chiat is no longer a hidden gem, after being named one of the world's coolest. But tourists often skip over Tin Yeang Restaurant, despite it being a great place to mingle with the locals. It's loud, it's busy, but you can learn a lot about the culture while enjoying prata (crispy pancakes) with fish curry for just a few pounds. It's right by the multicoloured Peranakan houses too, so you can explore the mix of Chinese and Malay heritages afterwards.

**BEST VIEW:** When it comes to gardens, Singapore goes up, putting them on top of skyscrapers. And the best free view is found at Henderson Wave Bridge, the highest footbridge in the city. Join the other joggers and dog walkers to get views of both the city and nature, without paying a penny.

**RATED RESTAURANT:** Keng Eng Kee is an institution of a restaurant. Family-run for more than 50 years, siblings Paul, Wayne and Jia Min are joined by the rest of their relatives when it gets busy. The most popular dishes are chilli crab and Marmite chicken. Unusual, but salty and delicious. Be sure to book, as they can easily serve up to 800 tables a weekend, meaning it gets busy.

On a budget? Hawker Chan is an indoor market food hall where you can get excellent meals for less than a fiver.

**BEST BAR:** If you only go to one bar, it has to be Jigger + Pony, often named one of the best in the world. Think speakeasy interiors and pretend magazines that disguise the menu, peppered with articles of the bar's history. The Clover Club is a must but staff are also on hand if nothing takes your fancy, to mix something up for you. You'll find yourself spending hours there, with fantastic music and service.

**HOTEL PICK:** Mama Shelter's first hotel in Asia, which opened last year, brings French flair to Singapore. The 115 rooms include an unusual two-person bunk option – perfect for friends. Mama's restaurant is just as fun with eclectic interiors and live music. Try the Szechuan crispy chicken and a Ms Violet cocktail. Rooms cost from £120 per night. See mamashelter.com.

KARA GODREY



CHEAP EATS... food court in the city

# UNIQUE FOODIE EXPERIENCE ON 'ROBINSON



ISLAND TUNA



GRILLED SEA BASS



FISH OF THE DAY CHARCOAL GRILLED

AND ON THE MENU...



OVEN BAKED FISH



ALL ABOARD... Jill went on a catamaran around Ilha Deserta

# Algarve island where desert

JUST off the Algarve coast, near Faro, is the Ilha Deserta.

This literally means "deserted island", but there was no going hungry when I hopped on a boat to this unique spot.

Call me Jill Robinson Crusoe, if you will. Alongside seven kilometres of gorgeous white sand, the island is home to just one building – the fish restaurant Estamine.

And every dish on the menu is worth the trip alone.

My delicate, buttery, grilled sea bass was cooked to perfection and served with roasted potatoes and vegetables.

The choice is dizzying, with everything from giant carabinero prawns and Atlantic lobster to crispy sand shrimps and Grandma's squid stew.

Reached by boat taxi in around 15 minutes, the restaurant has stunning views of the Atlantic from its floor-to-ceiling windows.

Afterwards, you can sunbathe beside the crystal-clear waters, or take a peaceful stroll while trying to spot the rare birds and chameleons that frequent the island.

If, however, you prefer something a little more fancy, you can enjoy a catamaran trip around the Ilha Deserta, which is part of the Ria Formosa Natural Park – a coastal lagoon stretching 60km from Faro to Manta Rota.

I sailed with a local company called iSea and have to admit, sitting on deck with a

## GO: ALGARVE

**GETTING THERE:** There are multiple daily flights to Faro from most UK airports with British Airways, Ryanair, easyJet, Wizz Air and Jet2. Fares start from £29 return in May.

**STAYING THERE:** Double rooms at the Praia do Canal Nature Retreat are from £209, including breakfast. See [praiaadocanal.pt](http://praiaadocanal.pt). Rooms at the 3HB Faro start from £148 per night. See [3hb.com](http://3hb.com).

**MORE INFO:** See [visitalgarve.pt](http://visitalgarve.pt).

glass of prosecco and the sun on my face was a highlight of my trip.

But if you don't have the sea legs for a boat trip, the Algarve has plenty for you to enjoy on dry land.

Faro itself has a marina and historic old town with cobbled streets.

And here, you can delve into fabulous Portuguese cuisine at Tertulia Algarvia, which is set in an historic whitewashed building.

Alongside cooking classes, craft workshops and cooking demonstrations, it serves up some real classics.

There's still plenty of seafood, from octopus rice to grilled golden bream, but a standout on the menu was the chicken piri-piri.

This original grilled chicken dish comes with a spicier marinade than your local Nando's as well as a huge portion of crispy

chips, all for just £12.60. Meat dishes are as big a deal as seafood and fish across much of the region, and I was always spoilt for choice when it came to getting my daily fix of protein.

One of my favourite places was in Aldeia da Pedralva – a rural village which has been lovingly rebuilt after many of the buildings were left in ruins.

Now, most of the village buildings are available as accommodation to hire, but the main restaurant, Sitio da Pedralva, is a destination in itself thanks to its incredible farm-to-table offerings.

From succulent wild boar to melt-in-your-mouth pork cheeks, it was a true meat lover's paradise.

## Family vineyard

As well as the meat dishes, the chef also serves another classic dish from the region, *bacalhau no pao* – creamy cod served in a rustic, hollowed-out crusty-bread bowl. Delicious.

After all that food, I needed a walk and, thankfully, a short drive away was a stunning coastal route which makes up part of the Fisherman's Trail.

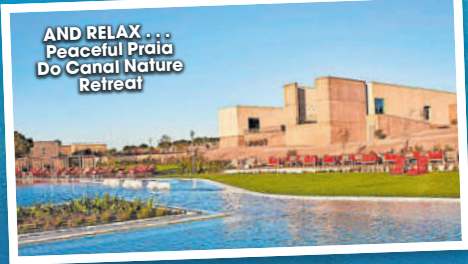
Covering 226km from Sao Torpes (near Sines) to Lagos, it is considered one of the best coastal paths in the world.

Along the way, it offers views of dramatic, rugged cliffs that drop off into incredible turquoise waters, and waves that keen surfers

# CRUSOE' ISLE IN PORTUGAL



ESTAMINE RESTAURANT



AND RELAX... Peaceful Praia Do Canal Nature Retreat

# restaurant is included

seek to ride. If you want to see the sights but don't fancy a hike or walk, a Jeep tour is another fun option – and I did a morning trip with Sagres Discovery.

Our charismatic driver took us off-roading to the western Algarve, including Sagres and Cape St Vincent Lighthouse – one of the most powerful in Europe.

All the adventure, food and sea air can certainly make you feel sleepy and, thankfully, I had the perfect place to stay a little further along the coast.

Praia Do Canal Nature Retreat is a five-star hotel set in the heart of the Vicentine Coast, offering tranquillity and relaxation, not to mention incredible decor and attention to detail.

With an infinity pool, yoga classes and exceptional food in its restaurant, it's perfect if you want to reconnect with nature – and yourself.

The huge rooms also offer a shower that is bigger than my entire bathroom at home, massive beds and views across the rolling hills to the Atlantic Ocean.

But if you want to stay closer to the action and not somewhere as remote as Praia Do Canal Nature Retreat, Faro is a great place to base yourself.

I finished my stay in the region with a

couple of nights at 3HB Faro, the only five-star hotel in the downtown area of the city, and just a short walk from the old town and marina.

With a rooftop infinity pool and terrace, as well as indoor spa facilities, the hotel offers some quiet calm once you've finished a day of exploring the region.

The Algarve is also a top destination for wine lovers, and a trip to a local vineyard is a must for any itinerary.

I enjoyed a lovely lunch and afternoon at Morgado do Quintão – a family-owned vineyard that also offers a farm-stay experience if you want to linger a little longer.

The estate offers guests a farm-to-table experience with a wine flight from its collection, which has revived the indigenous Negra Mole grape.

It is known for having an unusual variation of grape colour within the same bunch.

I had the chance to try a white, rose and red during my visit, all while enjoying fine views of the vineyard and the imposing 2,000-year-old olive tree which sits in the grounds.

I left the Algarve with a totally different perspective. From deserted islands to delicious dishes, I'd encourage anyone to go and enjoy every tasty morsel of it for themselves.

**JILL ROBINSON**



HISTORIC Faro is full of charm

## HOT DEALS ON SUMMER HOLIDAYS

DON'T panic if you haven't booked your summer holiday yet – there are still plenty of bargains out there.

Research from TravelSupermarket has revealed the price of getaways has barely budged in the wake of the crisis in the Middle East.

According to data from the holiday site, the cost of a seven-night summer break has risen by around £23pp since the conflict began.

But that's not for every destination. In fact, the figures revealed that some prices have even dropped, with hotspots such as Majorca, Dalaman in Turkey and Corfu in Greece seeing dips.

With consumer confidence at a low, experts recommend locking in a deal now, before prices rise again.

TravelSupermarket's Chris Webber said: "Prices won't stay like this indefinitely. Holiday companies are keen to get bookings moving, with some very competitive pricing right now."

Data from TravelSupermarket has revealed that the Neapolitan Riviera in Italy has seen the biggest price drop, with average holiday cost falling by £232pp.

The Dominican Republic has also seen dips in prices, as well as Italy's Amalfi Coast.

**lates**

**ITALY:** Seven nights' at the 4★ Hotel Leonardo da Vinci in Lake Garda, all inclusive, is from £588pp including flights from London Stansted on May 6. For details and to book, see [thomascook.com](http://thomascook.com).

**CORNWALL:** Three nights' self-catering at The Dairy Barn in Satecombe is from £95.75pp based on three sharing and for arrival on May 1. See [cornwallhideaways.co.uk](http://cornwallhideaways.co.uk).

**MENORCA:** Seven nights' self-catering in a one-bedroom apartment at Talayot Apartments is from £207pp including flights from London Stansted on May 18. See [firstchoice.co.uk](http://firstchoice.co.uk).

**ISLE OF WIGHT:** Four nights' half-board at the 3★ Daish's Hotel is from £189pp, based on two people sharing and for arrival on April 19. Coach pick-up available. See [daishs.com](http://daishs.com).



REOPENED... Camp Hill

## RAIL JOY FOR BRUM

The historic Camp Hill railway line has reopened, providing direct train links from south Birmingham to the city centre for the first time in more than 80 years.

Three stations – Moseley Village, Kings Heath and Pineapple Road (Stirchley) – opened this week, operating West Midlands Railway services to Birmingham New Street and Kings Norton.

The line was shut down in 1941 owing to wartime coal shortages, but it has now been given a new lease of life.

Each of the refurbished stations now has sheltered platforms, accessible lifts, passenger help points and secure cycle racks.

See [westmidlandsrailway.co.uk](http://westmidlandsrailway.co.uk).



## SCIENTIFIC TEA IS OUT OF THIS WORLD

**SMOKE** dramatically billowing from the cake stand, you could be forgiven for thinking one of my children had accidentally set their menu on fire during our afternoon tea at the Ampersand Hotel in London.

But luckily for us, this was all part of the thrilling theatrical experience that is the Science Afternoon Tea.

Brilliant for kids, and an ideal treat for the school holidays, it is a tea like no other, where cake stands arrive festooned in smoke, courtesy of a clever dry-ice science trick.

My three children aged five, eight and 12 were captivated from the very first moment.

Even before tea arrives, a collection of scientific-looking glass beakers are brought to the table and everyone is invited to mix their own lemonade using sachets of fixing powder, syringes of sugar syrups and pipettes of delicious raspberry and blackcurrant flavourings.

The fun science lesson continues with the arrival of rocket-shaped cake stands for the kids.

Dainty jam sandwiches were cut in the shape of dinosaurs, the delicious cheese straw was a rocket and the tasty blackberry mousse cake was shaped like Saturn.

But my daughter's favourite was the out-of-this-world planet-shaped cake pop, covered in sprinkles.

Grown-ups get to enjoy the fun too, with their adult cake stands also doused in dry-ice and featuring the same delicate blackberry cake.

But we also got a sophisticated mango, pistachio and almond moon cake topped with a coffee-and-chocolate astronaut – a very cute touch.

There was a lighter-than-air macaroon, too, into which we were invited to inject our own raspberry



GRAND... Ampersand

filling via a syringe. Then, both kids and adults alike are treated to a refreshing mandarin-and-redcurrant jelly served, of course, in a petri dish.

Kids are also invited to become palaeontologists by "excavating" a dino cookie buried in a tin of chocolate dust using a brush.

While adults can choose from a menu of teas – with the option to upgrade to champagne – children are brought steaming mugs



SPACE CADET... at the Science Museum

of milk and asked to create their own hot chocolate using solid-chocolate lollies, marshmallows and crunchy chocolate pearls.

The whole experience is so playful. It is the kind of culinary magic you might expect to find at Heston Blumenthal's Fat Duck restaurant – but with young guests also in mind.

The unusual experience has been inspired by the hotel's location next-door to London's

Science Museum – which is free to visit.

Fuelled by our rocket tea, we combined our visit with a trip to the museum's fascinating galleries where we saw real-life astronaut suits, spacecraft and moon rock... not the edible kind.

**CAROLINE IGGULDEN**

**GO:** The Science Afternoon Tea is from £39.50 per child and £64.50 per adult. See [ampersandhotel.com](http://ampersandhotel.com).

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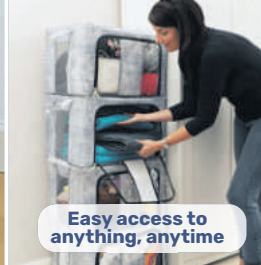
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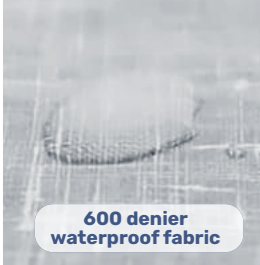
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- At Suttons we select only the best plants that will perform well in your garden year after year and for 20 years cascading Begonia Apricot Shades has been a customer favourite.

Each year there will be hundreds of extra large, three to four inch blooms in the most vibrant shades of orange and apricot to amaze you. Begonias thrive in the British weather growing in sun, rain and shade. Only by growing this spectacular variety will you truly appreciate why this is our best selling begonia. Plant in beds, create sensational patio displays. Pre-order for May Despatch.

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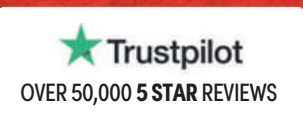


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KH9112	Geranium Jackpot 12 Garden Ready Plants	<del>£16.99</del>	£12.99	
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Suttons' Spring varieties deliver just what's required to continue to inspire the nation's gardeners throughout the Spring months!



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# Sun gardening



By Veronica Lorraine

In association with



**SAVE!**

THE weather is hotting up, so why not seek some shade under a smart parasol? Robert Dyas has a lovely Beliani parasol for £108.99, or Habitat makes an attractive tilting version costing £25 at Argos.

**WIN!** OUR pals at Vonhaus have got an XXL American charcoal BBQ with Smoker worth over £200 to give away. To be in with a chance of winning, see [thesun.co.uk/smoker](http://thesun.co.uk/smoker) or write to Sun Smoker competition, PO Box 3190, Colchester, Essex, CO2 8GP. Include your name, age, email or phone. UK residents 18+ only. Entries close 11.59pm, April 25, 2026. T&Cs apply.

**LEARN!** **Q** WHAT is the best way to prune our rose? **MICHAEL OWEN**, via email

**A** This looks pretty healthy. But if you do want a light prune, remove any dead and damaged branches, any rubbing against each other and then reduce the height by a third. I'd remove that sideways branch, too. You are aiming for a wine-glass shape.

SOW wildflower seeds and hardy annuals – and overseed your lawn. Prepare bed with manure or compost. Pinch out tips of sweet peas and prune penstemons.

This week's **JOB**

## INSECT POO SOIL IS TOPS

HEARD of insect frass? It is the term for insect excrement, combined with old exoskeletons from bugs such as mealworms and black soldier fly larvae.

And the good news is that you can spread it on your flowerbeds as it's really good for soil health. There are even whispers it repels slugs.

The result is a stronger, more resilient growth, not from chemicals, but from the plant's own natural defences.

Stewart Black, at The Shropshire Seaweed Company, which sells frass, says: "This isn't a trend. It's biology.

"People are starting to understand healthy soil isn't about feeding plants, it's about feeding the living system beneath. Frass does it in a way almost nothing else can."

See [shropshireseaweed.co.uk](http://shropshireseaweed.co.uk) for details.

# Weeding frenzy

**BINDWEED** **PLANTAIN** **CREeping BUTTERCUP**

**DANDELIONS** **KNOTWEED** **NETTLES**

It doesn't matter how many times you tell yourself they're "just a plant in the wrong place", weeds can get really annoying.

But whether you are a fastidious "everything in order" gardener or someone who likes to let mother nature do it's own thing, weeds are an "indicator plant" that have a message.

Not only do they show the kind of soil you have, but they can also signal whether your soil is acidic, waterlogged or lacking in nutrients.

Here is a guide to what weeds mean for your space:

**DANDELIONS:** They love to take over where grass is struggling, and like damp, compacted soil. If you do not remove the taproot, they will

## WHAT UNINVITED PLANTS SAY ABOUT YOUR LAWN

come back, especially on a thin lawn.

**PLANTAIN:** These thrive in compacted soil, often due to heavy footfall, especially if it is poorly drained, or old, nutrient-deficient earth.

They also like lawns that aren't fed or aerated, and acidic soil.

**FINGER GRASS:** Any opportunity to take over bare, dry patches of sandy, poor soil in the lawn or flower beds. It also thrives in warm weather, so when the

other grass might go dormant when it gets really hot, this will continue to grow.

**HORSETAIL:** Amazing fact – horsetail has been around longer than the dinosaurs. Less amazing fact – if it is in your garden, then you have probably got waterlogged soil. And it is either heavy clay or poor, sandy soil where any other plants will struggle to survive.

**KNOTWEED:** Loves disrupted ground, such as construction areas and roadsides, and often gardens that have been left to go wild. It doesn't care what pH your soil is, either – and likes nutrient-poor earth and growing through cracks in the ground.

**BINDWEED:** Hard to win with this one. Likes dry gravel soils but also heavy, wet clay. Also thrives in low-calcium, low-oxygen disturbed soil with high levels of magnesium.

**CREeping BUTTERCUP:** Likes waterlogged conditions, poor drainage or over-watering. It thrives in acidic soil and prefers moist, heavy clays.

**NETTLES:** If you have got nettles, it's actually quite a good sign as they really like nutrient-rich, fertile soil. They do not care whether it's alkaline or acidic. A good indicator of soil health.

## TIME TO PRUNE

IT'S finally the moment to prune your hydrangeas, although do leave the climbing plants.

By keeping those old flower heads in place, you are actually helping shield next year's fresh buds from biting frost.

The dried stems act like a natural barrier, trapping warmer air around delicate new growth.

If you are not sure which you have, chop off the heads and prune back to strong emerging buds, and watch them bloom.

**PLANT** of the week

**HIBISCUS** "starburst chiffon". Get 20 per cent off at [thompson-morgan.com/sunoffers](http://thompson-morgan.com/sunoffers). T&Cs apply.

THIS is the last week-end for the Octonauts Above And Beyond at Kew Gardens, London. It's perfect for kids aged three to six. For more information, see [kew.org](http://kew.org).

**GET IN TOUCH** ▶

Email: [gardening@the-sun.co.uk](mailto:gardening@the-sun.co.uk) | Web: [thesun.co.uk/gardening](http://thesun.co.uk/gardening) | Write: Sun Gardening, London SE1 9CF | Follow: @biros\_and\_bloom

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**Lobelia Queen Victoria**



**Achillea 'Cerise Queen'**



**Dianthus 'Rockin Red'**



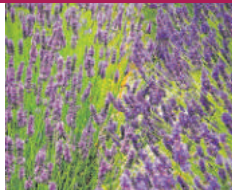
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STOJSAVLJEVIC... pride

## Mika GB bow wow

By ROB MAUL

MIKA STOJSAVLJEVIC made a winning start for GB — then admitted: “I can’t remember the last point.” The 17-year-old earned her Billie Jean King Cup bow against Australia in a qualifier in Melbourne.

And she stunned world No 56 Talia Gibson 7-6 7-5 in the opening rubber.

Stojsavljevic was picked as Emma Raducanu, Sonay Kartal and Katie Boulter were not available.

The world No 275 said: “It feels amazing. I can’t believe it — I can’t even remember the last point.”

“When I got called up I was honoured.”

Harriet Dart won 4-6 6-3 6-3 against Kimberly Birrell as Britain led 2-0 overnight in the battle to reach the September finals.

## Kid Mich in frame

By ROB MAUL

SNOOKER whizkid Michal Szubarczyk is two wins away from reaching the Crucible — aged just 15.

Szubarczyk beat Englishman Sanderson Lam 10-8 in the second round of qualifying for this month’s World Championship.

And the Pole faces Iranian Hossein Vafaei, 31, over two sessions today — with the winner to play either Tom Ford or Gao Yang on Tuesday.

The world No 98 said: “It is very exciting. I was surprised by the last result. If I focus, I can win again. But I can’t dream just yet.”

Luca Brecel, the 2023 world champion, is the youngest player to feature at the Crucible, as a 17-year-old in 2012.

## Room is too Little

By ROB MAUL

LUKE LITTLER and Gian van Veen will be forced to practise in the same room in Holland on Thursday as their oche feud continues.

The pair clashed in Manchester last week when world champ Littler angrily mocked GVV as the Dutchman, 23, beat him 6-5 in their Premier League quarter-final.

At many venues in the tournament, there are two practice rooms — but the Rotterdam Ahoy complex has just one large area.

Littler, 19, was booed in Brighton on Thursday as Jonny Clayton beat Michael van Gerwen 6-5 in the final.

Clayton, 51, said: “I don’t think there’s anything of it. Gian was in the room with us and Luke was in the other one.”

# BOXING SHOWDOWN FURY V

# Like a bat outta shell



ROARING TO GO... Tyson Fury at last night’s weigh-in is pumped up for his comeback fight against Russian battler Arslanbek Makhmudov



SWELL... Fury has a tubby history

# TYSON’S FAT CHANCE

EXCLUSIVE by JACK FIGG

LENNOX LEWIS is sure Tyson Fury is taking Arslanbek Makhmudov seriously — because he does not look FAT.

The Gypsy King returns to the ring tonight 16 months after retiring following a second loss to Oleksandr Usyk.

Fury, 37, spent 16 gruelling weeks training in Thailand — where he claimed temperatures in the sweltering gym hit 45 degrees — as he dropped down to 19st 2lb from more than 20 STONE he weighed in at when he went into camp.

And that, mixed with a refusal to even talk about a future blockbuster against Anthony Joshua, makes Lewis (right) adamant that Fury is focused.

Heavyweight legend Lewis said: “This

is a fight that’s on his mind and that’s good, that shows me good focus.

“I think that Thailand was great for him. He’s looking great, he’s not as fat as he was.

“He’s focused, he’s talking good. So this is gonna be a great fight for him.

“He can basically do what he wants in this fight. He can fight inside, he can fight outside.

“So if he says he’s going to knock him out, look for the knockout.”

Another former heavyweight world champion, David Haye, told SunSport’s No Glove Lost show that 6ft 6in Russian

Makhmudov, 36, is the perfect replica of rival AJ to help Fury prepare for a potential Battle of Britain fight.

But Lewis, 60, admitted: “I would say yes and no. I would say Anthony Joshua’s way better than him and a lot quicker than him, but they are similar in certain ways.”

Lewis reckons fans will know within minutes of the first bell tonight whether Fury has lost his touch after being out of the ring for so long.

He said: “Oh, you can see that the first couple of rounds. But I think he’s in a good, good state.

“He needs the ring right now. The ring helps him, he’s able to be free in the ring.”



# MAKHMUDOV

MAIN CARD 7PM; RING WALKS 10PM approx; Netflix & **talkSPORT**



JONES... fans' boost

## Meg will thrill 'em

By HARRY TALBOT

MEG JONES says England want to be "entertainers" in their first Twickenham action since winning the World Cup.

The Red Roses face Ireland in today's Women's Six Nations opener in front of 75,000 fans.

And captain Jones, 29, said: "How class is that, knowing we can keep those numbers going off the back of the World Cup?"

"Our role is to be the entertainers and make sure we provide a product that people want to come back and watch."

"We always say how amazing the fans are and how much they give us that energy and boost."

"I have full faith in the fact that they're going to be our extra 16th player."

## Smith so tenderful

By JOHN ETHERIDGE

JAMIE SMITH virtually nailed down his England place with his second ton of the season.

Surrey man Smith, 25, was under big pressure after a poor Ashes.

But he plundered 166 against Leicestershire at the Oval following his 132 against Warwickshire.

In-form Smith looks set to keep wicket and bat at No7 against New Zealand at Lord's on June 4.

Surrey mate Ollie Pope also made a century but that will not help him reclaim the No3 berth from Jacob Bethell.

Durham's Ben McKinney advanced his claims to open in place of Zak Crawley with 214 not out against Gloucestershire.

By WALLY DOWNES Jr



# GYPSY KING HAD TO FLEE COCKLE MAN

TYSON FURY says he fled Morecambe for the Isle of Man to escape the Shell Man - not the taxman.

The heavyweight, 37, wife Paris and their seven children uprooted from Lancashire after 20 years in December.

But he did not emigrate to a haven with no capital gains, inheritance or wealth tax, or stamp duty, to protect his £400million fortune.

Instead, it was prank callers, strange stalkers and a man dressed all in SHELLS that sent the two-time world champ over the Irish Sea.

Asked ahead of tonight's comeback clash with Arslanbek Makhmudov about the stress of moving, Fury said: "It wasn't tough - sometimes you can just be in a place too long and everybody knows where you live."

"I had to disconnect my intercom on the gates as every weekend I had crackpots and drunks ringing the doorbell and asking for Tyson."

"The final straw was when I had a lunatic come over my gates - 40ft gates and I've got an attack dog, I've just got everything."

"Then the police came and he just said, 'I'm here to be adopted by Tyson and Paris'."

"The man was about 35 years

old and he was saying that we were going to adopt him. He was wearing a dressing gown and pyjamas.

"When the police asked where he came from, he said 'London' - and that he was here to visit his father and mother."

"This man could have had a knife on him, or anything."

"I wasn't actually home. I was at the gym and Paris phoned me going nuts and then it was actually one of our neighbours who saw someone climbing over the bins and she phoned the police."

"But that wasn't the only one. I've had a million nutjobs at my place. "One time there was a guy dressed in seashells - from head to toe - he looked like an absolute lunatic."

"He said God sent him to speak to me. But my manager Spencer offered him 20 quid and he grabbed it and then vanished."

It takes a brave - or deranged - man to try to infiltrate the Fury household.

Yet that is what baby-faced teen Noah Price did when he proposed to 6ft 9in Fury's eldest daughter

Venezuela at her 16th birthday party in September.

The wannabe boxer had the decency and courage to approach the intimidating Gypsy King and ask for his princess's hand.

And the former master of machismo mind games - before untouchable Oleksandr Usyk cracked his brain and chin on back-to-back occasions - gave his blessing after spotting the fear in the young man's eyes.

Fury explained: "He did ask my permission. He came in and just sat down and I explained marriage is not an easy thing and that they are only young kids."

"I asked if this is what they really want. He said it was and I gave him my blessing."

"He wasn't shaking but I could tell that he was nervous, fair play to him."

"He's a heavyweight boxer and they say that a daughter always goes for someone like her dad - and she definitely has."

Typically, the showman changes roles, from doting dad to fun father-in-law, adding with a grim: "I don't know if he's had a stag do

yet. If he does, I'll be there - and I'll bring the strippers."

As always with larger-than-life Fury, it is impossible to know what is real and what is part of the latest family reality TV show.

This, after all, is the end of his FIFTH fake retirement.

Ranting absent father John - who slammed his son and team and snubbed the build-up - could be waiting in the wings, ready to swoop down and attempt to steal the show in the same way Chris Eubank Sr did in his lad's win over Conor Benn.

And Tyson claims to have broken the world record for boxing in SIX consecutive football stadiums, without mentioning three of those Saudi shows happened at indoor arenas.

But you would have to be a cold-hearted cynic not to believe his sentiments about his latest boxing comeback - and how much he thrives on being centre of attention.

Fury, who fights 36-year-old Russian powerhouse Makhmudov at the Tottenham Hotspur Stadium, added: "I enjoy it all. I always have done. This is a circus."

"This is my dream job and I have been able to do my dream job."

"I dreamed as a child of being the heavyweight world champion and I have lived it."

"Boxing's just hard to let go of - anything that you've done forever is hard to let go of."

"And that's just what boxing is to me. It's natural, something that I do, it's an essential part of my day-to-day life."

"If that's taken away, then I have nothing left."

"Although I have everything that every man could ever want, boxing has always been my dream."

"Everything I have always wanted. It gives me everything I've always wanted."

"And here we are again, five times out of retirement. And who knows how many more times I will retire?"

Only you, Tyson. Only you.

# HATT'S A NICE TOUCH

From Back Page

icon and Manchester City fan Hatton following his close pal's death last September at the age of 46.

And Fury, 37, attended Hatton's funeral at Manchester Cathedral back in October.

Two-weight world champ Hatton was in Fury's corner for the bout with Deontay Wilder in December 2018, offering support in Los

Angeles. Fury also trained at his friend's Manchester gym in preparation for the Wilder fight.

Fury hit the scales at 19st 2lb compared to Makhmudov's 18st 13lb at yesterday's weigh-in - ten years after the pair posed for a photo together.

Makhmudov took a grainy snap with Fury, who was a year on from his shock 2015 win over Wladimir

Klitschko. And before tonight's clash in Tottenham, the Dagestan-born, Canada-based boxer said:

"We make a photo ten years ago and it means a lot to me because God started to prepare me for this moment and I believe it is my time."

"I was, and still am, his fan and he's a great boxing legend but Saturday night I go for my job, I go for MY story."

**NO GLOVE LOST**

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**THE Sun**

"EVERYONE just wants Fury v Joshua" - watch George Groves and David Haye preview Fury v Makhmudov in our YouTube show.

**FURY VS MAKHMUDOV**

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**talkSPORT**

ON THE APP ON YOUTUBE ON SMART TV

# Pollock pain

**By ADAM HATHAWAY**  
**HENRY POLLOCK** went from Saint to sinner as Bath reached the last four of the Champions Cup for the first time in 20 years. Northampton's Pollock (right) scored a try, had a superb game but was sinbinned with seven minutes left as Bath stole it and set up a semi with Bordeaux-Begles or Toulouse. Bath had trailed by 21 points twice in the first half but Ted Hill crashed over for the winner five minutes from time. The visitors were 12 points clear heading into

Bath.....43  
 Northampton...41



the final quarter before Bath replacement hooker Kepu Tuipulotu narrowed it to five when Saints had lock JJ van der Mescht in the bin. Fin Smith kicked two penalties to give the visitors some breathing space before Finn Russell grabbed one back and Hill finished it. A bonkers first half had ended with Northampton leading 35-26 as the teams shared nine tries in a crazy 40 minutes.

## SPORTS ROUND-UP: RESULTS & FIXTURES

**PREMIER LEAGUE**  
**WEST HAM (1) 4 WOLVES (0) 0**  
 Mavropanos 42, 83  
 Castellanos 66, 68

**SKY BET CHAMPIONSHIP**  
**WEST BROM (0) 0 MILLWALL (0) 0**

**SKY BET LEAGUE TWO**  
**COLCHESTER (0) 3 SOUTHAMPTON (0) 0**  
 Read 48 Att: 4,880  
 Goodwin 54  
 Anderson 69

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Bromley	42	23	14	5	67	41	85
MK Dons	42	21	13	8	77	42	76
Northampton	42	23	7	12	71	45	76
Cambridge	41	20	14	7	58	31	74
Swindon	43	22	8	13	67	51	74
Salford City	42	23	4	15	57	50	74
Chesterfield	41	18	14	9	63	52	68
Crewe	42	19	9	14	61	50	66
Oldham	41	17	14	10	52	35	65
Crewe	40	18	11	11	59	43	65
Barnet	42	17	13	12	57	47	64
Walsall	42	17	11	14	52	46	62
Colchester	42	16	12	14	56	45	60
Fleetwood	42	14	13	15	51	53	55
Bristol Rovers	42	16	4	22	46	62	52
Accrington	41	14	9	18	40	46	51
Gillingham	41	12	15	16	48	40	49
Shrewsbury	42	12	8	22	39	66	44
Cheltenham	40	11	10	19	44	67	43
Crawley Town	42	8	13	21	40	62	37
Tranmere	41	9	9	23	48	71	36
Newport City	42	9	7	26	41	72	34
Barrow	41	8	9	24	38	65	33
Harrowgate Tn	42	8	9	25	34	64	33

**WILLIAM HILL CHAMPIONSHIP**  
**QUEEN'S PARK (1) 1 ROSS CNTY (0) 0**  
 Connolly 16 Att: 846

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
St Johnstone	32	18	11	3	58	25	65
Partick	32	16	12	4	48	33	60
Airbroath	32	12	11	9	41	39	47
Dunfermline	31	13	7	11	48	35	46
Queen's Park	32	9	12	11	34	43	39
Raith	31	9	13	34	34	36	36
Ayr	32	7	15	10	35	42	36
Morton	32	8	12	12	33	44	36
Airdrieonians	31	7	9	15	28	39	30
Ross county	33	6	10	17	28	38	28

**BUNDESLIGA** - Augsburg 2 Hoffenheim 2  
**EREDIVISIE** - Twente 2 Volendam 1  
**LIGUE 1** - Marseille 3 Metz 1, Paris FC 4 Monaco 1  
**LA LIGA** - Real Madrid 1 Girona 1  
**SERIE A** - Roma 3 Pisa 0

**CRICKET**  
**ROTHERSAY COUNTY CHAMPIONSHIP**  
**DIVISION ONE**  
 Essex v Somerset  
 Chelmsford: Essex 149 (51.0 overs), Somerset 179-5 (43.0 overs; C Overton 50th).  
 Nottinghamshire v Glamorgan  
 Trent Bridge: Nottinghamshire 278 (63.4 overs; J A Haynes 100, F O'Neill 59; R Hadley 4-76, T van der Gugten 4-54), Glamorgan 81-4 (32.0 overs).  
 Surrey v Leicestershire  
 The Kia Oval: Surrey 412-6 (96.0 overs; J L Smith 166, O J D Pope 103, B T Foakes 62no).  
 Sussex v Warwickshire  
 Hove: Warwickshire 267 (79.4 overs; C R Woakes 64, K Smith 53), Sussex 17-0 (4.4 overs).  
 Yorkshire v Hampshire  
 Headingley: Hampshire 251 (69.1 overs; J S Lehmann 76; G C H Hill 5-46), Yorkshire 48-4 (24.0 overs).  
**DIVISION TWO**  
**Gloucestershire v Durham**  
 Bristol: Durham 456-2 (88.1 overs; B S McKinney 214no, A Z Lees 129, D G Bedingham 76no).  
 Kent v Northamptonshire  
 Canterbury: Northamptonshire 409-1 (91.0 overs; L Procter 131no, R Vasconcelos 127, C G Harrison 124no).  
 Lancashire v Derbyshire  
 Old Trafford: Lancashire 351 (91.2 overs; M S Harris 125, J Bohannon 73; S Bashir 4-76), Derbyshire 0-1 (1.3 overs).  
 Middlesex v Worcestershire  
 Lords: Worcestershire 191 (54.5 overs; B L D'Oliveira 75), Middlesex 91-6 (33.2 overs).  
**TATA IPL**  
 Rajasthan Royals v Royal Challengers Bengaluru  
 Guwahati: Royal Challengers Bengaluru 201-8 (20 overs, Patidar 63); Rajasthan Royals 202-4 (18 overs, Jurel 81, Sooryavanshi 78), Rajasthan Royals (2pts) win by 6 wickets.

**BASKETBALL**  
**SLB** - Bristol Flyers 76 London Lions 783, Leicester Riders 90 Surrey 89ers 103, Newcastle Eagles 95 Manchester Basketball 96, Sheffield Sharks 113 Caledonia Gladiators 75.

**NETBALL**  
**SUPERLEAGUE** - London Pulse 56 London Mavericks 46.

**RUGBY LEAGUE**  
**CHALLENGE CUP QUARTER-FINALS**  
**ST HELENS (20) 36 CATALANS (0) 4**  
 St Helens - Tries: Murphy, Sailor, Davies, Dagnall, Whitty (2). Goals: Sailor (5), Whitty. Catalans - Tries: Faataape.

**RUGBY UNION**  
**INVESTEC CHAMPIONS CUP QUARTER-FINAL**  
**ULSTER (24) 41 LA ROCHELLE (10) 24**  
 Ulster - Tries: 2 Ward (2), O'Toole, Izuchukwu, B Ward, McCormick. Cons: Doak (3), Flannery, Pens: Doak.  
 La Rochelle - Tries: Cancoriani, Latu, Scavi. Cons: Jurd (3), Pens: Jurd.

**EUROPEAN CHALLENGE CUP QUARTER-FINAL**  
**BATH (26) 43 NORTHPTON (35) 41**  
 Bath - Tries: Dunn, Russell, Arundell, Van Wyk, Tuipulotu, Hill. Cons: Russell (5), Pens: Russell.  
 Northpton - Tries: Pollock, Dingwall, Lockett, Kemery, Sleightholme. Cons: F. Smith (5). Pens: F. Smith (2).

**CHAMP RUGBY** - Doncaster 31 Richmond 10, Nottingham 33 Coventry 26.

**TENNIS**  
**ATP MONTE CARLO MASTERS (Monaco)**  
**Quarter-Finals** - A Zverev (Ger) bt J Fonseca (Bra) 7-5 6-7 (3-7) 6-3, J Sinner (Ita) bt F Auger-Aliassime (Can) 6-3 6-4, C Alcaraz (Spa) bt A Bublik (Kaz) 6-3 6-0, V Vachrot (Mco) bt A de Minaur (Aus) 6-4 3-6 6-3.

**WTA UPPER AUSTRIA LADIES LINZ (Linz, Austria)**  
**Quarter-Finals** - G Ruse (Rom) bt J Ostapenko (Lat) 4-6 6-4 6-1, M Andreeva (Rus) bt S Cristea (Rom) 7-6 (7-4) 4-6 6-2, A Potapova (Aut) bt L Taggar (Aut) 7-6 (9-7) 6-0, D Vekic (Cro) bt K Pliskova (Cze) 7-5 6-4.

**BILLIE JEAN KING CUP (Melbourne)** - Great Britain lead Australia 2-0. M Stojanovic (GB) bt T Gibson (Australia) 7-6 (7-4) 7-5; H Dart (GB) bt K Birrell (Australia) 4-6 6-3 6-3.

**TODAY'S SPORT**  
**CRICKET**  
 County Championship (day 2, 11.0).  
**Tata IPL**: Punjab Kings v Sunrisers Hyderabad (New Chandigarh, 11.0), Chennai Super Kings v Delhi Capitals (Chennai, 3.0).  
**GOLF**  
 The Masters (Augusta, Georgia).  
**ICE HOCKEY**  
 Elite League Play-offs Otr-finals 1st leg (7.0): Guildford Flames v Sheffield Steelers (6.0), Coventry Blaze v Cardiff Devils (6.0), Manchester Storm v Nottingham Panthers, Belfast Giants v Glasgow Clan.  
**NETBALL**  
 Netball Superleague: Cardiff Dragons v Birmingham Panthers (4.0), Manchester Thunder v Leeds Rhinos (5.0), Nottingham Forest Netball v Loughborough Lightning (7.0).  
**RUGBY LEAGUE**  
 Challenge Cup Otr-finals: Hull K R v York (1.30), Warrington v Leigh (5.30).  
 Betfred Championship (6.0): London Broncos v Sheffield.  
**RUGBY UNION**  
 Investec Champions Cup Otr-finals: Glasgow v Toulon (3.0), Leinster v Sale (6.30).  
 European Challenge Cup Otr-finals (8.0): Montpellier v Connacht (12.30), Zebre v Dragons.  
**Champ Rugby (3.0)**: Caldy v Hartpury RFC, Cambridge v Ealing Trailfinders, Cornish Pirates v Chinnor (2.30), London Scottish v Amptill, Worcester v Bedford.  
**National League 1 (3.0)**: Birmingham Moseley v Leeds Tykes (4.0), Blackheath v Sale FC, Dings Crusaders v Bishop's Cleeve, Plymouth Albion v Sedgley Park (4.0), Rosslyn Park v Leicester Lions, Rotherham Titans v Rams (2.0), Tonbridge Judians v Clifton.  
**Welsh Super Rugby (2.30)**: Aberon v Llandovery, Carmarthen Quins v Ebbw Vale, RGC 1404 v Bridgend, Swansea v Cardiff.  
**Guinness Women's Six Nations: England v Ireland (2.25), France v Italy (12.25), Wales v Scotland (4.40).**  
**TENNIS**  
 ATP Monte Carlo Masters (Monaco).

# THE MASTERS DAY 2

# TYRRIFIC Hothead Hatton makes



**TYRRELL HATTON** had a monster pay-off for keeping the lid on his temper – as he stormed up The Masters leaderboard.

On an Augusta course that the Englishman famously said he "hated" a few years ago because of his struggles to break 70, he hit a stunning **SIX-UNDER-PAR 66**.

That was only his fourth sub-70 score over this hallowed turf and a **TWO-SHOT** improvement on his previous lowest round.

It took him from two over to four under and put him in contention to be one of the unlikely Masters champs of them all.

That is provided he continues to roll with the punches, like the lip-put on the final hole that cost him a 65 and the first bogey-free round of the tournament. Before

**From DAVID FACEY**  
 in AUGUSTA

that, the golfing gods decided to smile on 'Terrible Tyrrell' for not exploding on day one, when his approach shot clattered into the flag on the seventh and flew into a bunker.

It cost him a bogey and Hatton went full teapot as he watched his ball disappear into the sand – but somehow managed to bite his tongue and accept his tough break.

He got his revenge by making a birdie on the same hole as he made a blistering start yesterday.

It was one of four birdies Hatton bagged on the front nine, quickly propelling him to two under.

And when he caressed a gorgeous tee shot on the short 12th to within

8ft for a fifth birdie, he had climbed 35 places into a share of fifth.

But Hatton was not finished. Birdie No6 – at the hole he calls the dreaded 15th because of his previous struggles there – was followed by another at the 16th.

That final bogey was greeted by a disbelieving look, as the stone-faced man from Marlow in Buckinghamshire headed off to sign a card he will still want to take a picture of.

And Hatton said: "I was absolutely headless after what happened at seven in the first round.

"I can't remember much of what happened after that.

"But I'll want to remember what happened today, apart from the lip-put for that three-putt on 18."

Fellow Englishman Justin Rose is not usually prone to the odd show of emotion when things are not going well.

So when he gave himself a



**HATTON GARDEN JOB**  
 ... England's Tyrrell Hatton fired an impressive 66 among the rhododendrons, dogwoods and azaleas to go four under at Augusta



# IM THE LINE OF FIRE

**SUNGJAE IM** was on the march again at Augusta yesterday – just a few months after completing his national service.

The former Masters runner-up was in combat gear rather than golf pants as recently as November. All South Korean men under the age of 35 have to spend 21 months in the military – but Im's sporting status put him in a special category where he only

had to do three weeks' basic training. His time away did not affect him too much as he bounced back from an opening 76 with a three-under-par 69.

Im (left), 28, said: "I enjoyed my military training but it was quite hard. I was pleased to come away without suffering any injury that might have affected my golf. I love it at Augusta. I'm pleased my special category meant I did not have to miss this."



MacINTYRE ... gesture

# ACTION

Round 3 today,  
live on  
**sky sports** golf

# STUFF

## serene progress

vicious slap on the thigh after missing a short putt on the par-five eighth, it was obvious he was not a happy camper.

But that gesture of annoyance after he failed to sink an inviting eight-footer for birdie did the trick. Rose (left) rattled off a hat-trick of birdies from nine to 11 – probably the toughest stretch at Augusta – and his bid for a Green Jacket was right back on track.

His frustration was understandable as the putt on eight came after missed chances at the second and fourth from a foot closer.

And after starting out with a bogey at the first, Rose knew he had to shrug that off and make the most of the better scoring conditions.

He did strike one early blow, with a 25-footer at the seventh taking him back to his starting position of two under. That hat-trick took him to five under after a round of 69.

Rose said: "That was probably the most I could have shot.

"It's frustrating, because definitely some putts did slide by – not good when you are trying to make a run. "I don't really need to try any harder, know what I mean?"

"The experience from previous near-misses ain't going to help me. So that's probably the dance I'm doing with myself."

Rose, 45, would be a popular winner, especially on the back of his play-off defeat to McIlroy last year.

That was the second time he had lost out in sudden death at Augusta and the third time as a runner-up.

Ex-US Open champion Wyndham Clark showed ominous signs of a return to form as a 68 took him to four under at halfway.

And one of Rose's playing partners, Brooks Koepka, looked in the mood to challenge for a **SIXTH** Major title as a 69 put him three under.



SAILOR... ran the show

St Helens.....36  
Catalans.....4

By GARY CARTER

**TRISTAN SAILOR** sent Saints one win from Wembley as Catalans look to begin life after coach Joel Tomkins.

The Dragons boss is believed to be leaving after being allowed time away, with the French club thought to be supportive.

And whoever does take charge full-time following Ryan Sheridan's interim role, they will not have a Challenge Cup semi-final to think about.

St Helens star Sailor was a try scorer and a creator.

Thrown in five goals for a 14-point haul after taking Daryl Clark's chip kick to touch down as this quarter-final turned

# Sailor sets a semi course

into a breeze. Sailor sent Jake Davies over and set up Owen Dagnall (inset), while Jackson Hastings created the first of George Whitby's brace before Solomona Faataape replied.

Saints may have their eyes on a shot at Wembley but Las Vegas also appears to be on their mind.

SunSport understands they lodged an interest in playing in Sin City next year ahead of Wednesday's deadline, along with Hull FC and Bradford. And while it is

not a firm commitment, they are in the running as Super League heads there for the third time.

Despite their epic 34-24 comeback win over Wigan on Good Friday, boss Paul Rowley insisted:

"It's fantastic to get that win and what it meant but we keep trying to move on – that's history now."

One thing that was not banished into the past was Saints' injury luck, as Jake Wingfield and try-scorer Lewis Murphy were helped off in agony.



HAT TIP	
HATTON'S ROUND TWO	
HOLE >	1 2 3 4 5 6
PAR >	4 5 4 3 4 3
SCORE >	4 4 3 3 4 3
HOLE >	7 8 9 10 11 12
PAR >	4 5 4 4 4 3
SCORE >	3 5 3 4 4 2
HOLE >	13 14 15 16 17 18
PAR >	5 4 5 3 4 4
SCORE >	5 4 4 2 4 5
TOTAL	PAR > 72 SCORE > 66

# Sweary Mac's rap

**ROBERT MACINTYRE** faces a Masters rap after swearing and 'giving the finger' to the course during his calamitous 80. World No8 MacIntyre was heard using foul language a couple of times during his first round. And he held up his middle finger to the 15th green as he put two balls

From **DAVID FACEY**

into the water on his way to a quadruple bogey NINE. When MacIntyre missed a putt on the 13th hole, he was heard yelling: "Now it's breaking the other way. Jesus, f\*\*k."

His playing partner **Scottie Scheffler**, who is deeply religious, would

have found that remark extremely offensive.

Masters officials do not release details of any disciplinary action and do not believe fines are worth imposing on multi-millionaire golfers.

But the Scot, 29, is sure to get a severe reprimand and a warning over his future conduct.



## Where ballers thrive

"It's like all your problems become invisible. Premier League Kicks creates this environment and the players just thrive from it. Once you get to the pitch, you forget about everything."

Manuel.

Celebrating the 2.5 million people who have participated in Premier League community programmes, where the football is free and the lessons are for life.



Scan for Manuel's full story

**Premier League**  
More than a game.

# CHAMPO CHAOS A LIBERTY!

**Karren Brady**  
READ HER EXCLUSIVE VIEWS EVERY SATURDAY IN **Sun**

**THERE is a popular narrative doing the rounds in football — that the Championship is some kind of victim.** It says English football's second tier is broken, underfunded, needs help and the answer lies in taking more money from the Premier League.

It sounds reasonable. It is also completely wrong. That's because the Championship is not poor. It is the richest second tier in world football, generating close to £1 billion a year.

The problem isn't what it earns. The problem is what it spends.

Championship clubs generated close to £1bn of revenue — yet still spent £1.2bn on player wages.

That is 120 per cent of revenue before you even consider other expenses.

In any normal industry, that is a collapse waiting to happen.

Transfer spending is out of control. Wages are out of control. Losses are out of control.

Championship owners had to inject £417m just to keep their clubs functioning. Despite this, the cry from some quarters is for more.

More money. More redistribution. More support from the Prem.

But why? To sustain this model? To just continue spending beyond means? To chase a dream with someone else picking up the bill?

Because that is what this is.

Football is not a normal business. It is a high-risk, high-emotion industry where success is chased, not guaranteed. Most clubs do not make money — they chase success.

And that's not pretend the top flight is some model of perfect financial health — it isn't — as 15 of the top-flight clubs lose money, too.

My own club have posted nine-figure losses. That is

the nature of football. It is a risky business built on ambition, not balance sheets.

That's the reality. And it comes with consequences. The Championship has not stumbled into losses.

Clubs are gambling on promotion, pushing wages beyond sustainable levels, and hoping that the reward justifies the risk.

But there is a difference between taking your own risks and expecting others to underwrite them.

The Premier League is not a bottomless well. It has its own pressures, with debts running close to £4bn.

It already funds the whole football pyramid, to suggest it should pump more money into clubs who cannot control costs is not just unrealistic — it is irresponsible.

There is a wider point here, too.

If you continually bail out a system that refuses to change, you don't fix it. You entrench it.

You keep writing cheques and then act surprised when the bill gets bigger.

As former Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher (*inset*) said: "The problem with socialism is you eventually run out of other people's money."

The regulator's job is not to make failure more comfortable. It is to make sustainability unavoidable.

Ensure clubs live within their means, not help them stretch those means even further.

Right now, too many clubs are not standing on their own two feet.

They are leaning — on owners, on debt, on the hope promotion will solve everything... and, if not, the Premier League will bail them out.

The Championship does not need rescuing. It needs reform.

Until that happens, more money will not solve the problem.

It will simply make it bigger.



**SAD TALE**... Sheffield Wednesday's relegation from the Championship and financial misery

# PREM



# WEST HAM 4

MAVROPANOS 42, 83; TATY 66, 68

**TATY CASTELLANOS and Konstantinos Mavropanos toasted dream doubles to lift West Ham out of the drop zone.**

And in doing so, they sent Tottenham into the bottom three at least until tomorrow.

Spurs must win at Sunderland to get out of it this weekend. And the North Londoners — if they were not already — will be really stressing about the prospect of being relegated for the first time since 1977.

The Irons looked doomed after slipping seven points adrift of safety in January.

Yet slowly but surely, Nuno Espirito Santo has got a tune out of them and they are two points above the drop zone.

Nuno's old team Wolves were the better side for much of the opening half. But it was West Ham who went into the break in front when Mavropanos headed home. Then, January

By **JUSTIN ALLEN**



signing Taty clinically punished Wolves twice — slotting home in the 66th and 68th minutes to secure the points.

And former Arsenal defender Mavropanos volleyed home with seven minutes left.

Wolves had not played for an incredible **TWENTY-FIVE** days due to the international break and Arsenal reaching the Carabao Cup final.

It was such a ridiculous break, Rob Edwards arranged a behind-closed-doors friendly.

The Hammers, however, played against Leeds on Easter Sunday in the FA Cup — and although they went out on penalties, most of their squad got vital minutes into the legs.

Crysencio Summerville, out since aggravating a calf injury against Brentford, gave West

Ham a huge boost by starting. But it was the visitors who should have gone in front.

Jean-Ricner Bellegarde played a lovely pass across the six-yard box for Hugo Bueno, yet Kyle Walker-Peters managed to just get in front to intercept.

West Ham had a great chance when Mateus Fernandes found Summerville — but from an angle and with keeper Jose Sa to beat, he blazed over.

Wolves went close down the other end as Yerson Mosquera headed inches wide before Taty steered a shot over from El Hadji Malick Diouf's ball.

Diouf then carelessly gave the ball away on the edge of his box but Adam Armstrong shot over.

And Armstrong elected to head, rather than volley, when unmarked and goalkeeper Mads Hermansen was able to gather. But

West Ham were in front three minutes before the break.

After a Hammers corner was cleared, the ball came out to Jarrod Bowen on the right and his cross was perfect for Mavropanos to nod home.

It was the first real piece of quality from the hosts — and a seventh assist from Bowen this season.

Wolves were denied after the break by the woodwork as Angel Gomes — with a free-kick 25 yards out when Taty gave away a foul — cracked the right post.

The Hammers then swept down the other end and Summerville, seeing Sa off his line, attempted a 30-yard lob but it lacked power and the keeper palmed it wide.

Lively Bowen was also denied when he cut in before cracking a shot against the left post. Tomas Sou-

MATCH STATS	
WEST HAM	WOLVES
18	13
7	4
44%	56%
344	449
278	388
24	23
5	2
11	7
2/0	2/0
MATCH TIME: 95m 16s	
BALL IN PLAY: 51m 30s	

# CAST IRON WIN

**Taty 'n Dinos give Nuno hope in relegation fight**



## PREMIER LEAGUE

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Arsenal	31	21	7	3	61	22	70
Man City	30	18	7	5	60	28	61
Man Utd	31	15	10	6	56	45	55
Aston Villa	31	16	6	9	42	57	54
Liverpool	31	14	7	10	50	42	49
Chelsea	31	13	9	9	53	58	48
Brentford	31	13	7	11	46	42	48
Everton	31	13	7	11	57	55	46
Fulham	31	13	5	13	43	44	44
Brighton	31	11	10	10	41	57	43
Sunderland	31	11	10	10	32	56	43
Newcastle	31	12	6	13	44	45	42
Bournemouth	31	9	15	7	46	48	42
Crystal Palace	30	10	9	11	33	35	39
Leeds	31	7	12	12	37	48	35
Notm Forest	31	8	15	11	31	43	32
West Ham	32	8	16	10	47	52	32
Tottenham	31	7	9	15	40	50	30
Burnley	31	4	8	19	33	61	20
Wolves	32	3	8	21	24	58	17

## CHAMPIONSHIP

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Coventry	41	25	9	7	84	42	84
Millwall	42	21	10	11	56	47	73
Ipswich	39	20	12	7	69	40	72
Middlesbro	41	20	12	9	62	41	72
Hull	41	20	8	13	63	58	68
Southampton	40	18	12	10	68	49	66
Wrexham	41	17	13	11	63	58	64
Derby	41	18	9	14	60	51	63
Norwich	41	17	7	17	55	48	58
Watford	41	14	15	12	52	49	57
Bristol City	41	16	9	16	52	51	57
QPR	41	16	9	16	58	63	57
Stoke	41	15	9	17	48	45	54
Preston	41	13	15	13	48	52	54
Swansea	41	15	9	17	49	54	54
Birmingham	41	14	11	16	49	52	53
Sheff Utd	41	15	6	20	57	58	51
Charlton	41	12	13	16	38	49	49
Blackburn	41	12	11	18	37	49	47
West Brom	42	11	13	18	42	56	46
Portsmouth	40	10	12	18	40	57	42
Leicester	41	11	14	16	54	63	41
Oxford Utd	41	9	14	18	39	54	41
Sheff Wed	41	1	10	30	25	82	-5

(Leicester deducted 6 points)  
(Sheff Wed deducted 18 points)

# COBURN FLUFFS HIS

By **GRAHAM HILL**

**ALEX NEIL'S Millwall edged back into the Championship's promotion places — but they could have had so much more.**

The Lions left The Hawthorns with a valuable point. But they were left to rue a first-half miss from Josh Coburn who volleyed wide from five yards out.

Millwall dominated for 70 minutes but almost let relegation-threatened Albion steal a late win.

Now Neil's side must wait for today's results to see if they can hold on to second spot.

For West Brom, it was another step towards safety as they

West Brom..... 0  
Millwall..... 0

stretched their unbeaten run under interim boss James Morrison to seven games.

Mihailo Ivanovic hit the bar from long range — but Millwall just could not score.

Their fine away form has seen them total 37 points — but they needed to win here with Ipswich and Middlesbrough on their tail.

Millwall threatened after just five minutes, when Ivanovic pounced on a poor pass from Baggies skipper Alex Mowatt. He

released Thierno Ballo who raced clear, only to run out of space and find the side-netting.

Ballo was making his first start in almost three months, and he tormented the Baggies defence again when he whipped in a cross from the left.

Coburn looked set to score but fluffed his big chance. That was a clear opportunity and he knew it. But Neil's side almost grabbed a spectacular opener when Ivanovic turned and rattled the crossbar from 25 yards out.

George Campbell and Nathaniel Phillips got in a mix-up and were lucky not to gift Millwall an own goal. But the visitors finished the

# WOLVES 0

cek gave away a careless free-kick on the edge of the box by hacking down Bellegarde – and Angel Gomes fired the set-piece inches over.

With 66 minutes gone, West Ham grabbed their second.

Summerville won possession in the centre of the park before setting Taty away. He played a quick one-two with Pablo before netting.

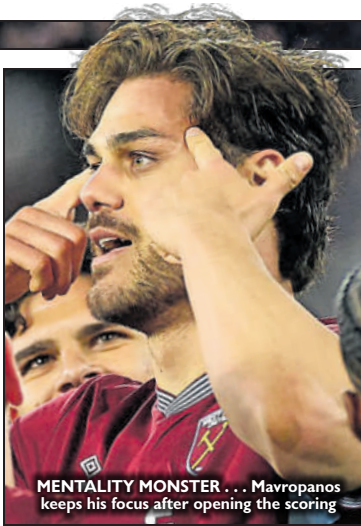
From the restart, Wolves lost the ball and Bowen – with his eighth Prem assist this campaign – set up Taty to score. Only Bruno Fernandes has provided more goals this term.

And Mavropanos volleyed in a corner to cap a perfect night at the London Stadium.

**HOW THEY LINED UP**

**WEST HAM:** Hermansen, Walker-Peters, Disasi, Mavropanos, Diouf, Bowen, Soucek, Fernandes (Magassa 85), Summerville (Traore 78), Pablo (Potts 78), Taty (Wilson 82).

**WOLVES:** Sa, Mosquera (Arokodare 71), S Bueno, Krejci, Tchatchoua, Andre, J Gomes (Edozie 85), A Gomes (R Gomes 61), H Bueno, Bellegarde (Mane 61), Armstrong (Hwang 71).



**MENTALITY MONSTER . . .** Mavropanos keeps his focus after opening the scoring

# Ed sale or return

**EDDIE HOWE** accepts Newcastle will have to sell at least one big star if they fail to qualify for the Champions League.

Captain Bruno Guimaraes, Sandro Tonali, Anthony Gordon and full-back Tino Livramento are all set to be in high demand this summer as vultures begin to circle above St James' Park.

Toon boss Howe faced flak from fans after last month's home derby loss to Sunderland, days after they were thumped 7-2 at Barcelona in the Champions League round of 16.

That crippling Prem defeat leaves Newcastle 12th in the table ahead of tomorrow's trip to

By **GARY STONEHOUSE**

Crystal Palace and facing a huge task to secure any form of European football.

CEO David Hopkinson conceded that top talents will need to be sold and Howe (left) said:

"If that's the reality, and David will know more than me, then that's the reality."

"I've got no issues working with the conditions that the club set. Finances dictate. I've never had an issue with that throughout my career."

"As long as that's made clear to everyone on the outside and the expectations are aligned within that."

Despite claiming he retains the support of both Hopkinson and

new sporting director Ross Wilson, he warned Howe would not think twice about walking away if he felt those relationships hit the buffers.

He said: "There have been no fallings-out. We're plotting to try and take the club forward in the smartest way possible. I've had good support from both."

"What do I need? Just that, I need support. Good working relationships with people around me. And I have that."

"If I feel that, and the club feels that, then they're getting the best manager they can from myself."

"If that's not working for whatever reason, on both sides, then it's best for the football club, which is the most important thing in all of this – Newcastle United. Not me or anybody else, it's Newcastle."



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**TATY'S SPECIAL . . .** Argentine star Taty Castellanos pounces for West Ham's crucial second



# LIONS

half on top and Camiel Neghli's left-foot shot from the edge of area was well saved by Baggies keeper Max O'Leary.

Albion pushed hard after the break and Daryl Dike headed over, before Jayson Molumby drove a low shot just wide.

But Millwall must have thought they had scored when sub Tommy Watson looked set to head home only to be denied by a superb clearance from Danny Inmyr.

Albion responded and Millwall keeper Anthony Patterson pulled off his **FIRST** real save of the game from Molumby's effort.

Baggies' Ousmane Diakite then went close in a late flurry.



(3.0 unless stated)  
**TODAY**  
**PREMIER LEAGUE**

1 Arsenal v AFC Bournemouth (TNT Sports 1)..... 12.30  
2 Brentford v Everton .....  
3 Burnley v Brighton .....  
6 Liverpool v Fulham (Sky Sports Main Event)..... 5.30

**SKY BET CHAMPIONSHIP**

10 Charlton v Preston North End.....  
11 Coventry v Sheff Wed..... 12.30  
12 Leicester v Swansea.....  
13 Middlesbrough v Portsmouth.....  
14 Norwich v Ipswich (Sky Sports Main Event)..... 12.30  
15 Oxford Utd v Watford.....  
16 QPR v Bristol City ..... 12.30  
17 Sheff Utd v Hull.....  
18 Southampton v Derby .....  
19 Stoke v Blackburn.....

**SKY BET LEAGUE ONE**

20 Blackpool v Peterborough.....  
21 Bradford v Stevenage .....  
22 Burton Albion v AFC Wimbledon.....  
23 Cardiff v Bolton ..... 12.30  
24 Doncaster v Reading.....  
25 Huddersfield v Wycombe.....  
26 Lincoln City v Leyton Orient ..... 12.30  
27 Plymouth v Exeter ..... 12.30  
28 Rotherham v Barnsley.....  
29 Wigan v Mansfield.....

**SKY BET LEAGUE TWO**

30 Accrington Stanley v Fleetwood Tn.....  
31 Barnet v Barrow.....  
32 Bristol Rovers v Crawley Tn ..... 12.30  
33 Cambridge Utd v Notts County.....  
34 Chesterfield v Tranmere.....  
35 Grimsby v Crewe.....  
36 Milton Keynes Dons v Bromley ..... 12.30  
37 Newport County v Harrogate Tn.....  
38 Salford City v Cillingham.....  
39 Shrewsbury v Oldham.....  
40 Walsall v Cheltenham.....

**WILLIAM HILL PREMIERSHIP**

42 Aberdeen v Hibernian.....  
43 Celtic v St Mirren.....  
44 Dundee Utd v Livingston.....  
46 Hearts v Motherwell.....  
47 Kilmarnock v Dundee.....

**WILLIAM HILL CHAMPIONSHIP**

48 Ayr v Arbroath.....  
49 Partick v Dunfermline.....  
Raith v Morton.....  
St Johnstone v Airdrieonians.....

**WILLIAM HILL LEAGUE ONE**

East Fife v Peterhead.....  
Hamilton v Alloa .....  
Kelty Hearts v Montrose.....  
Queen of South v Cove Rangers.....  
Stenhousemuir v Inverness CT (BBC Alba)..... 5.30

**WILLIAM HILL LEAGUE TWO**

Dumbarton v Stirling.....  
Edinburgh City v Clyde.....  
Elgin v Annan Athletic.....  
Forfar v East Kilbride.....  
Spartans v Stranraer.....

**ENTERPRISE NATIONAL**

Aldershot v Gateshead.....  
Altrincham v Eastleigh..... 12.30  
Boreham Wood v Hartlepool.....  
Boston Utd v Truro City.....  
Carlisle v Sutton Utd.....  
Forest Green v Braintree Tn ..... 5.30  
Rochdale v Wealdstone.....  
Scunthorpe v Brackley.....  
Southend v Solihull Moors.....  
Tamworth v York ..... 12.30  
Woking v Morecambe.....  
Yeovil v FC Halifax.....

**ENTERPRISE NORTH** - Alfreton Tn v Oxford City, Bedford Tn v Hereford FC, Buxton v Scarborough Athletic, Chester FC v AFC Fylde, Chorley v Curzon Ashton, Darlington v Marine, Kidderminster v King's Lynn Tn, Merthyr Tn v Macclesfield FC, Peterborough Sports v AFC Telford, Radcliffe v South Shields, Southport v Leamington, Spennymoor Tn v Worksop Tn.

**ENTERPRISE SOUTH** - AFC Totton v Dorking Wanderers, Bath City v Chesham Utd, Chelmsford v Maidenhead Utd, Dover v Farnborough, Hampton & Richmond v Chippenham, Hemel Hempstead v Eastbourne Borough, Hornchurch v Ebbsfleet United, Horsham v Maidstone Utd, Slough v Torquay, Tonbridge Angels v Salisbury FC, Weston-S-Mare v Enfield Tn, Worthing v Dag & Red.

**THE PITCHING IN NORTHERN PREMIER** - Ashton Utd v Workington, Cleethorpes Tn v Hebburn Tn, Guiseley v FC United of Manchester, Hednesford Tn v Morpeth Tn, Ilkeston Tn v Bamber Bridge, Lancaster City v Gainsborough Trinity, Leek Tn v Prescot Cables, Stockton Tn v Rushall Olympic, Warrington Rylands v Stocksbridge P S, Whitby Tn v Hyde Utd.

**THE PITCHING IN ISTHMIAN PREMIER** - Burgess Hill Tn v Cheshunt, Canvey Island v Dartford, Carshalton Ath v Brentwood Tn, Chatham Tn v Wingate & Finchley, Cray Wanderers v Lewes, Hashtag United v Cray Valley (PM), Potters Bar Tn v Chichester City, Ramsgate v Billerica, St Albans v Aveley, Welton v Dulwich, Whitehawk v Folkestone Invicta.

**THE PITCHING IN SOUTHERN PREMIER CENTRAL** - Alvechurch v Royston Tn, Banbury Utd v AFC Sudbury, Bury Tn v Stamford, Halesowen Tn v Harborough Tn, Kettering v Worcester City, Needham Market v Barwell, Quorn v Leiston, Redditch Utd v Real Bedford, Spalding Utd v Stratford Tn, St Ives Tn v Bromsgrove Sporting, Sloughbridge v Bishop's Cleeve.

**THE PITCHING IN SOUTHERN PREMIER SOUTH** - Bracknell Tn v Tiverton Tn, Chersey Tn v Poole Tn, Dorchester Tn v Gloucester, Evesham Utd v Walton & Hersham, Gosport Borough v Yate Tn, Hanwell Tn v Weymouth, Hungerford Tn v Basinstoke Tn, Plymouth Parkway v Havant and W, Sholing v Farnham Tn, Taunton Tn v Uxbridge, Wimborne Tn v Berkhamsted.

**TOMORROW**  
**PREMIER LEAGUE**

4 Chelsea v Man City (Sky Sports Main Event)..... 4.30  
5 Crystal Palace v Newcastle (Sky Sports Action)..... 2.0  
7 Nottm Forest v Aston Villa (SS Premier League)..... 2.0  
8 Sunderland v Tottenham (SS Premier League)..... 2.0

**SKY BET CHAMPIONSHIP**

9 Birmingham v Wrexham (Sky Sports Main Event) 12.0  
**VERTU TROPHY FINAL**

41 Luton v Stockport County (Sky Sports Football).....  
**WILLIAM HILL PREMIERSHIP**

45 Falkirk v Rangers (Sky Sports Football)..... 12.0

**MONDAY**  
**PREMIER LEAGUE**

Man Utd v Leeds (Sky Sports Main Event)..... 8.0

# PREMIER LEAGUE



5.30pm  
sky sports main event

# He's a Salah-brity ... get him out of there

## SELFISH MO'S A DRAMA QUEEN



**THINK Arne Slot is the man to blame for Liverpool's woes? One look at selfish Mo Salah tells a very different story.**

# Troy Deeney



**OUR COLUMNISTS ARE THE TALK OF FOOTBALL**

The Liverpool winger, 33, is one of the biggest drama queens I have come across. It is nothing personal – but look at the credit he gets compared to his behaviour this season and it stinks.

One of Liverpool's all-time greats? Talent wise, maybe, but being a great is about the full package. You have to be a figurehead for the club before anything.

Salah is out for himself and himself alone.

Compare him to Virgil van Dijk, the only Liverpool player who fronts up win, lose or draw.

Team-mates, Slot and the fans won't have liked it when Van Dijk spoke about them giving up, but four days later after the defeat by Paris Saint-Germain, he is there again taking the brunt of it.

What is Salah doing? Making sure he gets a little moment in front of the TV cameras, off to shake the hand of Steven Gerrard and Steve McManaman.

McManaman has been doing these games for a decade and we've never seen Salah do that before. It is not the first time he has contrived to create a bit of drama in response to not getting what he wants.

You can wind back two years to when he was named on the bench by Jurgen Klopp, had a row with him on the touchline and then turned down an

interview request by stating: "If I speak there will be fire."

In October last year, after being benched and watching Liverpool win 5-1 at Frankfurt, he deleted all references to the club from his social media.

And that is before you get to his interview at Elland Road where he torched Slot, said he had no relationship with the manager, suggested someone was forcing him out and that the next game could be his last for the club.

Salah then went off to the Africa Cup of Nations and came back as if nothing happened. When things are going well Salah gets all the credit, some even said he is a better player than Thierry Henry was – what a load of bulls\*\*t.

He deserved adulation last season when he was in incredible form, but he turns things sour as soon as things start going wrong.

Salah is Liverpool's highest-

paid player but not only does he hide when things are going badly, he actively ramps up the problems at Anfield.

Slot has been fighting fires almost since day one in the job on Merseyside, and Salah has sought to pour fuel on them rather than help his manager.

The Egyptian seems to forget who was on the touchline when he had a campaign for the ages just last year.

His behaviour, and the fact that others like Van Dijk are being left to do all the talking, can fracture Slot's squad.

Hugo Ekitike, one of Liverpool's few success stories this season, must be so frustrated when he is the one being replaced while Salah stays on the pitch having contributed next to nothing.

It is an attitude other players can follow, too.

Curtis Jones has talked about Liverpool getting bullied. Now I don't know Jones, he seems a good lad with the right attitude.

But here is some advice, the one thing you don't need a manager to teach you is how to run and put in a proper challenge.

So is that lack of fight down to Slot as well or should we be focusing on the players more?

The Dutchman has battled with injuries all season, as well as dealing with missing Trent Alexander-Arnold, while also being told that he won the league with Klopp's team.

He should be judged next year, when Salah is not a distraction. Because one thing appears clear, turning to a club legend will not be the answer.

When did Liverpool become Manchester United?

They can't smash the glass and call for Stevie or rush to appoint Xabi Alonso.

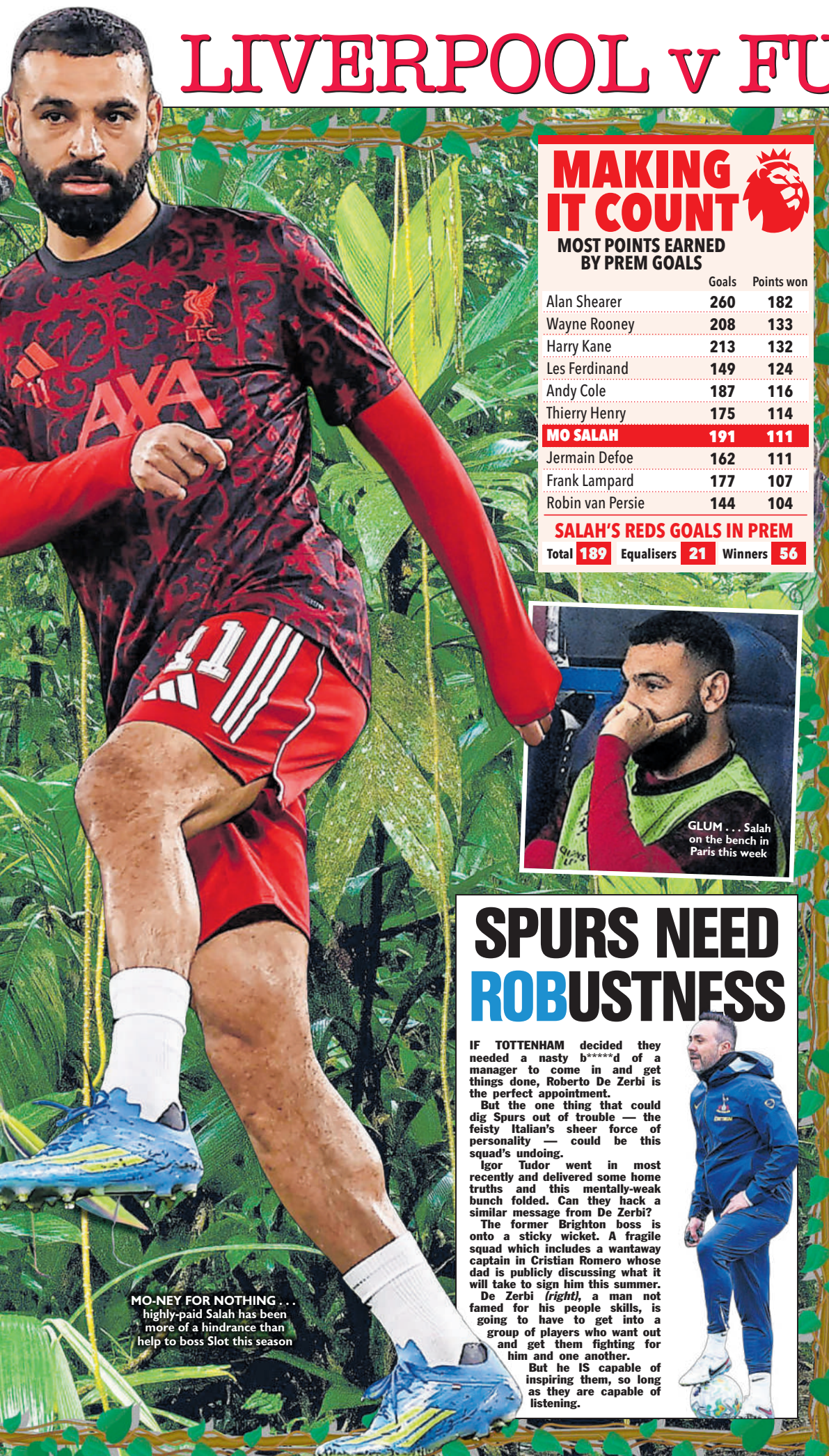
Alonso did incredible work at Bayer Leverkusen, where he called the shots, but was chewed up on the big stage at Real Madrid. What proof is there that he will succeed at Anfield?

There is even less evidence Gerrard would be a success.

He is a smart coach and their greatest player, but that is not enough.

Salah is out for himself and himself alone

# LIVERPOOL v FULHAM



## MAKING IT COUNT



### MOST POINTS EARNED BY PREM GOALS

	Goals	Points won
Alan Shearer	260	182
Wayne Rooney	208	133
Harry Kane	213	132
Les Ferdinand	149	124
Andy Cole	187	116
Thierry Henry	175	114
<b>MO SALAH</b>	<b>191</b>	<b>111</b>
Jermain Defoe	162	111
Frank Lampard	177	107
Robin van Persie	144	104

### SALAH'S REDS GOALS IN PREM

Total	<b>189</b>	Equalisers	<b>21</b>	Winners	<b>56</b>
-------	------------	------------	-----------	---------	-----------



GLUM... Salah on the bench in Paris this week

## SPURS NEED ROBUSTNESS

IF **TOTTENHAM** decided they needed a nasty b\*\*\*\*d of a manager to come in and get things done, Roberto De Zerbi is the perfect appointment.

But the one thing that could dig Spurs out of trouble — the feisty Italian's sheer force of personality — could be this squad's undoing.

Igor Tudor went in most recently and delivered some home truths and this mentally-weak bunch folded. Can they hack a similar message from De Zerbi?

The former Brighton boss is onto a sticky wicket. A fragile squad which includes a wantaway captain in Cristian Romero whose dad is publicly discussing what it will take to sign him this summer.

De Zerbi (right), a man not famed for his people skills, is going to have to get into a group of players who want out and get them fighting for him and one another.

But he IS capable of inspiring them, so long as they are capable of listening.



MO-NEY FOR NOTHING... highly-paid Salah has been more of a hindrance than help to boss Slot this season



DOWN BUT NOT OUT... Slot after Paris Saint-Germain loss

## Reds: Things Arne that bad

By **KEN LAWRENCE**

**ARNE SLOT** knows "it may sound weird" but he insists he still has the backing of the Liverpool hierarchy and the fans.

Many who walked out of the Etihad a week ago long before the end of an FA Cup quarter-final drubbing by Manchester City may beg to differ.

Those who were in France to witness the 2-0 Champions League last-eight loss to PSG were locked in until after the final whistle for security reasons and unable to vote with their feet.

Slot won the title in his first season last year. Now the Dutchman heads into this evening's potentially toxic Anfield clash with Fulham trying to put on a brave face.

He is adamant that sporting director Richard Hughes and FSG chief executive of football Michael Edwards are still behind him.

The Reds boss: "I am repeating myself a lot.

"But I have said many times, I feel a lot of support not only from the owners but from Richard and Michael as well.

"As weird as it might sound, I also feel the support of the fans.

"In Paris when the players went out for the warm-up and the fans, after a 4-0 loss, immediately started singing, 'We love you Liverpool'.

"We were outplayed over 90 minutes, we went to the away end and they

were still singing for us and clapping for us.

"So that's the support I've felt, we have felt, constantly and, as I've said many times, the club knows which period we are in.

"In the meantime, I feel their complete support."

But the manager failed to mention the odd occasion when fans have booed his side off.

Slot, 47, has one more season left of his contract and there have been no talks on extending it.

Anfield legend and ex-Real Madrid manager Xabi Alonso is favourite to replace him if he does not at least guarantee a Champions League spot.

Slot admitted: "We've not given ourselves the best situation but Paris kept us alive and we are still in that tie."

Liverpool have taken only one point from their last three league games and, with their season hanging by a thread, Slot said: "Not only for us but for all teams these are defining moments.

"Massive games in the league and hopefully more in the Champions League.

"If there's anything positive from the PSG game, it is that we faced the champions of Europe and we experienced that we were not on the level we should have been.

"We want to keep improving and playing at that level next season."

## Silva fighting for Europe

By **TONY LITTLE**

**MARCO SILVA** has promised Fulham will fight for European qualification in the last weeks of the season.

The Cottagers go into the weekend in ninth place, two points behind Brentford and Everton.

But with those two sides meeting each other before Fulham kick off at Liverpool, Silva's side have the opportunity to move up the table.

He said: "We have a big, big motivation.

"We have set ourselves a position where we can fight for something that

is very difficult to achieve but is achievable.

"Last season we were close, fighting to the last months to achieve it.

"This season we are repeating it and that shows the progression of the football club.

"If we are there we are going to fight, definitely.

"The importance of each game is going to be bigger than before because we just have seven games to play.

"We fought very hard to be in this position right now."



FERNANDEZ... sorry

## Rosenior has Enzo 'hurdles to cross'

By LLOYD CANFIELD

ENZO FERNANDEZ misses Chelsea's Prem clash with Manchester City tomorrow — despite apologising for flirting with Real Madrid.

The Argentine ace was handed a two-match ban by boss Liam Rosenior after an interview during the international break where he spoke of his love for the Spanish.

He sat out the 7-0 FA Cup romp over Port Vale but Rosenior said yesterday there are still a "few hurdles" to overcome for the midfielder, 25, to return to action.

And when asked if he could even miss the crunch Prem showdown with top-five rivals Manchester United next Saturday, Rosenior replied: "Not in this moment."

He added: "He won't play on Sunday but hopefully after that he'll be a massive part of the group moving forward."

"There are still a few hurdles that need to be overcome which I won't go into but I want every player really focused now on a huge run."

Rosenior has taken flak for dropping Fernandez — who has eight Prem goals this season — as they chase a Champions League spot.

But the Blues boss said: "I had three or four really good conversations with Enzo. He's apologised to me, to the club, and we'll deal with that after a massive game on Sunday."

"It's not about individuals, football is a team sport. It's not about shooting yourself in the foot."

"There are certain values and cultures that I believe in, that this club believes in, and it makes the team stronger if you get that right."

"I'm not questioning his character or who he is as a person. I believe people make mistakes and you can't overstep the punishment for the mistake."

"We made a decision — I made a decision — and what I want for Enzo is for him to come on here and have an outstanding career."

# PREMIER LEAGUE ARSENAL v CHAMPIONS



BOUNCING BACK... Rice and Co will hope to shake off double cup blow

## Mik tells fans to feast as leaders look to gorge on Cherries

MIKEL ARTETA knows the Emirates mood will be febrile at lunchtime.

The pre-game chest-thumping bravado and chants of Double glory will swiftly dissipate among the most nervous fans in the country if Arsenal do not get off to a flier against Bournemouth.

Against Liverpool and Manchester United in particular, that change in mood impacted on Arteta's players, the negativity whittling away at their ambition and sense of certainty.

Even so, watching the Spaniard channelling his inner John Sitton to urge the Gunners faithful to get their side over the line was a shock.

Former Leyton Orient boss Sitton's infamous dressing-room rant more than 30 years ago included telling his players they could pair up to take him on and "bring your f\*\*\*ing dinner".

Gunners chief Arteta, by contrast, is not prone to four-letter outbursts — certainly not in public.

But his plea to Arsenal fans to turn up in mind as well as body against the Cherries could have been stolen from Sitton's script.

Arteta (right) said: "The closer we get, the relevance and importance of the match increases."

"This is a big day for us. The players know it, our supporters know it. It's a 12:30 kick-off, it's an



By MARTIN LIPTON

CHIEF SPORTS CORRESPONDENT

early kick-off. So get up early, have an early breakfast, bring your lunch, bring your dinner and let's go for it together as it has to be a big day."

And Arteta added: "We know the meaning of every match here and the opportunity that we have."

"Especially when we play at home, we need to maximise every result. So it's about each individual, how we turn up there."

"It's not about being in the stadium, it's actually impacting the game, the atmosphere and the energy in that stadium — and that's very different."

"And whoever goes there, I will please ask them to be with that mindset, with that energy and commitment, because the team is going to respond beautifully to that."

Arteta's faith in his players, he insisted, has been "reinforced" over the past seven days.

And he cited the determination of Eberechi Eze to get back from his calf injury ahead of schedule.

Although the Spaniard deliberately kept his cards close to his chest over

the fitness of Jurrien Timber, Martin Odegaard, Bukayo Saka and Riccardo Calafiori. More crucially, Arteta maintained, is the mental strength to respond to adversity and setbacks after a Carabao Cup final loss and FA Cup exit to Southampton.

He added: "It's better to observe first, to see the natural reaction, to see what we are made of, to see what's the first instinct, collective and individual from players."

"Then you can intervene based on that. But we felt it didn't need much as the reaction was tough, the understanding of why we lost those matches and how we were going to put it right."

"It was a really good reaction against Sporting. "That tells you about your culture and identity of this club and the team — and to define that, you have to go through different scenarios, different moments, individually and collectively."

"It's one of my proudest things — not only with the people but our supporters as well — that they've always been with the team regardless of the situation."

"That attitude and that behaviour and that unity gives you more will to win for them."

"That possibility and opportunity to make so many people proud and happy increases."

"And that's what has driven everybody. Me, first of all, and then



**CHELSEA v CITY PREVIEW Goals**  
Pages 6 and 7

# BOURNEMOUTH

12.30pm,  
TNT Sports 1  
& **TalkSPORT**



GUARDIOLA...pursuit

# TITLE

From Back Page

that right to the end. First, the will has to be there. "There's no bigger motivation than being there to win a major trophy.

"The unity is going to be there, the energy is going to be there.

"But the composure, that's a massive one, to maintain an emotional state in the right way."

A win at the Emirates will ramp up the pressure on Pep Guardiola's City, who visit Chelsea tomorrow.

The Gunners finished second in the last three seasons — twice to City.

And Arteta accepts past failures have heightened the sense of nervousness, despite his side having been top of the table since early October.

Back-to-back defeats at the hands of City, in the Carabao Cup final, and Southampton in the FA Cup's last eight preceded Tuesday's last-gasp Champions League quarter-final first-leg win at Sporting.

And Arteta attempted to turn the burden of anticipation into the ultimate exhilaration — by claiming a first league crown

The unity and energy is going to be there

— MIKEL ARTETA

since Arsene Wenger's legendary Invincibles would create memories that last for decades.

Arteta, 44, added: "Just think about the outcome.

"It's going to be totally different to any other club.

"This would be a very particular one, 22 years since this club won the Premier League, while the Champions League has never been done.

"So that has to fill you with enthusiasm, energy.

"It's very big to do it and this is the moment."

Arteta said his contract talks are on hold.

The Spaniard's three-year deal is up in 2027 and he has shelved thoughts of extending his 6½-year stay.

Arteta, who is hunting just the second trophy of his reign to go with the 2020 FA Cup, admitted: "We have no time to discuss that now.

"The full focus is on what we have to do until the end of the season.

"I am fully committed, really happy and feel good.

"Give your very best and feel you are the person that can lead and inspire the group to achieve great things for the club.

"I feel that way and, hopefully, I will for the rest of the week and with a great outcome at the end of the season."

# DINNER



SPRINT FINISH...  
Gunners stars in training yesterday

## Arsenal Top of the Table Dinner

*Appetiser*  
Marli Smoked Salmon

*First Course*  
David JambaRaya

*Main*  
Max Dow-Mein with Declan Rice

*Dessert*  
Myles Lewis-Jelly and ice cream

*Drink*  
Bukayo Sake

Served in honour of Mr Mikel Arteta

**JUST IN TIME FOR LUNCH**  
ARSENAL UNDER ARTETA AT 12.30PM

	PLD	GD	PTS
1 Arsenal	31	+39	70
2 Man City	30	+32	61
3 Man Utd	31	+13	55
4 Aston Villa	31	+5	54
5 Liverpool	31	+8	49

**NEXT TWO GAMES FOR TOP TWO**  
Today: ARSENAL v BournemOUTH  
Tomorrow: Chelsea v MAN CITY  
Apr 19: MAN CITY v ARSENAL

all the players and the people in the organisation. I see them every day and see first of all the capacity that we have as a club and as a team.

"The will to win. We recognise the opportunity ahead and we're going to do our best to try to achieve it."

Despite those feelings — the belief that has been fostered over eight months and that nine-point lead at the top of the Prem — Arteta understands it may yet come down to one match or even one kick.

Indeed, he referred to his spell as Pep Guardiola's assistant at Manchester City to recall how even the best of teams may have to rely on something special to take the final step to win titles.

Highlighting Vincent Kompany's goal against Leicester from 30 yards in the last week of the 2018-19 campaign, Arteta said: "I won the championship when a central defender put the ball in the top corner, when you couldn't expect that.

"Also, winning in the last game of the season three times, in very different ways.

"So a lot of things have to go your way. But you have to push, too, for that element of luck that is needed to go your way at times.

"That's something I just believe has to come from us as well."

# Iraola Bourne again

**ANDONI IRAOLA is expected to stay at Bournemouth after losing out on a dream job at his beloved Athletic Bilbao.**

Cherries are primed to make a formal announcement within days about their Spanish gaffer's future — after the LaLiga club name their new man.

Bilbao are understood to have opted for former Borussia Dortmund coach Edin Terzic to replace legend Ernesto Valverde.

Iraola, 43, made 510 appearances during 12 years as a Bilbao player and was on a three-man shortlist for the job, along with his former assistant Inigo Perez.

But Bournemouth's boss — who is out of contract this

By **GRAHAM NICKLESS**

summer — revealed yesterday that there had been no contact with his former club.

When asked if he or his representative had spoken to Bilbao during the international break, Iraola emphatically replied: "No!"

And that will be great news for Bournemouth supporters who have taken Iraola to their hearts after watching his team flirt with European qualification.

But former Manchester United star Terry Gibson believes Iraola will end up managing Bilbao... one day.

Gibson, who has covered LaLiga for Spanish TV for several years, was consulted by Bournemouth about Iraola's potential before they employed him in June 2023.

Gibson said: "Andoni has built a fabulous reputation in the Premier League and his managerial journey is still

starting. I think it's too early for him to manage Bilbao — probably when he's older but at this moment he wants to be competitive and win things.

"And there is a lot of pressure for a head coach at Bilbao because they have never been relegated.

"There is also a glass ceiling because they can only buy Basque players — which is why they are not going to challenge Real Madrid, Barcelona or Atletico Madrid."

Bournemouth are unbeaten in 12 games since they lost 3-2 at home to today's opponents Arsenal back in early January.

Iraola said: "I have no doubt that my players can beat Arsenal but we need one of our very best days.

"If we are average, we have no chance. If we are very good, we have a good chance...100 per cent.

"We've shown already that if we give our best level, we are difficult to beat."



HE DOESN'T FIT THE BIL...  
Bournemouth's Iraola looks set to miss out on coveted Bilbao job

thesun.co.uk/sport  
**Sun Sport**

**CLASS ACT**  
... Fury honours Hatton



**Hatt's a nice touch, Tyson!**

**By JACK FIGG**

**TYSON FURY** will honour pal **Ricky Hatton** by wearing his trademark blue-and-white boots in tonight's showdown. The **Gypsy King**, in his first fight in 16 months, takes on heavyweight **Arslanbek Makhludov**. Fury will pay his respects to boxing **Turn to Page 63**

**Favourite**



**Grand National tips in your No1 pullout**

**By JACK KEENE**

**BOOKMAKERS** are in Panic mode as a huge Grand National gamble continues to gain momentum.

Dan Skelton's Panic Attack has been popular with punters, who have backed her into 7-1 favourite for today's big race at Aintree.

She was a 25-1 shot at the start of the week and the bookies are bracing themselves for a multi-million-pound payout if she wins.

History is against the ten-year-old, as no mare has won the Grand National in **75 YEARS**.

Skelton, whose brother Harry rides Panic Attack, has never won the race but rival Willie Mullins is trying for a third straight victory.

His 2024 winner I Am Maximus is his big hope, along with Grangeclare West who will be ridden by his son – and last year's winning jockey – Patrick Mullins.



**FEELS GRAND**  
... Harry Skelton and Panic Attack go off today as favourites

**Bookies running scared as Dan's mare now 7-1**

**PANIC ATTACK!**



**Mikel tells stars to embrace their final hurdles and gallop to title**

**Arsenal v Bournemouth**  
12.30pm, TNT Sports 1 & iPlayer

**By MARTIN LIPTON**

**MIKEL ARTETA** has told his Arsenal players to keep calm heads as the title race enters the final furlong.

Victory for the galloping Gunners over Bournemouth on Grand National Day will extend their lead to 12 points over chasers Manchester City.

And boss Arteta is desperate for his thoroughbreds to hold their nerve to the finishing line and deliver a first Premier League crown since 2004.

He said: "I want my players to embrace the opportunity, the difficulty, to put everything on the table."

"We've been very consistent in what we've been doing. "But this is the most crucial part of the season, it's about to happen and we need to deliver"

**Turn to Page 71**

**TOP OF TABLE**

	P	GD	PTS
1 Arsenal	31	+39	70
2 Man City	30	+32	61

**THE WINNER'S ENCLOSURE** ... Arteta is urging Arsenal to get to the finish line

**Goals**  
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**Guide to the Prem in FREE pullout**

**Hammers are so hot to Tott**

West Ham.....4 Wolves.....0

**By JUSTIN ALLEN**

**WEST HAM** surged out of the Premier League relegation zone — and plunged Tottenham into it.

Former Arsenal defender Konstantinos Mavropanos and Taty Castellanos (left) scored doubles as the rampant Hammers moved two points clear of the bottom three.

Roberto De Zerbi's Spurs, now 18th in the table, travel to Sunderland tomorrow.

Mavropanos said: "It's an incredible result."

**Match report — Pages 66, 67**



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**CABARET-STYLE DINING**

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**HALF-PRICE DRINKS**

**BACK THRU THE DECADES SOMERSET SEASIDE PARTY**

**SAND BAY HOLIDAY VILLAGE, NEAR WESTON-SUPER-MARE**

**ENTERTAINMENT:** Boy Gorgeous, The Moondogs, The Foundations, DS; UK (Dire Straits tribute), Marc Robinson's Winter Dance, tributes to Buddy Holly, Richie Valens, The Big Bopper & Dion and The Belmonts, Earth, Wind For Hire, ET as Bob Marley, Suzy Hopwood as Kylie Minogue, Keri Whip as Tina Turner, Carnaby Street, Sarah Riches as Olivia Newton-John, YMCA - Village People Experience, Maxine Mazumder as Dusty Springfield, Nat Augustin as George Benson, Buzz D'Angelo as Little Richard, Jimmy Jemain as Cliff Richard, Billy Shannon and The GN A-way Team.

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Saturday, April 11, 2026

By CALLUM JAMIESON

**BULLISH Dan Skelton is fanning the flames of the big Grand National gamble.**

His **PANIC ATTACK** (4.00) has been backed off the boards in the lead-up to the famous race and could even go off favourite.

The ten-year-old will be ridden by Dan's brother Harry in the £1 million showpiece and would be the first mare to win the race in **75 YEARS** if she gets the job done.

But that stat hasn't put off the punters who have backed her into just 8-1 from 25-1 with William Hill in the past week and the firm are now in full Panic mode.

Hill's Lee Phelps said: "The bookies will have had a mare if Panic Attack does win!"

"Punters have really latched on to her and she's been smashed in. Last week she was a 20-1 shot, but she's plummeted into 8-1 and is stubbornly popular.

"She's by far our worst result and we're facing a huge payout."

Skelton, who is set to be crowned champion trainer for the first time at the end of the jumps season, said: "Everything we could have hoped for in the build up to this race has happened.

"It is going to be hard to win a National, you don't need me to tell you that. She is trying something that a mare hasn't done since 1951.

"But she's got a big chance and looks fantastic. She's had a great season, she is on top of her game, she stays really well, and she wants this type of trip now-a-days."



**LEADING LADY** ... Panic Attack is the big Grand National gamble

**BIG-RACE TIP AND STAR RATINGS FROM TEMPLEGATE PAGES 8-9**

**COLOUR CARD, FORM AND TRENDS FOR BIG RACE PAGES 10-11**

**SUPER SWEEPSTAKE PAGE 20 MATT CHAPMAN PAGE 2**

**REST OF AIN TREE COLOURS PAGES 12-15**

# PANIC STATIONS

Bookies sound the alarm as the Skeltons go on Attack in National



BIG BROTHER ... trainer Dan Skelton



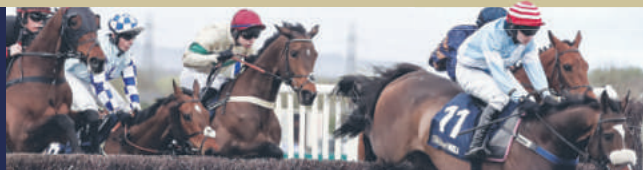
JOCKEY ... Harry Skelton

Grand National Festival Grand National Festival Grand National Festival Grand National Festival Grand National Festival Grand National Festival Grand National Festival

**5 PLACES ON THE GRAND NATIONAL**

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"Extra places" refers to either (a) Extra Places offered on the standard race card of selected races (Min runners apply, 1/5 odds unless otherwise stated, T&Cs apply) or (b) Each Way Extra market (4+ runners required, BOG and Cash Out not available, T&Cs apply)



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# Favourite

YOUR No1 RACING PULLOUT

# 2026 AINTREE GRAND



**IT** once looked as though one of racing's most famous families – the O'Neills – would never taste Randox Grand National success.

Former top-class rider and now brilliant trainer Jonjo O'Neill failed to secure a clear round in Aintree's great test.

But, as a handler, the man who famously rode Dawn Run to Cheltenham Gold Cup success did break his Grand National hoodoo when he sent out Don't Push It to land the race in 2010.

Now 16 years later it's O'Neill's jockey-son Jonjo Jr who has a huge chance – live on ITV – to do in the saddle what his dad couldn't when he teams up with IROKO (4.00), a staying-on fourth this time last year.

Off the track Jonjo Jr has had to overcome some demons in recent times, but on it he's enjoyed some big moments, including when landing the County Hurdle at Cheltenham on his old man's Wilful.

Iroko is handled by the up-and-coming pair of Oliver Greenall and Josh Guerriero and, while he's 5lb higher in the weights this time around, he looked better than ever when beating Firefox at Ascot on his penultimate start.

I have to forgive a flop behind **Johnnywho** (great result for this column!) at Cheltenham in the Ultima, but it was reported he scoped dirty that day.

It's a wide-open Grand National on paper, but of course there is every chance **I Am Maximus** will be in the mix once again.

In the same JP McManus colours as Iroko, I Am Maximus was the winner under Paul Townend in 2024 and a gallant second last year.

He's proven over the modern-day Grand National fences and stays super strong. As far as his mark is concerned, the Willie Mullins-trained hero won it with ease off 159 two years ago

and was on a mark of 167 when runner-up. I suspect he wasn't quite as on his game in 2025 as he was in 2024, and he now gets cheekpieces added. This time he must be better than ever off 168, but his second to Affordale Fury in the Savills is as good form as anything in this and he was rated 170 on that occasion. He must have a huge chance of at least hitting the frame.

Mullins sends an army over for the race, and as with I Am Maximus it's easy to make a solid case for **Grangeclare West**.

Third last year, Grangeclare West might well have gone very close to landing the prize if he hadn't made a thumping error at the last. He's up 3lb to a mark of 166, but he's bang in form after Fairyhouse and he looked in great shape.

I also expect a decent run from one of the bigger-priced runners in the shape of **Final Orders**.

A cross-country specialist, Final Orders comes into this in belting form having hacked up at the Festival over the unique fences there. The good going is the key to him. Other leading fancies include **Panic Attack**, but I can't have the mare over this trip. The last female horse to win the Aintree marathon was Nickel Coin in 1951. History dictates it's unlikely to happen.

**Jagwar** is another contender for Greenall and Guerriero, and he gets first-time cheekpieces and a tongue-tie. His jumping will need to improve.

Richie McLernon went as close as anyone has got to winning the Grand National when touched off on Sunnyhillboy in 2012. He was beaten a nose. Now he's aboard **Johnnywho** having his second run after a wind operation.

Whatever the result, the world will be watching the Grand National. It remains one of the great sporting events. Good luck and Yeeehaaaa!

**DREAM TEAM** . . . Iroko trainers Oliver Greenall (left) and Josh Guerriero



# SUNRACING — FIRST PAST THE POST — THE BEST RACING PULLOUT

# I'd never seen our famous win



**WEST IS BEST** . . . Grangeclare West is one of the favourites for this year's Grand National at Aintree



**FATHER TIME** . . . Patrick and Willie enjoy emotional moment after last year's success with Nick Rockett



**THE reality is usually never quite as good as the dream.**

But victory in last year's Randox Grand National, if anything, exceeded expectations for Patrick Mullins.

He might not have earned a penny of the £500,000 prize-money, given he is technically an amateur rider, but the truth is he would happily have paid a king's ransom for that sort of adrenaline rush.

During the long, dark winter, he was hoping to return to Aintree with his hero from 12 months ago, **Nick Rockett**, to write another epic chapter in their story.

Sadly, horses are not machines, and the defending champ was ruled out on Thursday morning.

He'll be back next year, touch wood, most likely with Patrick on his back. The sequel is simply on ice.

Mullins said: "It's 72-hour declarations for the Grand National and we wanted to give him every chance to make it back there, but he gave a few coughs on Thursday morning which made up our mind."

"It was very frustrating. It hit me about a month after we won the race last year

By **JACK KEENE**



that our story wasn't done and that I'd be back here to ride him again.

"It would have been very cool to ride him in the National again, but it was a case of everything needed to go right to get him here and, unfortunately, we just didn't get everything to go right."

"He could have run, but we didn't want to do that if he wasn't 110 per cent."

"You need to be 110 per cent to run in a race like the Grand National and, unfortunately, he's not at the moment."

The horse always comes first, especially one as precious as Nick Rockett.

And if he never wins another race, he has been responsible for arguably the greatest day in Mullins family history.

In fact, the occasion was so momentous, something unimaginable happened to the usually steadfast champion trainer Willie.

Mullins smiled: "I'd never seen dad cry

before! I think it made the occasion for everyone, because it was very unlike him.

"He is very good at keeping his emotions under wraps. My theory is that it was because of the strong medication he was on for a sore hip at the time. That's my only logical explanation."

"It was magic to have my mother there and it would have been amazing if my grandmother was still around to see it. She died about a year before the race and she would have absolutely loved it."

As far as Grand Nationals go, the race could hardly have been more straightforward for Patrick and his 33-1 shot.

He was in a lovely rhythm the entire way round, and the only slight doubt was whether he had enough petrol in the tank to last home.

Mullins continued: "I remember snapshots of the race, there are some races you remember every little detail, but the race went so smoothly there were only a few things that stood out."

"Hewick ran across us at Becher's second time around, which was a bit of a heart-in-mouth moment, and I thought I

in association with



NATIONAL FESTIVAL



# Willie cry until at Aintree

**GREATEST DAY...**  
Nick Rockett and Patrick Mullins (below) on their way to victory in last year's National — he will not defend his crown today

Says last year's Grand National hero

# PATRICK MULLINS



was too far back at the Canal Turn but then I looked over and saw Rachael Blackmore beside me, so I thought I was doing something right.

"And I remember very clearly hitting the front two out and thinking 'bollocks, I shouldn't be here so soon!'

"It is definitely going through your head, whether or not you're going to get around the Elbow and get home. It's a long way home from the last and you've plenty of time to think about what's going on.

"I rode Burrows Saint a few years ago and for the best part of a mile I was thinking we could win, don't mess it up, but we didn't get home after the last.

"On Nick Rockett it never went through my mind, I was expecting the dream to evaporate at some point.

"You'll hear other jockeys say the same thing, but it was pure disbelief when I crossed the line. You can see I didn't even celebrate, all I did was smile."

The celebrations will live long in the memory for anyone lucky enough to be at Aintree — not just Willie's tears, but jubilant owner Stewart Andrew giving Patrick

a piggyback into the winner's enclosure as Nick Rockett cooled down.

Mullins said: "I know from my father's generation, there was no Irish winner between L'Escargot and Bobbyjo, there was 24 years between them.

"But for my generation I've seen David Mullins do it, Paul Townend and Rachael Blackmore, you know it's doable but you never expect it to happen to you."

And there is every chance it could happen to Patrick again this afternoon.

As far as supersubs for the National, Grangeclare West isn't a bad one.

For plenty of people he was an unlucky loser last year, when he stayed on powerfully into third having made a horlicks of the last under Brian Hayes.

Perhaps more important than his proven form around Aintree was his bounceback win in the Bobbyjo Chase last time — a race which has a rich recent history of providing National winners.

Hedgehunter was the first to do the double in 2005 before I Am Maximus in 2024 and Nick Rockett last year.

And you don't have to look too far back

to find the last jockey to win back-to-back Grand Nationals on different horses, with Leighton Aspell achieving the rare feat on Pineau De Re and Many Clouds in 2014 and 2015.

The bookies certainly reckon Grangeclare West has a big chance — he could go off favourite at 4.00 today — and Mullins is hoping beyond hope they're right.

He said: "Even before we had to scratch Nick Rockett, Willie was keen for me to ride Grangeclare West.

"He looks to have an excellent chance, he won the Bobbyjo which has been a good guide recently and he ran very well in the race last year.

"I'm not surprised Paul Townend decided to stick with I Am Maximus.

"The run he put in last year, with the amount of ground he lost with his jumping, was excellent.

"We've won the last two Nationals and it would be very cool to emulate Vincent O'Brien with three in a row. It would be even cooler if I rode it again!"

Whenever the Mullins are involved, anything is possible.

**SALVATOR MUNDI** looks a Saturday sizzler in the Maghull Novices' Chase (12.45).

The emerald army are lumping on Willie Mullins' jolly, and he should kick the afternoon off in style.

And **PANIC ATTACK** has got bookies' knees knocking in the Randox Grand National (4.00).

In-form Dan Skelton's mighty mare nabbed a couple of top-notch handicaps in mid-winter and warmed up for this with a lively leg-loosener at Cheltenham. Dan's Liver bird jumps for fun and she will be involved at the business end if Harry Skelton can pick his way through the pack.

But if you are hunting for an each-way earner, have a good peep at Henry de Bromhead's lively 14-1 shot **MONTY'S STAR**.

Hooray Henry has got plenty of previous in the Merseyside marathon and this big boy will be fresh as paint for the day that matters most.

Meanwhile, the hard-working boys and girls at Hill's HQ are battenning down the hatches for a betting bonanza.

Their man Lee Phelps said: "The Grand National is the most bet-on race of the year by a country mile, and we expect well over £150 million to be staked.

"Panic Attack has been backed down from 66s to 7-1 — she's the one we're fearing most.

"Final Orders and Haiti Couleurs have also been popular and both would be expensive results for us."

Talking about dough, Ben Pauling's posse will cop a £500,000 bonus ball if their Aintree ace **TWIG** manages

to nick the National. That windfall would give connections enough for a decent spend-up.

But big Ben has never let success go to his wardrobe, and the old carrot cruncher is planning

to splash his share of the cash on a fresh pair of jeans.

And the Aintree layers were searching for a decent tailor after losing their shirts when Dan Skelton's Nan's Choice (10s to 9-2) ran away with Thursday's nightcap.

That has given Skelton's squad plenty of ammo, and they are nibbling at **MR HOPE STREET** in the William Hill Handicap Chase (2.30).

Dan's dark'un hasn't managed to get his noggin in front over fences yet. But he turned a few heads at Sandown last time and will be fitter than Rocky.

My mucker Tracksuit Dave has been on the blower to his local gym about starting a yoga class.

When they asked how flexible he was, Tracksuit said he couldn't do Tuesdays or Thursdays.

Anyway, Dave is warming up for the workout by spending a week clacking his castanets in sunny Spain. The prince of Primark paid for that beano when a South African flyer named in his honour landed a tickle for Joao Da Mata's Glistian Racing crew at Turffontein in midweek.

That was double handy and Dave plans to play up his booty by having a couple of shekels on Gordon Elliott's **BALLYFAD** (1.55) in the Mersey Novices' Hurdle.

Gordy's gang are on a five-timer in that classy contest and their nag deserves another chance after being kicked at the start before his latest jaunt.

Finally, Chris Gordon's stable star **BASS HUNTER** (5.00) is top of the pops in the bumper.

Gordon's go-getter whacked the woodwork at Cheltenham last time and will take plenty of stopping with the brilliant Harry Cobden booked to press

all the right buttons.

Leave the layers with the Mundi blues in Maghull



FANCY... Salvator Mundi goes in Maghull



# Favourite

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**THEY say men think about sex 19 times a day... including after a Grand National win, it turns out.**

Mick Fitzgerald is a familiar face to racing fans around the country these days, but he became a household name after his famous interview 30 years ago.

Moments after riding **Rough Quest** to victory at Aintree he said to Des Lynam: "After that, Des, even sex is an anticlimax."

Fitzy, 55, declined to divulge how his missus at the time felt about those remarks, but smiled: "It's definitely how I felt, though I've remarried since, so you might get a different answer now!"

Even the legendary Lynam, for so many years the face of the BBC's Grand National coverage, struggled to stifle a snigger live on air.

Fitzgerald continued: "The scary thing is when I look back on those days I think, 'My God, am I really that old?'. Des was a god of

**By JACK KEENE**



television in those days. We had a stewards' inquiry which took a long time, and as soon as it was done I was whisked out in front of him.

"He said, 'Mick Fitzgerald, you've just won the Grand National, how do you feel?'."

"The first thing that went through my head was 'blimey, Des is quite tall', and then I just came out with that line.

"I could see him flicker as I said it and I thought he was going to laugh but he held it together."

"Given the enormity of the occasion, it was just one of those lines that came out, and now it gets replayed every year. It's probably more famous than the race."

There's little doubt about it. But the result did more for Fitzgerald than just boost his chances of a

post-racing TV career. It catapulted him to the next level just as he was trying to break through in a golden era of jump jockeys.

When you're riding against Richard Dunwoody, AP McCoy and Adrian Maguire every day of the week, it's difficult to get opportunities on the big days.

When they come, you've got to make the most of your chance.

Fitzgerald said: "I finished second in a Gold Cup on Rough Quest two weeks earlier, he was a serious horse for me."

"A lot of people say I gave him a great ride to win the National, but I thought I gave him as good a ride as I've ever given one to finish second in a Gold Cup."

"He was a horse I had a lot of faith in and I was blessed that he came along at that point in my career when I was still young."

"I'd won the Ultima on him at the Festival the year before but I was lucky to get back on him."

"Richard Dunwoody had won the

Racing Post Chase on him at Kempton the month before Cheltenham because I was retained to ride one of Nicky Henderson's."

"Before Aintree I was s\*\*\*\*\* myself that I'd lose the ride."

"I'd only had one ride in the National before then and that was on a horse called Tinryland who fell at the first."

"It was a nervous wait to find out if I'd get the ride because I really fancied him."

As it turned out, Dunwoody didn't jock him off and the rest, as they say, is history.

Fitzgerald gave him a beautifully-judged waiting ride and delivered him 200 yards from the line to beat Encore Un Peu - though he was made to sweat through a stewards' inquiry before his dream result was confirmed.

He said: "It's one of those races that lives forever in your memory, it's the biggest of them all."

"If you win it, you get introduced as 'Grand National-win-

ning jockey'. With respect to those races, you don't get introduced as a Champion Chase-winning rider or 2,000 Guineas winner."

"The National is on a level all on its own and, even though the race has changed over the years, it is still unbelievably special."

"It doesn't matter if it's 30 years, 40 years or 100 years from now, they can never take it off me."

"I was petrified the stewards might try to, I didn't want to become the first ever jockey to lose the National after an inquiry. Thank goodness I didn't!"

Fitzgerald's love affair with Aintree came to a terrible and abrupt end in 2008, when he

**I said winning the National was better than sex... I stand by it!**



**THROWBACK . . .** big-race jockey turned top TV pundit Mick Fitzgerald rode Rough Quest to win Grand National back in 1986

**SAYS MICK FITZGERALD**

in association with



# NATIONAL FESTIVAL

suffered a fall in the Grand National that would end his glittering career. He was riding L'Ami in the big race when he came down at the second fence, breaking his neck.

He said: "It was unfortunate what happened and it was just bad luck that it happened in the Grand National. For jump jockeys it's a risk every time you get on a horse."

"Even though that injury happened at Aintree, when I walk through the gates my memories are of winning the race, not what happened on L'Ami."

Indeed, he loves the city and he loves the race.

He continued: "Liverpool is an amazing place. The Grand National doesn't belong to the BHA or the Jockey Club, it belongs to the people of Liverpool."

"There is a reason why the beauty salons will be jam-packed before the National and people are getting new suits, it's because they want to look their best for their race."

"When there was the bomb scare

and the race was called off, the people of Liverpool opened their doors to everyone stuck with nowhere to go.

"That wouldn't have happened in any other city."

"And we saw it during those protests a few years ago, they dragged them off the track and stopped them climbing over fences. They weren't having any of it."

Fitzgerald has been a staple of the Grand National coverage now for the last 10 years, and he will give his National tip later today on ITV.

So we might as well give you a sneak peek. He said: "It's a fascinating race and there are lots with chances on paper. I've a shortlist of a few, but Grangeclare West has an outstanding chance for me. I think Patrick and Willie Mullins will win it for the second year in a row."

Plenty of punters will be following Mick in with last year's third.

Backing the winner of the Randox Grand National might not be better than sex, but apparently riding the winner is.



**MAX POWER...**  
Paul Townend steered I Am Maximus to famous win in 2024 at Aintree — his first in the big race

**IT'S finally here again, the biggest day in our sport... and I get just as excited for it now as I did when I first rode in the race 17 years ago.**

The Grand National is the race I remember most as a kid.

At home we would make a fence out of tyres to jump on the ponies, and we'd be looking for anything green we could get our hands on to wrap around the fence and make it resemble one of the National ones.

It was always a bit of an event in our house so to come full circle and now be riding in the race on a fancied horse... it's surreal.

I was a massive Paul Carberry fan as a kid, and I remember just thinking he was so stylish, so I always tried to model myself on him when I first started riding.

Bobbyjo would probably be my earliest memory, actually, and seeing Carberry win on him really inspired me to want to do the same.

Papillon is another that sticks in my mind, and I remember everybody in Ireland just being thrilled for the Walsh family that day.

I was so nervous the first time I got to ride in the race.

I remember walking the course on the Friday night before the National and just thinking the fences were absolutely huge.

The adrenaline riding over them that first time was like nothing I'd ever experienced. They've changed a bit now, but the hang time over those old fences was just incredible, and the minute it was over, I was desperate to have another go.

Thankfully when I won on I Am Maximus two years ago I got to experience what it's like to cross the line in front.

I didn't allow myself to believe I'd won until I'd crossed the line, and I didn't dare celebrate a second before. I just put my head down and kept driving all the way.

The feeling crossing the line was just incredible, but it is a bit of a blur. You are high-fiving people and shaking people's hands; it really was the stuff of childhood dreams.

If you go anywhere in the world and tell people you are a jockey, they always ask if you've ridden in the Grand National, so to be able to tell them you've won it is pretty cool, let me tell you!

The celebrations that night are a bit of a blur now, if truth be told! Hopefully there will be more of



**PAUL TOWNEND**  
GRAND NATIONAL-WINNING RIDER & WILLIE MULLINS' NO1 with betway

*Winning this was dream – I reckon we can party again*

and I think the cheekpieces going back on this time could help him.

The National is a very different race from what it used to be.

Yes, you need to stay, and yes, you need to jump well, but you need a much classier horse to win it than in the past, and I Am Maximus stays, jumps, and has a touch of class, so I wouldn't swap him for anything else in the race.

I'm obviously gutted for connections of Nick Rockett, as he was such an impressive winner last year, but he'll unfortunately miss the race this time around.

I would give a mention to **Champ Kieley** as I think he could easily outrun his odds.

He was a Grade 1-winning novice, has a lovely weight, and his work at home has been excellent, so if he settles and stays, he's capable of running into a place.

We kick off with **SALVATOR MUNDI** (12.45) in the Maghull, and his best performance came here at Aintree when winning the novice hurdle last year, so the track really seems to suit him.

He was entitled to win his beginners' chase last time, but he could hardly have done it any easier, and he's a horse I've always thought a lot of.

He comes here fresh after skipping Cheltenham and Fairyhouse, and his work at home has been good, so there are a lot of positives going into the race, and I think he has a massive chance in this.

We finish with **LOOK ME** (5.00) in the bumper, and his form behind I'm Slippy reads well, with that horse running to a decent level over hurdles. It was a messy bumper he won in a small field at Fairyhouse, but he did it comfortably, so he's earned his place in this much stronger contest.

**Bass Hunter** is the right favourite after his third in the Champion Bumper at Cheltenham, and if he reproduces that then he'll be the one we'll all have to beat.

There's a lot of good bumper horses in the yard, though, and this is the one Willie has decided to send here, so you'd have to take that as a big positive. Good luck!



**ROUGH AND READY...** Fitzgerald as a youngster poses for cameras after celebrations



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ACE . . . Toby McCain-Mitchell

**McCain carries a piece of Red Rum**

**JOCKEY** Toby McCain-Mitchell is hoping for a bit of good luck thanks to the late, great Red Rum.

The jockey, grandson of Red Rum's late trainer Ginger McCain, is having his first ride in the Grand National today on big outsider Top Of The Bill.

But if any jockey is bred for the job, it is the 24-year-old. For good measure, his uncle Donald McCain trained Ballabriggs to win the world's most famous race in 2011.

His mum Joanne kept the locks from Red Rum's mane when the fan favourite died in 1995.

McCain-Mitchell said: "I'll put a lock I have in my gloves on Saturday."

"It's a bit silly but it's just for good luck. He used to do well over the fences so it can't do any harm!"

"I'm looking forward to it and it's certainly a dream come true."

"I suppose it has always been a bit like destiny to ride in the Grand National and it has always been the dream and a goal of mine."

"Hopefully it is a proud day for the family, but I did see an interview with granddad not too long after Ballabriggs won in 2011 and one of the questions was 'what was your last Grand National ambition?'."

"He said he wanted to live long enough to see one of his grandchildren turn a\*\*e over t\*\* at one of the ditches down the back. Hopefully that doesn't happen!"

Meanwhile, the team behind 40-1 shot Twig will be hoping their £100 horse can land jump racing's biggest prize and an even bigger payday.

Should the Ben Pauling-trained 11-year-old win today, he will scoop not only the £500,000 first prize but also another £500,000 bonus for having won the William Hill Half A Mill Becher Chase at Aintree in December.

Bought to go point-to-pointing five years ago as a mount for big-race partner Beau Morgan by the jockey's mother Georgia, the "horse of a lifetime" has run only once since the Becher Chase when seventh over hurdles at Uttoxeter last month.

If he does scoop the bonus, don't expect a dry eye in the house.

# STORMY

Tears of joy for day marred by



HIGHS AND LOWS . . . Paul Townend was consoled by his boss Willie Mullins after Gold Dancer was put down following Mildmay victory

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NATIONAL FESTIVAL

# SKIES

## Neil but big Gold death

onal Festival Live from 8am Grand National Festival



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By JACK KEENE

**NEVER** have the highs and lows of racing been more sharply in focus than in an emotional 40 minutes at Aintree.

The very next race after **Gold Dancer's** sadly ill-fated victory in the Mildmay Chase, small-time trainer Neil King celebrated his greatest ever day with outsider **Storming George**.

Racing has done a good job of getting on the front foot when there have been difficult situations to deal with, but there is no sugar coating the incident involving **Gold Dancer**.

The Willie Mullins-trained seven-year-old was in the clear and had the big Grade 1 novice chase in the bag when he made an error and stumbled badly after the last.

Paul Townend rode a finish but dismounted after the line and the horse was immediately attended to by vets. A short while later it was confirmed that he had been put down.

It was upsetting to watch and when it became clear the horse had suffered an injury it immediately sucked the air out of the building.

What is clear is that Townend would have pulled **Gold Dancer** up if he was aware the horse had suffered an injury after the final fence, rather than riding him through the line.

Horses are Townend's life and are the reason he has had such a wonderful, glittering career.

He is not cold-hearted and understands better than anyone the emphasis placed on horse welfare, at the Grand National meeting in particular.

The stewards held an inquiry and asked him why he'd not pulled the horse up. He said he hadn't felt anything different in **Gold Dancer's** action until he'd eased him to a trot.

It was a view shared by the BHA's chief vet James Given, who watched the race footage back and did not notice any material difference in the horse's gait while he was still galloping. The stewards will take no further action.

It was a bitter blow to trainer Mullins who said: "It's a big loss for the yard because he was improving all the time and to give such an exhibition of jumping was unbelievable."

"Paul said to me the horse galloped through the line fine, went down to his slow pace at a canter and then just as he turned he went into a trot and that was the first he felt."

"I would say he didn't feel that the horse had any damage and he galloped all the way to the line and that's what you do as the rider."

"It's like a forward going for goal. He's going to keep going and something happens. He's going to keep going and kick the ball into the back of the net if he can. Same with the



**BREAKTHROUGH** ... Neil King (left) over the moon as **Storming George** provides trainer first Grade 1 win

jockey. Unless they feel that the horse's action is really wrong, he's not going to stop, because if he stops he'll lose his licence.

"Punters will drag him off the horse and say what did you pull him up for?"

"Horses make mistakes. People out running might trip and get up and run another ten miles and they only find out later on that night that they've pulled a muscle somewhere."

"It's just life. We can't legislate for everything."

"If Paul thought something was wrong he'd be the first one to pull him up."

And yet, there was a reason to smile on a tough day at Aintree as **Storming George** sprung a 16-1 surprise in the Grade 1 Top Novices' Hurdle.

King has only a small yard in Wiltshire - his string has shrunk to just 20 horses in recent years - so he was understandably

tearful after the six-year-old picked up strongly to run down **Sinnatra** and win going away.

King said: "That's fantastic, just fantastic. I'm over the moon."

"He's a horse we made ourselves after buying him as a store from Goffs."

"It's been a fabulous journey with the most wonderful owner behind him in Peter Beadles."

"It's great for Jack as well and he gave

him a smashing ride. To be honest with you, I didn't think we were travelling at all today but I knew he'd stay all right."

"I pitched him in a Grade 1 here on Boxing Day and I don't do that for the sake of it, but he came home sick that day so we can put a line through that."

"The other time he let me down was in the **Dovacote** at Kempton but we probably rode him a bit too aggressively there."

"I knew he was far better than a handicapper and I was so keen to bring him here for this."

"How can I sum up 30 years of really hard work in one sentence?"

We do this day in and day out, all of us. We do it for the love of the horse and we love the sport. To get that kind of a result is just fantastic."

Dan Skelton continues his march towards a first ever trainers' title and he bagged a big one with fan favourite **Grey Dawning** in the Melling Chase.

The 5-1 shot jumped like a stag under Harry Skelton and just got his head down on the line after a tremendous battle with **Solness** up the straight.

Skelton said: "I thought we'd win going to the last, two, three strides out."

"Halfway up the line couldn't come quick enough, but he's been very tenacious."

"It's been a wonderful season and to win another Grade 1 with this horse is very special."

**TRAGIC...** **Gold Dancer** suffers fatal injury after Grade 1 win



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**2026 Aintree Grand**

# GO TO WAR

Powerful Jag has ammo for this brutal track

By **STEVE MULLEN**



Templegate's horse-by-horse guide to the Grand National

**JAGWAR** can motor to Grand National glory (4.00 Aintree, nap).

Mark Walsh steps down as JP McManus's No.1 rider next month and can give him a great parting gift on this improver.

He finished like a train in the Ultima at Cheltenham and this longer trip in first-time cheekpieces could be the making of him. The winner of that race, **Johnnywho**, will be on the premises again too.

Henry de Bromhead has a solid National record and his **Monty's Star** can use his Grade 1 class to figure in the places.

Last year's third **Grangeclare West** is another with a big say.

Here's my guide to the runners:

**I AM MAXIMUS** ★★★  
MAX a factor. 2024 winner and last year's runner-up, so loves the race. His Leopardstown second in December showed plenty remains and still has class to mix it with top stayers. Can go close again despite lumping a hefty weight.

**BANBRIDGE** ★★  
BRIDGE too far – literally! King George winner in his prime but best around 3m and surely won't stay despite his class.

**GRANGECLARE WEST** ★★★

WEST tip. Excellent third in this race last year despite clattering the last. He comes here after brushing aside **Gerri Colombe** in the Bobbyjo and is only 3lb higher than last year. He stays, travels well and can go close again.

**GERRI COLOMBE** ★★★  
GER we go. Not the force of old

but well treated on his peak form. Has shown some decent signs this season but must turn back clock.

**HAITI COULEURS** ★★★  
HAI hopes. Irish and Welsh National winner who stays strongly. The test should suit him perfectly and he has shown before he can bounce back from a poor run. The Gold Cup effort was disappointing but this is a very different test and he cannot be ruled out.

**FIREFOX** ★★  
FIRE out. He's a decent performer but didn't stay in the Irish or Cheltenham Gold Cups and this is a mile further. Hard to fancy.

**MONTY'S STAR** ★★★  
MONTY zoomer. Genuine Grade 1 performer from a respected trainer. He was fourth in last year's Gold Cup and has had this as his target. Ran well again in a Grade 1 last time and should find this easier.

**SPANISH HARLEM** ★★  
SPAIN pain. Would have won the Thyestes but for unseating at the last and his overall staying form is

solid. Was poor last time and looks a little high in the weights.

**LECKY WATSON** ★  
LECKY cut. Was a high-class staying novice but has gone backwards. Made mistakes last time and needs this longer trip to work wonders.

**CHAMP KIELY** ★★  
CHAMP KO'd. Grade 1 winner at Punchestown who showed ability when travelling well in the Irish Gold Cup before fading. He has class but this trip is completely unknown territory.

**IROKO** ★★★  
KO for it. Fourth last year and targeted at another crack. Won well at Ascot in December and he had excuses for a poor Festival run. Proven stamina, solid jumping and a clear liking for this race make him a strong contender once again.

**FAVORI DE CHAMPDOU** ★★  
FAV an outsider. His cross-country form alongside **Final Orders** is strong. He looks fairly handicapped, jumps nicely and clearly stays. He did boil over at Cheltenham though

and that's a worry again along with the stronger opposition.

**THREE CARD BRAG** ★★  
CARD trick. Has been in decent form but was fancied for this last year and patently didn't stay. Likely to be the same story again.

**OSCAR'S BROTHER** ★★★  
BROTHER in arms. Improving novice who has won three over fences this season and ran a strong race to finish fourth in the Brown Advisory. He stayed on well that day and looks the type who could improve again for this longer trip. One of the more interesting unexposed runners here.

**MR VANGO** ★★  
VAN must motor. This extreme distance is right up his street and his second in the Becher over these fences showed his liking for the test. But his last two runs have ended badly. That dents confidence despite his clear staying power.

**HIGH CLASS HERO** ★★  
HERO must fly. Showed strong staying ability when third in the Bet365 at Sandown and has been

mentioned as a National type since. But his form has fallen off a cliff and he needs a big turnaround.

**STELLAR STORY** ★★  
FAIRY Story. He has shaped like a strong stayer in decent races and this longer trip could suit. Place chance if building on his Bobbyjo Chase third last time out.

**BEAUPORT** ★  
PORT in a storm. Midlands National winner at his peak who jumped well last year before surprisingly fading. Hasn't shown a lot this season.

**CAPTAIN CODY** ★★★  
SALUTE Captain. Scottish National winner who finished like a sprinter at Ayr. Up the weights but that effort is hard to forget and gives him place claims.

**JAGWAR** ★★★★★  
JAG has gears. Eye-catching runner-up in the Ultima where he chased home **Johnnywho** despite early trouble. He has improved with each chase start and shapes like this longer trip will suit. First-time cheekpieces may help and this



in association with



# NATIONAL FESTIVAL

LEAVE YOUR MARK  
... Mark Walsh  
(right) can win the  
Grand National  
on Jagwar



## BLUFFERS GUIDE TO THE BIG RACE



OUR top tipster TEMPLEGATE (Steve Mullen) is old enough to remember watching Aldaniti win the National. He has come up with some tasty punter pointers to help you pick your Grand National fancy. We're under Starter's Orders!



### JOCKEY WATCH

EVEN the best jockeys struggle to win the Grand National and only two of today's 34 pilots have won the big race. PATRICK MULLINS took it 12 months ago on Nick Rockett but deserted him to ride GRANGECLARE WEST even before the defending champ was ruled out. Another of Irish champion trainer Willie Mullins' pilots, PAUL TOWNEND, is the only other National winner and it took him 13 goes. He's on likely favourite I AM MAXIMUS who he steered to glory in 2024 and second place 12 months ago. He had the pick of the Mullins team so that could be a tip in itself.

TIMES have really changed since the days of Becher's Brook being almost seven feet tall thanks to a massive drop on the landing side. All the drops have been filled in on the National course and we haven't had a faller at Becher's since 2018. All the fences have had their solid wooden cores removed and replaced with small plastic hurdles that are covered with spruce that the horses can brush through. The maximum field has been cut to 34 to give the runners more room and the start moved away from the stands so it's calmer. That cut two furlongs from the distance and there's been just one faller at the first since 2022.



### SAFETY FIRST



### SITTING ON THE FENCE

DESPITE the fences definitely being easier these days, good jumpers still win the big race. NONE of the past 10 Grand National winners had ever fallen in their career before heading to Aintree. Looking at this year's field Lecky Watson, Iroko, Favori De Champdour, Oscars Brother, Beauport, Captain Cody, Perceval Legallois (fell in the National), Gorgeous Tom and Final Orders have fallen which is a worry. Don't be totally put off though as 2013 66-1 winner Auroras Encore had fallen five times before Aintree! On the plus side, I Am Maximus and Twig have all won over the big fences before which is a plus for their backers.

HORSES run in the colours of their owners and looking at the National card on pages 10-11, you'll notice several of the runners are wearing green and gold hoops. Those seven are in the silks of jump racing's No.1 owner JP McManus. He has won the Grand National an impressive three times, including with I Am Maximus in 2024. During the race you can distinguish them by their different coloured caps — best of luck to the commentators! It looks like JP could have four of the first five in the betting and one bookie is going just 6-4 that McManus will be in the winner's enclosure again at 4.15 this afternoon.



### TALKING OWNERS



### TOUGH FOR TRAINERS

NICKY HENDERSON doesn't have a horse in today's National so his wait for a winner goes on for another year. His first runner in the race was in 1979 so he's clearly a patient man. There's nothing from 14-time UK champion Paul Nicholls either which can't be a great sign for British jump racing. Trainers who have won the National before and have at least one runner today include Willie Mullins who has a ridiculous eight lining up, Gordon Elliott has won three Nationals and has five in the field but all at big prices. Past winner Henry de Bromhead saddles three, Nigel Twiston-Davies has two, while Jonjo O'Neill has one.

IF you don't mind taking a fifth of the odds instead of a quarter, many bookies will offer five, six or even seven places in the Grand National. There are also special bets galore. For example, it's 40-1 about Willie Mullins training the first three past the post. Or it's only 25-1 for JP McManus to own the first, second and third. And you can bet on the number of finishers. The past five Nationals have had an average of 17.6 completing the course and it's 9-4 with Hills for 16-18 getting round today. It's 7-2 for 13-15 finishers or if you fancy more to make it, you can have 6-1 about 22-24 seeing out the race.



### BASH THE BOOKIES

track can sharpen his jumping too. Huge chance under Mark Walsh.  
**PERCEVAL LEGALLOIS** ★★★  
POINT Percy. Fell in this last year when fancied and not done much this season. Back on a fair mark from a shrewd trainer and no shock if he runs well with Harry Cobden up.  
**GORGEOUS TOM** ★★★  
TOM sauce. Newbury fourth in the Coral Gold Cup reads well and he followed that with another solid effort at Leopardstown. He looks like a stayer in the making and this longer trip could bring improvement.  
**THE REAL WHACKER** ★  
OUT of Whack. Top-class in his prime with a Cheltenham Festival win but that was a good while ago and he's far from certain to stay.  
**QUAI DE BOURBON** ★★  
LOST Quai. Irish National third last season which shows he can stay. His Leopardstown third was encouraging and suggests he is coming back to form. Not the best jumper though.  
**ANSWER TO KAYF** ★  
ANSWER's no. Troytown winner over

3m whose best displays have come on softer ground over shorter trips.  
**JORDANS** ★★  
JOR dropper. Smart novice last season including a strong second over 3m1f here. Hasn't kicked on this year but is only seven so can improve.  
**FINAL ORDERS** ★★★  
FINAL whistle. Cross-country specialist who beat Favori De Champdour at Cheltenham. He is on the same mark here and his stamina is well proven. This is a different challenge but his staying power makes him an interesting contender.  
**MARBLE SANDS** ★★  
SHIFTING Sands. Got round in last year's Topham and is unexposed over long trips. He looks overpriced despite needing to find more.  
**PANIC ATTACK** ★★★  
ON the Attack. Coral Gold Cup winner who has improved a mile since joining the Skeltons. She travels strongly and stays well. This longer trip is another test but she arrives in good form and has been backed.  
**TOP OF THE BILL** ★★  
BILL thrill. Haydock winner and

runner-up in the Grand National Trial who is in peak form. He stays well but this is a deeper race and he will need to raise his game again.  
**JOHNNYWHO** ★★ ★★  
JOHNNY on the spot. Ultima winner at Cheltenham where he dug deep to beat Jagwar. He has already handled these fences well in the Grand Sefton. His Irish National run suggests this trip could suit and he's high on the shortlist.  
**TWIG** ★★  
TWIG brittle. Becher Chase winner over these fences and clearly suited by the unique Aintree test. However, last year's National saw him finish only tenth and similar result is likely again today.  
**IMPERIAL SAINT** ★★  
IMPERIAL has measure. Has a fine record on the Mildmay course here and was hampered in the Ultima. Capable of better from a low weight.  
**AMIRITE** ★  
RITE wrong. Fourth in the Topham last season and has decent stamina but past two runs have been poor and he needs a lot more.

# Favourite

YOUR No1 RACING PULLOUT

# 2026 AINTREE GRAND

# 4.00

# 2026 RANDOX GRAND

● GRADE 3 HANDICAP CHASE ● 4m 2f 74yds ● WINNER: £500,000; 2nd: £200,000

### TEMPLEGATE

- JAGWAR
- Monty's Star
- Johnnywho
- Grangedclare West

### TOM PEPPER

- JOHNNYWHO
- Jagwar
- Grangedclare West
- I Am Maximus

### MATT CHAPMAN

- IROKO
- I Am Maximus
- Grangedclare West
- Final Orders

### SUNRATINGS

- JAGWAR
- Grangedclare West
- I Am Maximus
- Haiti Couleurs

### TRACKMAN

- PANIC ATTACK
- Monty's Star
- I Am Maximus
- Grangedclare West

### EACH-WAY THIEF

- PERCEVAL LEGALLOIS
- Haiti Couleurs
- Iroko
- Johnnywho

### EAMONN HAMES

- QUAI DE BOURBON
- I Am Maximus
- Captain Cody
- Oscars Brother

### THE COMPUTER

- I AM MAXIMUS
- Jagwar
- Iroko
- Monty's Star

### THE JUDGE

- JAGWAR
- I Am Maximus
- Perceval Legallois
- Captain Cody

#### 1 I AM MAXIMUS (CD)

Trainer: Willie Mullins Jockey: Paul Townend  
 Age: 10 Weight: 11-12 **SUNRATING: 98**  
 Form: 82-925 Days since last ran: 68 **7-1**  
 Headgear: Cheekpieces Favoured ground: Good to Soft  
 Runs: 21 Wins: 6 (4S,GS) Places: 6 £126,398  
**Won this in 2024 and a brilliant second last year off similar mark, in better form this term and no surprise if he can win for a second time**

#### 2 NICK ROCKETT (CD)

Trainer: Willie Mullins Jockey: non-runner  
 Age: 9 Weight: 11-11 **SUNRATING: 97**  
 Form: 4111-3 Days since last ran: 25 **OUT**  
 Headgear: None Favoured ground: Soft  
 Runs: 15 Wins: 8 (3S,GS) Places: 3 £651,335  
**Powerful win last year, only 4lb higher, but rejected by Patrick Mullins which suggests other stablemates are more fancied, ruled out**

#### 3 BANBRIDGE

Trainer: Joseph O'Brien Jockey: J J Slevin  
 Age: 10 Weight: 11-11 **SUNRATING: 93**  
 Form: 7-4423 Days since last ran: 30 **50-1**  
 Headgear: Visor Favoured ground: Good  
 Runs: 25 Wins: 11 (5G,4GS) Places: 4 £664,090  
**Grade 1 class, won King George in 2024 and runner-up in a stronger renewal this season, fair effort in Ryanair, no surprise if he runs well**

#### 4 GRANGEDCLARE WEST

Trainer: Willie Mullins Jockey: Patrick Mullins  
 Age: 10 Weight: 11-10 **SUNRATING: 98**  
 Form: 5-8481 Days since last ran: 49 **9-1**  
 Headgear: None Favoured ground: Soft  
 Runs: 18 Wins: 7 (5S) Places: 2 £264,827  
**Unlucky not to win this last year after a terrible error at the last, won best trial at Fairyhouse in fine style, classy and Patrick's pick**

#### 5 GERRI COLOMBE

Trainer: Gordon Elliott Jockey: Jack Kennedy  
 Age: 10 Weight: 11-10 **SUNRATING: 91**  
 Form: 7-4P21 Days since last ran: 25 **25-1**  
 Headgear: Cheekpieces Favoured ground: Good to Soft  
 Runs: 19 Wins: 12 (5S,2GS) Places: 4 £651,872  
**Runner-up in Gold Cup in 2024, so has plenty of back class, but not sure he's anywhere near that form these days, others appeal more**

#### 6 HAITI COULEURS

Trainer: Rebecca Curtis Jockey: Sean Bowen  
 Age: 9 Weight: 11-10 **SUNRATING: 97**  
 Form: 4-1P1P Days since last ran: 29 **14-1**  
 Headgear: None Favoured ground: Good to Soft  
 Runs: 18 Wins: 9 (3S,4GS,G) Places: 5 £483,570  
**National specialist, already won Irish and Welsh versions and must have every chance of winning the big one, though he has had busy year**

#### 7 SPILLANE'S TOWER

Trainer: James Mangin Jockey: non-runner  
 Age: 8 Weight: 11-8 **SUNRATING: 91**  
 Form: 52-931P Days since last ran: 2 **OUT**  
 Headgear: None Favoured ground: Soft  
 Runs: 18 Wins: 6 (4S) Places: 4 £327,179  
**Unexposed as stayer, just notch below very best at Grade 1 level, Cotswold Chase win useful form, pulled up here Thursday, ruled out**

#### 8 FIREFOX

Trainer: Gordon Elliott Jockey: Keith Donoghue  
 Age: 8 Weight: 11-4 **SUNRATING: 86**  
 Form: 2-1246 Days since last ran: 29 **66-1**  
 Headgear: None Favoured ground: Good to Soft  
 Runs: 20 Wins: 6 (2S) Places: 6 £202,024  
**Improver, shaped like a non-stayer in the Gold Cup at Cheltenham last month, class and ability to travel will help but vulnerable late**

**FIREFOX** (11-10) 33-1 towards rear, some headway 3 out, pushed along after 2 out and went 4th at last, ridden and no impression run-in, 4th of 12 (b7n 141) to Fact to File (11-10) **I AM MAXIMUS** (11-10) 9-1 towards rear, pushed along before 4 out and headway 3 out, no impression approaching last, 5th (b7n 251) **MONTY'S STAR** (11-10) 40-1 tracked leaders, jumped right and bumped rival 2nd, 3rd half way, 2nd and ridden entering straight, no impression last, 6th (b7n 261) **CHAMP KIELY** (11-10) 66-1 mid-division, pushed along and no impression after 2 out, 7th (b7n 281) **GRANGEDCLARE WEST** (11-10) 25-1 rear of mid-division, pushed along 4 out, soon no impression towards rear, tailed off, 8th (well b7n) **LECKY WATSON** (11-10) 40-1 rear of mid-division, mistake 6th and dropped towards rear, detached 11th, no impression after 4 out, pulled up before 2 out, (12 ran) (Leopardstown 3m ch Grd 1 (1) £142,500 soft).

**GERRI COLOMBE** (11-0) 8-13 fav jumped left at times, close up, led after 3 out, pushed along and pressed before 2 out, jumped left 2 out, soon ridden and asserted, not fluent last, kept on well run-in, but Roi Mage (11-3) **NICK ROCKETT** (11-7) 13-8 jumped right, held up, 3rd half way, mistake 5 out and pushed along, ridden and no impression before 2 out, kept on one pace, 3rd (b7n 67-1) (4 ran) (Down Royal 3/1m, ch £93,600 good to yielding).

**BANBRIDGE** (11-0) 3-1 in touch with leaders, shaken up 4 out, plenty to do 2 out, no chance before last, went 3rd flat, plugged on, 3rd of 7

#### 9 MONTY'S STAR

Trainer: Henry de Bromhead Jockey: Darragh O'Keeffe  
 Age: 9 Weight: 11-3 **SUNRATING: 95**  
 Form: 43-056 Days since last ran: 68 **14-1**  
 Headgear: None Favoured ground: Soft  
 Runs: 17 Wins: 2 (2S) Places: 7 £173,678  
**Trained to peak for this all year, skipped the Gold Cup to come here nice and fresh, trainer knows the time of day, plenty of staying power**

#### 10 SPANISH HARLEM

Trainer: Willie Mullins Jockey: Brian Hayes  
 Age: 8 Weight: 11-3 **SUNRATING: 87**  
 Form: 11PUP Days since last ran: 49 **40-1**  
 Headgear: Cheekpieces Favoured ground: Soft  
 Runs: 20 Wins: 3 (S) Places: 4 £156,924  
**Best to ignore latest run, unlucky to unsettle when in control of the Thyestes, that race has been a great trial for this, leading place shout**

#### 11 LECKY WATSON

Trainer: Willie Mullins Jockey: Sean O'Keeffe  
 Age: 8 Weight: 11-2 **SUNRATING: 93**  
 Form: F-7P78 Days since last ran: 49 **33-1**  
 Headgear: None Favoured ground: Good  
 Runs: 18 Wins: 4 (2S,GS) Places: 3 £193,713  
**Won Brown Advisory last season, unexposed over marathon trips, has the class to travel well and should be well suited to this test, e-w**

#### 12 CHAMP KIELY

Trainer: Willie Mullins Jockey: Danny Mullins  
 Age: 10 Weight: 11-1 **SUNRATING: 85**  
 Form: 1-2S57 Days since last ran: 68 **33-1**  
 Headgear: None Favoured ground: Good to Soft  
 Runs: 17 Wins: 9 (2S,G) Places: 2 £220,657  
**Not been at his best last twice, needs to find his best form, but he does tend to peak in the spring, rider won Grade 1 on him last season**

#### 13 IROKO

Trainer: Oliver Greenall & Josh Guerrero Jockey: Jonjo O'Neill Jr  
 Age: 8 Weight: 11-1 **SUNRATING: 96**  
 Form: 24-210 Days since last ran: 32 **14-1**  
 Headgear: None Favoured ground: Good to Soft  
 Runs: 19 Wins: 5 (3S,GS,G) Places: 6 £256,588  
**Well-punited favourite when fourth last year, given average ride and tactics will be positive, no ground or stamina doubts, leading player**

#### 14 FAVORI DE CHAMPDOU (BF)

Trainer: Gordon Elliott Jockey: Danny Gilligan  
 Age: 11 Weight: 11-1 **SUNRATING: 91**  
 Form: 05F11 Days since last ran: 31 **40-1**  
 Headgear: Blinks Favoured ground: Soft  
 Runs: 29 Wins: 9 (2S,G) Places: 9 £243,170  
**Rejuvenated in cross-country races, stays well and jumping is very solid, likely to run his race but will surely lack the class of big guns**

#### 15 THREE CARD BRAG (BF)

Trainer: Gordon Elliott Jockey: Jordan Gainford  
 Age: 9 Weight: 11-0 **SUNRATING: 83**  
 Form: 8-2127 Days since last ran: 49 **50-1**  
 Headgear: Cheekpieces Favoured ground: Good  
 Runs: 20 Wins: 5 (2S,G) Places: 5 £205,847  
**Top staying handicapper, beaten fav in Bobbyjo at Fairyhouse last time, non-stayer when only 11th last year, plenty to find and big ask**

#### 16 OSCARS BROTHER

Trainer: Connor King Jockey: Daniel King  
 Age: 8 Weight: 10-13 **SUNRATING: 97**  
 Form: 221114 Days since last ran: 31 **18-1**  
 Headgear: None Favoured ground: Soft  
 Runs: 18 Wins: 5 (2S,G) Places: 8 £97,241  
**Rapid improver, chasing has been the making of him, huge effort in the Brown Advisory at Chelms, any rain would be a huge help, shortlist**

#### 17 MR VANGO (D)

Trainer: Sara Bradstock Jockey: Jack Tudor  
 Age: 10 Weight: 10-12 **SUNRATING: 9**  
 Form: 11-2PP Days since last ran: 49 **66-1**  
 Headgear: Cheekpieces Favoured ground: Soft  
 Runs: 15 Wins: 6 (4S,GS) Places: 2 £243,373  
**Stout stayer, always looked the perfect type for the Grand National and runner-up in Becher Chase, but last two runs have been awful**

#### 18 HIGH CLASS HERO

Trainer: Willie Mullins Jockey: James Bowen  
 Age: 9 Weight: 10-11 **SUNRATING: 8**  
 Form: 23-2PP Days since last ran: 34 **80-1**  
 Headgear: None Favoured ground: Soft  
 Runs: 17 Wins: 7 (4S) Places: 6 £107,178  
**Failed to complete on last two starts, not ideal prep but he does have plenty of back class, stays 3m+ but this trip might stretch him**

#### 19 STELLAR STORY

Trainer: Gordon Elliott Jockey: Robert Dunn  
 Age: 9 Weight: 10-11 **SUNRATING: 9**  
 Form: 23-383 Days since last ran: 49 **28-1**  
 Headgear: Blinks Favoured ground: Soft  
 Runs: 19 Wins: 6 (3S) Places: 5 £230,552  
**Grade 1 winner over hurdles, decent form over fences but a notch or two below the best, a dour test of stamina is likely to suit, live show**

#### 20 BEAUPORT (D)

Trainer: Nigel & Willy Twiston-Davies Jockey: Sam Twiston-Davies  
 Age: 10 Weight: 10-11 **SUNRATING: 8**  
 Form: 20-4P4 Days since last ran: 56 **100-1**  
 Headgear: None Favoured ground: Soft  
 Runs: 27 Wins: 6 (5S,G) Places: 8 £291,448  
**Ran well for a long way in this last year, just lacks a touch of class to be a serious contender, any rain will help but others appeal more**

#### 21 CAPTAIN CODY

Trainer: Willie Mullins Jockey: Jonathan Burke  
 Age: 8 Weight: 10-10 **SUNRATING: 9**  
 Form: 1-37F5 Days since last ran: 49 **18-1**  
 Headgear: None Favoured ground: Good to Soft  
 Runs: 20 Wins: 4 (3S,GS) Places: 3 £173,525  
**Slick win in the Scottish National last season, looks made for the test if able to hold his early position, lovely racing weight, dangerous**

#### 22 JAGWAR (BF)

Trainer: Oliver Greenall & Josh Guerrero Jockey: Mark Walters  
 Age: 7 Weight: 10-10 **SUNRATING: 9**  
 Form: 11-322 Days since last ran: 32 **9-1**  
 Headgear: Cheekpieces Favoured ground: Good to Soft  
 Runs: 14 Wins: 5 (3S,2GS) Places: 5 £209,016  
**Imposing, career best when just held in the Ultima at Chelms last month, mistakes can hold him back but could be gamble of the race**

#### 23 PERCEVAL LEGALLOIS

Trainer: Gavin Cromwell Jockey: Harry Cobden  
 Age: 9 Weight: 10-9 **SUNRATING: 8**  
 Form: 11F-P4 Days since last ran: 100 **33-1**  
 Headgear: None Favoured ground: Good to Soft  
 Runs: 26 Wins: 6 (2S) Places: 8 £258,011  
**Strongly fancied when fell early on last year, heap mark probably beyond him but he's unexposed over marathon trips, live place show**

#### 24 GORGEOUS TOM (BF)

Trainer: Henry de Bromhead Jockey: Sean Flanagan  
 Age: 8 Weight: 10-9 **SUNRATING: 8**  
 Form: 4-4245 Days since last ran: 40 **25-1**  
 Headgear: None Favoured ground: Good  
 Runs: 17 Wins: 4 (G) Places: 5 £89,755  
**Best form is over shorter, likely to travel well for a long way but will must have serious stamina doubts for 4m+, watching brief advised**

## Sunracing FORM

led after 2 out, stayed on well, always holding rival, but L'Homme Presse (11-10) 9-1 (4 ran) (Cheltenham 3m ch Grd 2 (1) £71,188 soft).

**FIREFOX** (11-10) 25-1 held up towards rear, headway before 2 out, no extra last, 6th of 10 (b7n 261) to Gaelic Warrior (11-10) **HAITI COULEURS** (11-10) 6-1 chased leaders, headway to lead after 2nd, mistake 4 out, headed after 3 out, weakened before 2 out, pulled up before last, (Cheltenham 3/1m ch Grd 1 (1) £351,688 good to soft).

**SPANISH HARLEM** pulled up latest, earlier (11-1) 16-1 prominent, led after 3rd, mistake 6th, slight mistake 9th, joined 4 out, left in lead next, pushed along in 4 lengths lead 2 out, ridden after last, stayed on well, but **THREE CARD BRAG** (11-7) 9-1 mid-division, 4th when led 3rd 3 out, pushed along in 2nd 2 out, ridden and no impression before last, kept on, 4/1 **PIED PIPER** (11-5) 25-1 in touch behind leaders when fell 10th, (18 ran) (Listowel 3m hcup ch Grd 3 (1) £120,001 yielding).

**JOHNNYWHO** (11-3) 18-1 mid-field, in touch with leaders 14th, not fluent 3 out, hit next, led 2nd, ridden to challenge and led flat, stayed on gamely, but **JACWAR** (11-9) 3-1 fav held up in mid-division, not fluent 3rd, towards rear when mistake 8th, headway 13th, chased leaders after 3 out, not fluent next, ridden last, edged left but stayed on flat, went 2nd final strides,

right but not fluent rounding Elbow, pulled out towards finish, (13 ran) (Aintree 3/1m).

**HIGH CLASS HERO** (11-12) 10-3 tracked leaders, led 4 out, jumped left on run-in, b7n 4/1 (Punchestown 2m 5f).

**BEAUPORT** (11-2) 6-1 headed 2 out where 4th of 5 (b7n 20) to htle Grd 2 (1) £34,570.

**PERCEVAL LEGALLOIS** not fluent 13th and space in 4th closing to Heart Wood (11-2) 1-1 fav prominent, led 4 out, jumped left, (12 ran) (Cheltenham 3m 5f hcup ch (1) £22,341) (Tramore 2m 7f).

**QUAI DE BOURBON** leader, closer 3 out closing stages, soon 3rd of 16 (b7n 3) to **TOM** (11-11) 5-1 to fav last, dropped to 5th, paced, 5th (b7n 61), division, lost place stages, 11th (b7n 15).

**THE REAL WHACKER** ridden and dropped 40) to Kabral Du M 2/1m htle Grd 2 (1)

(b7n 121) to Heart Wood (11-10) (Cheltenham 2m 5f ch Grd 1 (1) £211,425 good).

**GRANGEDCLARE WEST** (11-0) 7-2 in rear, travelled well and headway 2 out, improved to 2nd before last where mistake, led closing stages, kept on well, but **GERRI COLOMBE** (11-0) 8-1 mid-division, 3rd after 11th, effort in 3rd approaching straight, 2nd 2 out, led before last, headed closing stages, kept on same pace, 5/1 **STELLAR STORY** (11-12) 12-1 led, under pressure and headed last, soon 3rd, one paced run-in, 3rd (b7n 151) **ANSWER TO KAYF** (11-0) 6-1 rear of mid-division, rear after 3rd, improved to 4th before last, one paced run-in, 4th (b7n 161) **CAPTAIN CODY** (11-0) 11-2 towards rear, effort 4 out, no impression in 5th before last where mistake, weakened run-in, 5th (b7n 331) **THREE CARD BRAG** (11-0) 3-1 fav rear of mid-division, 5th before 14th, lost place 3 out, weakened 2 out where mistake, 7th (well b7n) **LECKY WATSON** (11-12) 22-1 prominent, 3rd half way, headway 14th, lost place before 2 out, weakened, mistake last, 8th (well b7n) **SPANISH HARLEM** (11-0) 9-1 mid-division, 6th half way, dropped to rear after 11th, weakened and pulled up before 14th, (9 ran) (Fairyhouse 3/1m ch Grd 3 (1) £22,500 heavy).

**HAITI COULEURS** pulled up latest, earlier (11-6) 5-6 fav made all, pushed along before 2 out, kept on well, but **L'Homme Presse** (11-8) 7-1 (4 ran) (Newbury 2m 7f ch Grd 2 (1) £51,255 soft to heavy).

**SPILLANE'S TOWER** pulled up latest, earlier (11-4) 11-4 chased leader, going well after 3 out,



# NATIONAL RUNNERS 'N RIDERS

3rd: £100,000; 4th: £65,000; 5th: £40,000; 6th: £30,000 ●34 RUNNERS ●GOOD TO SOFT ●LIVE ON ITV



**25 THE REAL WHACKER**  
Trainer: Patrick Neville Jockey: Gavin Sheehan  
Age: 10 Weight: 10-9 **SUNRATING: 83**  
Form: 54-256 Days since last ran: 100 **80-1**  
Headgear: None Favoured ground: Good  
Runs: 20 Wins: 5 (3S,2G) Places: 2 £310,526  
**Won Brown Advisory in 2023, decent form since but best days are behind him judged on recent form, trainer reckons he will run well**



**26 QUAI DE BOURBON**  
Trainer: Willie Mullins Jockey: Donagh Meyler  
Age: 7 Weight: 10-9 **SUNRATING: 94**  
Form: B3-PP3 Days since last ran: 40 **28-1**  
Headgear: Cheekpieces Favoured ground: Soft  
Runs: 14 Wins: 4 (3S) Places: 3 £388,563  
**Dark horse of the race, third in Irish National last season and totally unexpended over 4m+, nice confidence boost last time, one to watch**



**27 ANSWER TO KAYF**  
Trainer: Terence O'Brien Jockey: John Shinnick  
Age: 10 Weight: 10-8 **SUNRATING: 86**  
Form: 06-144 Days since last ran: 49 **50-1**  
Headgear: None Favoured ground: Soft  
Runs: 17 Wins: 4 (3S) Places: 6 £106,533  
**Won Troytown at Navan earlier in the season, but struggled off new mark, chance depends on how soft the ground is, this is tough task**



**28 JORDANS**  
Trainer: Joseph O'Brien Jockey: Ben Jones  
Age: 7 Weight: 10-8 **SUNRATING: 91**  
Form: 2-85P0 Days since last ran: 40 **25-1**  
Headgear: None Favoured ground: Good to Soft  
Runs: 18 Wins: 3 (S,G,S) Places: 5 £138,245  
**Smart novice chaser, has been trained for this race with his hcap mark protected, lovely weight and an outsider with serious claims**



**29 FINAL ORDERS**  
Trainer: Gavin Cromwell Jockey: Conor Stone-Walsh  
Age: 10 Weight: 10-5 **SUNRATING: 90**  
Form: P63151 Days since last ran: 31 **28-1**  
Headgear: None Favoured ground: Good  
Runs: 51 Wins: 10 (2S,G,S,G) Places: 8 £201,722  
**Jumped rivals silly in the Cross Country at Cheltenham last month, jumping not the huge factor it was in this and likely come up short**



**30 MARBLE SANDS**  
Trainer: David Killahena/Graeme McPherson Jockey: Kieran Woods  
Age: 10 Weight: 10-5 **SUNRATING: 88**  
Form: 250-12 Days since last ran: 106 **100-1**  
Headgear: None Favoured ground: Good  
Runs: 26 Wins: 10 (2S,G,S,G) Places: 6 £201,261  
**Won decent pot at Cheltenham in Nov, flat track will suit but not sure the fences will be to his liking, running style not great for this**



**31 PANIC ATTACK**  
Trainer: Dan Skelton Jockey: Harry Skelton  
Age: 10 Weight: 10-5 **SUNRATING: 96**  
Form: 2-1113 Days since last ran: 29 **8-1**  
Headgear: None Favoured ground: Good  
Runs: 26 Wins: 9 (5S,2G,2G) Places: 9 £382,803  
**Revelation this season winning the Paddy Power and old Hennessy at Newbury, ideal type for this but she may lack class edge of some**



**32 TOP OF THE BILL**  
Trainer: Nigel & Willy D'Avies Jockey: Toby McCain-Mitchell  
Age: 10 Weight: 10-5 **SUNRATING: 81**  
Form: P1-192 Days since last ran: 56 **80-1**  
Headgear: Cheekpieces Favoured ground: Good to Soft  
Runs: 25 Wins: 7 (2S,G,S,G) Places: 7 £110,699  
**Hardly handicapper who jumps and stays well, track will suit but even though he has a nice racing weight he lacks a touch of quality**



**33 JOHNNYWHO**  
Trainer: AJ & Jonjo O'Neill Jockey: Richie McLernon  
Age: 9 Weight: 10-4 **SUNRATING: 96**  
Form: 5-5351 Days since last ran: 32 **12-1**  
Headgear: Cheekpieces Favoured ground: Good to Soft  
Runs: 17 Wins: 5 (2S,2G,S) Places: 3 £180,223  
**Powerful win in the Ultima at Cheltenham last month, ran a superb trial for this in the Grand Sefton earlier in the season, leading player**



**34 TWIG (C)**  
Trainer: Ben Pauling Jockey: Beau Morgan  
Age: 11 Weight: 10-4 **SUNRATING: 89**  
Form: 70-117 Days since last ran: 28 **40-1**  
Headgear: Cheekpieces Favoured ground: Good  
Runs: 33 Wins: 14 (S,G,S,G) Places: 6 £245,125  
**Tough, battled like a demon to win the Becher Chase here in Dec, negative tactics when 10th last year, capable of better, place hope**



**35 PIED PIPER**  
Trainer: Gordon Elliott Jockey: non-runner  
Age: 8 Weight: 10-3 **SUNRATING: 77**  
Form: 2-5618 Days since last ran: 31 **OUT**  
Headgear: Cheekpieces Favoured ground: Good  
Runs: 26 Wins: 7 (S,G) Places: 4 £220,154  
**Fell last two starts, will travel well and has a nice racing weight, but has next to no chance of staying 4m+, ruled out of race on Thurs**



**36 IMPERIAL SAINT**  
Trainer: Philip Hobbs & Johnson White Jockey: Callum Pritchard  
Age: 8 Weight: 10-2 **SUNRATING: 89**  
Form: 2-5618 Days since last ran: 32 **50-1**  
Headgear: None Favoured ground: Good  
Runs: 19 Wins: 7 (4G,S,2G) Places: 5 £154,531  
**Very useful as he showed when landing a big gamble in the Peter Marsh at Haydock in Jan, track will suit but may lack class of some**



**37 AMIRITE**  
Trainer: Henry de Bromhead Jockey: Phillip Enright  
Age: 10 Weight: 10-2 **SUNRATING: 89**  
Form: P-140P Days since last ran: 37 **66-1**  
Headgear: None Favoured ground: Good  
Runs: 23 Wins: 4 (2G) Places: 3 £119,261  
**Huge odds are insulting, won a valuable pot last season and ran fair race in the Topham here last year, will not disgrace himself**

## BIG-RACE EARLY PRICES

	Aintree 4.00									
	C	H	L	SB	B	365	PP			
I Am Maximus	7	7	7	13-2	7	7	7	7	7	7
Panic Attack	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8
Grangeclare West	9	10	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9
Jagwar	10	14	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10
Johnnywho	14	14	14	12	12	12	12	12	12	12
Iroko	12	14	12	11	10	12	12	11	11	11
Oscars Brother	16	16	16	14	14	14	16	14	16	14
Captain Cody	16	16	16	16	16	16	16	16	16	16
Monty's Star	16	16	16	14	16	16	20	16	20	16
Haiti Couleurs	14	18	16	12	11	12	14	12	14	12
Stellar Story	25	25	25	25	25	25	25	25	25	25
Final Orders	25	25	25	20	20	20	25	20	25	20
Quai De Bourbon	33	33	33	25	25	25	33	25	33	25
Favori De Champdoux	25	33	25	25	25	25	33	25	33	25
Gerri Colombe	25	33	25	25	25	25	33	25	33	25
Jordans	25	28	25	33	25	28	28	28	33	28
Gorgeous Tom	25	33	25	28	28	28	28	28	33	28
Perceval Legallois	33	40	33	25	25	28	28	28	33	28
Banbridge	50	50	50	33	33	40	50	33	50	33
Spanish Harlem	33	50	33	33	25	33	40	33	50	33
Lecky Watson	33	50	33	28	22	28	40	28	50	33
Twig	50	66	50	50	40	50	50	50	66	50
Three Card Brag	50	66	50	40	40	40	50	40	66	50
Imperial Saint	50	66	50	66	66	66	66	66	66	66
Answer To Kayf	50	66	50	66	50	66	66	50	66	66
High Class Hero	50	66	50	50	40	50	66	50	66	50
Champ Kiely	28	80	28	25	25	25	33	25	80	28
Mr Vango	66	80	66	40	40	50	66	40	80	66
Deep Cave	66	100	66	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
The Real Whacker	66	100	66	66	66	66	100	66	100	66
Amirite	66	100	66	66	66	66	100	66	100	66
Firefox	50	100	50	50	50	50	66	50	100	50
Beaupourt	100	125	100	66	66	66	125	66	125	100
Marble Sands	100	125	100	100	100	100	125	100	125	100
Top Of The Bill	100	125	100	100	100	100	125	100	125	100
Ain't That A Shame	100	150	100	150	150	150	150	150	150	150
Buddy One	100	150	100	150	150	150	150	150	150	150


C = Coral, H = William Hill, L = Ladbrokes, BF = Better, SB = SkyBet, B = BoyleSports, 365 = Bet365, PP = Paddy Power

## HORSE RECORD OVER NATIONAL FENCES

- I AM MAXIMUS**  
1st 2024 Grand National  
2nd 2025 Grand National  
GRANGECLARE WEST  
3rd 2025 Grand National
- IROKO**  
4th 2025 Grand National  
THREE CARD BRAG  
11th 2025 Grand National  
MR VANGO  
2nd 2025 Becher Chase  
BEAUPORT  
12th 2025 Grand National  
PERCEVAL LEGALLOIS  
Fell 2025 Grand National  
FINAL ORDERS  
Fell 2023 Topham Chase  
MARBLE SANDS  
12th 2025 Topham Chase  
JOHNNYWHO  
5th 2025 Grand Sefton  
TWIG  
10th 2025 Grand National  
1st 2025 Becher Chase  
AMIRITE  
4th 2025 Topham Chase

## EACH-WAY THIEF

PERCEVAL LEGALLOIS (4.00 Aintree) was well backed before falling in this 12 months ago and is back from a lower mark having been aimed at this race all season. He can run well, while IROKO was a good fourth in this race 12 months ago and connections feel he's a bigger and stronger prospect this time around so can go close again.



**SUN BETTING:** 7 I Am Maximus, 8 Jagwar, Panic Attack, Grangeclare West, 10 Iroko, 12 Johnnywho, 14 Oscars Brother, Monty's Star, Haiti Couleurs, 16 Captain Cody, Jordans, 20 Stellar Story, Gorgeous Tom, 25 Quai De Bourbon, Gerri Colombe, Final Orders, 33 Favori De Champdoux, Perceval Legallois, 40 Lecky Watson, Spanish Harlem, High Class Hero, Banbridge, 50 The Real Whacker, Champ Kiely, Twig, Firefox, Mr Vango, Three Card Brag, Answer To Kayf, 66 Marble Sands, Top Of The Bill, 80 Amirite, 100 Beaupourt

**WHERE FAVOURITES FINISHED:** PU 2 1 1-0 4  
2025: Nick Rockett 8-1-8, Mr Patrick Mullins 33-1 (W P Mullins Ire), 34 ran.

## BIG-RACE TRENDS

**JOHNNYWHO** is the clear trends pick for the Grand National.

He has the perfect profile to win the world's biggest jumps race.

Age is a massive pointer in the National. The past 10 winners were aged between seven and nine, so you can safely rule out the young pretenders and the older legs.

This is a race for seasoned chasers right in their peak years.

The betting tells its own story. Only three favourites have delivered, while seven winners were sent off at 11-1 or bigger.

You don't need to go mad but this is no banker race – value hunters should be licking their lips.

Irish dominance is clear, with seven of the last 11 winners trained across the water but Brit yards can still have a say.

Fitness also matters, with nine winners running within the last 49 days and over half winning last time out.

Look for proven stamina. Nearly all winners had won over three miles-plus,

and strong chase form is essential – every winner had at least seven chase runs under their belt.

Weights matter too, with all winners carrying between 10st 3lb and 11st 8lb, while ratings between 146 and 160 hit the sweet spot.

So on age we can rule out I Am Maximus, Banbridge, Panic Attack, Grangeclare West, Gerri Colombe, Champ Kiely, Favori De Champdoux, Mr Vango, Beaupourt, The Real Whacker, Answer To Kayf, Final Orders, Marble Sands, Top Of The Bill, Twig and Amirite.

Haiti Couleurs is too high on OR, Imperial Saint is too low. Oscars Brother and

High Class Hero are too inexperienced. Perceval Legallois has only run twice this season.

Firefox, Gorgeous Tom, Jagwar, Iroko and Jordans have not won over 3m+.

Monty's Star has been off too long and is next to go. Lecky Watson, Captain Cody, Stellar Story and Quai De Bourbon have not won this season which is a negative.

Three Card Brag has not won a Graded race so he's crossed out.

So that leaves us with just one horse standing – and JOHNNYWHO is the clear contender when it comes to the stats.

## YOUR GRAND NATIONAL JOCKEY & TRAINER RECORD

Jockey	Run	Win	W%	£1bet	P/c	P/c%
J Bowen	5	0	-5	0%	0	0%
S Bowen	10	0	-10	0%	1	10%
J Burke	6	0	-6	0%	0	0%
H Cobden	7	0	-7	0%	0	0%
K Donoghue	4	0	-4	0%	0	0%
R Dunne	4	0	-4	0%	1	25%
P Enright	3	0	-3	0%	0	0%
S Flanagan	8	0	-8	0%	1	13%
J Gainford	3	0	-3	0%	0	0%
D Gilligan	2	0	-2	0%	0	0%
B Hayes	5	0	-5	0%	1	20%
B Jones	1	0	-1	0%	0	0%
J Kennedy	6	0	-6	0%	3	50%
R McLernon	10	0	-10	0%	1	10%
D Meyler	2	0	-2	0%	0	0%
B Morgan	1	0	-1	0%	0	0%
D Mullins	6	0	-6	0%	0	0%
P Mullins	6	1	28	17%	2	33%
S O'Keefe	5	0	-5	0%	0	0%
D O'Keefe	4	0	-4	0%	0	0%
J O'Neill Jr	4	0	-4	0%	1	25%
G Sheehan	4	0	-4	0%	0	0%
H Skelton	10	0	-10	0%	0	0%
J J Stevin	5	0	-5	0%	0	0%
P Townend	14	1	-6	7%	3	21%
J Tudor	3	0	-3	0%	0	0%
S Twiston-Davies	14	0	-14	0%	0	0%
M Walsh	13	0	-13	0%	2	15%
K Woods	1	0	-1	0%	0	0%

Trainer	Run	Win	W%	£1bet	P/c	P/c%
H de Bromhead	17	1	-5	6%	3	18%
G Cromwell	8	0	-8	0%	1	13%
R Curtis	7	0	-7	0%	1	14%
G Elliott	51	3	-1	6%	8	16%
O Greenall/J Guerrero	1	0	-1	0%	1	100%
P Hobbs/J White	29	0	-29	0%	3	10%
W Mullins	67	3	-17	4%	11	16%
J O'Brien	2	0	-2	0%	0	0%
J & A J O'Neill	35	1	-24	3%	6	17%
B Pauling	2	0	-2	0%	0	0%
D Skelton	5	0	-5	0%	0	0%
N Twiston-Davies	50	2	-21	4%	4	8%

**First ride:** D King, T McCain-Mitchell, C Pritchard, J Shinnick, C Stone-Walsh

last, slightly hampered pressed winner run-in, all denied final stride, sh hd n hcap ch (1) £84,195 soft), pulled up latest, earlier leader, disputed lead 3rd, R 2 out, soon headed, kept by Dee Capo (11-5) (3 ran) f hcap ch £27,000 soft), led, ridden along 3 out, not fluent, weakened last, Lud'or (11-2) (Haydock 3m 2d good to soft), (11-0) 20-1 mid-division, soon in rear, kept on same stages, 4th of 7 (btn 31) 6) CHAMP KIELY (11-2), took closer order (1-1), weakened 2 out, 5th (btn ch Grd 3 (1) £22,500 soft), (11-12) 11-2 soon tracked out, led straight, headed n dropped to 3rd, kept on, T (Too) 5) GORGEOUS tracked leader, improved 5th closing stages, one JORDANS (11-1) 17-2 mid-division last, weakened closing (1) (16 ran) (Leopardstown 1,000 yielding to soft), (11-0) 12-1 tracked leader, away 2 out, last of 6 (btn Mathan (11-0) (Cheltenham £39,865 good),

Favourite YOUR No1 RACING PULLOUT

2026 AINTREE GRAND NATIONAL

GRAND NATIONAL DAY STARTS HERE ON TV:

12.45 MAGHULL NOVICES' CHASE (GRADE 1) winner £67,524; 2m (8 runners)

- 1 -1P43 ALNILAM 85 (H;D) Sean Bowen 89
O Murphy 7-11-7... Sean Bowen 89
Runs: 15 Wins: 5 (3S,GS,G) Places: 3 £132,855
Two wins earlier in term but recent runs weak, back to 2m helps, needs more

BETTING: 5-6 Salvor Mundi, 9-2 Mighty Bandit, 5 Kala Conti, 8 No Questions Asked, 10 Be Aware, 20 Anilnam, 25 Mirabad

Sunracing FORM

NO QUESTIONS ASKED (11-2) 7-2 held up, mistake 3rd, in touch with leader... BE AWARE (11-2) 8-15 fav keen, led, 3 lengths clear when not fluent...

TEMPLEGATE'S VERDICT

SALVATOR MUNDI has been saved for this race and that patience can pay dividends. He won a Grade 1 over hurdles at this meeting last year and took a little time to get going over fences before making the breakthrough by 28 lengths at Thurles in February.

12.45 SALVATOR MUNDI has been saved for this race and that patience can pay dividends. He won a Grade 1 over hurdles at this meeting last year and took a little time to get going over fences before making the breakthrough by 28 lengths at Thurles in February.

PROBETS MARES (L55 Aintree) was backed before winning well at Kelso last time out. PAST FESTIVAL WINNERS: 12.45 Salvor Mundi; 2.30 Lookaway, Cruz Control, Deep Cave; 3.05 Hiddenvally Lake, Honesty Policy; 4.00 I Am Maximus, Banbridge, Gerri Colombe, Deep Cave.

TRACKFAX... TIC-TAC: Mildmay course is left-handed, flat track of 1m 3f, eight furlongs per circuit.

HOT 'N NOT TRAINERS with best record in last 14 days: O Murphy 9 wins from 28 runners; P Nicholls 6 from 22; D Skelton 10 from 44; C Gordon 4 from 18; B Pauling 5 from 27; M Seror 8 from 50; W P Mullins 10 from 80; G Cromwell 6 from 40.

TOP TRAINERS with best record in last 14 days: H Skelton 6 wins from 18 rides; D Meyler 6 from 19; P Townend 5 from 19; H Cobden 7 from 29; B R Jones 8 from 34; T Bellamy 5 from 24; T Durrell 4 from 21; S Bowen 7 from 37.

TOP JOCKEYS 2021-2026 D Skelton 25-177, P Nicholls 17-92, W P Mullins 10-97, S Bowen 10-105, M P Walsh 10-96, N Henderson 14-92, N S W Twiston-Davies 11-76, O Murphy 11-89, F O'Brien 10-70, G Elliott 9-89, B Pauling 6-55, J & A O'Neill 6-70.

TOP TRAINERS with best record in last 14 days: H Skelton 6 wins from 18 rides; D Meyler 6 from 19; P Townend 5 from 19; H Cobden 7 from 29; B R Jones 8 from 34; T Bellamy 5 from 24; T Durrell 4 from 21; S Bowen 7 from 37.

TOP JOCKEYS 2021-2026 H Skelton 20-132, H Cobden 16-78, S Twiston-Davies 10-97, S Bowen 10-105, M P Walsh 9-29, P Townend 8-33, N De Boinville 7-47, J J Burke 6-46, THIS SEASON: H Skelton 4, S Twiston-Davies 3, J Tudor 3, B R Jones 2.

UNDER ORDERS SEVEN-DAY WINNERS: None. BLINKERED FIRST TIME: 1.20 Wade out. VISORED FIRST TIME: 1.20 Eagle Fang, 2.30 Glenogully, FIRST RUN SINCE WIND UP: Anilnam (12-45), Glenogully (2-30), Strong Leader (3-05), JOB JOCKEYS: Sean Quinlan rides Romie Russett (5-00) for J O'Keefe, 7 from 15, 47%.

WILLIAM HILL HANDICAP HURDLE (1) winner £42,202; 3m 1f (22 runners) 1-2250 JERIKO DU REPONET 30 (BF) N Henderson 7-12-0... Nicos De Boinville 97

1-2250 JERIKO DU REPONET 30 (BF) N Henderson 7-12-0... Nicos De Boinville 97
Runs: 14 Wins: 5 (S,GS,G) Places: 3 £100,588
Better hurdler than chaser, return to this sphere helps, solid claims

35461 SUPREME WEST 30 D Skelton 8-11-11... Harry Skelton 99
Runs: 23 Wins: 7 (5S,2G) Places: 7 £132,758
Performs winner, thriving but 9lb rise may just anchor, more required

05-157 EAGLE FANG 7 (V\*) W Durkan (ire) 6-11-10... Patrick M O'Brien (5) 86
Runs: 15 Wins: 3 (2S) Places: 4 £41,899
Chasing not gone to plan, but hurdling with first-time visor on, e-w

P2-1P4 HARBOUR LAKE 10 (CD) A King 10-11-9... Tom Bellamy 88
Runs: 22 Wins: 6 (2S,2GS,2G) Places: 5 £110,708
Course winner, usually peaks in the spring, comes here nice and fresh

6-3PF0 CHART TOPPER 31 W Mullins (ire) 7-11-7... Brian Hayes 91
Runs: 12 Wins: 2 (S,G) Places: 4 £42,673
Fell when going well at Haydock, cop at Chelms latest, one to watch

14210 ACE OF SPADES 30 (C,D) D Skelton 7-11-6... Sam Twiston-Davies 95
Runs: 14 Wins: 5 (S,2GS,2G) Places: 5 £70,467
Two wins this term, could be high enough in the weights, not dismissed

12840 MINELLA RESCUE 31 (P\*) G Hanmer 8-11-3... Ben Jones 84
Runs: 21 Wins: 4 (4G) Places: 4 £58,516
Out of sorts lately, cheekpieces may sharpen him up, needs major revival

6-1146 WADE OUT 32 (B\*) O Murphy 7-11-2... Gavin Sheehan 92
Runs: 12 Wins: 7 (3S,2GS,G) Places: 1 £58,515
Smart chase winner, but fences not great, blinkers first-time, e-w

11118 ABSOLUTELY DOYEN 30 (D) P Nicholls 6-11-2... Harry Cobden 97
Runs: 14 Wins: 5 (3GS,2G) Places: 4 £48,262
Progressive, not disgraced in the Pertemps, stays well, big shout

12273 PUSH THE BUTTON 42 M Walford 7-11-2... Rian Corcoran (5) 94
Runs: 18 Wins: 4 (S,GS,2G) Places: 4 £60,684
Chase runs mixed, capable of better over hurdles, top claimer rides

2-4110 KIKIJO 30 (D) P Hobbs & J White 6-11-2... Callum Pritchard (3) 97
Runs: 9 Wins: 4 (4S) Places: 1 £58,708
Two wins before poor Cheltenham latest, could bounce back here

1-2131 IKARAK 30 (D) O Murphy 8-11-1... Kevin Brogan 98
Runs: 23 Wins: 8 (3S,4GS) Places: 6 £134,674
Career best in Pertemps at Chelms, but rejected by Bowen, contender

12.45

- Salvator Mundi (nb) No Questions Asked Mighty Bandit Kala Conti Salvor Mundi Salvor Mundi Salvor Mundi (nb) Kala Conti

Sun FORM

JERIKO DU REPONET (12-0) 4-1 fav midfield, hit 13th, lost place, mistake 17th, ridden 2 out, soon faded, 12th of 23 (btn 19) to Duke Brewster (10-2) (Cheltenham 3/4m amat heap ch (2) £36,232 good).

410176 DUKE SILVER 30 O'Brien (ire) 6-11-0... Hugh Horgan (5) 97
Runs: 20 Wins: 3 Places: 4 £41,939
Finished well in the Pertemps at Chelms, still improving, solid chance

13130 FORTUNE TIMMY 31 C Gordon 6-10-13... Tom Cannon 94
Runs: 6 Wins: 2 (2GS) Places: 1 £18,783
Useful novice, outclassed in Grade 1 Turners at Chelms, better expected

4141P2 GET ON GEORGE 35 J Parkinson & S Smith 6-10-13... Jack Tudor 97
Runs: 7 Wins: 2 (S,G) Places: 2 £30,157
Finished well for second at Sandown latest, step up to 3m suits, respected

1-0111 HOLD THE SERVE 49 O Murphy 6-10-11... Sean Bowen 98
Runs: 5 Wins: 4 (2,GS) Places: 3 £19,655
Progressive, hat-trick sealed at Kempton, Bowen's pick, strong fancy

77P-37 BOLD ENDEAVOUR 30 N Henderson 10-10-11... James Bowen 90
Runs: 25 Wins: 6 (S,F,GS,2G) Places: 6 £92,435
Fair Pertemps run, well treated on best form but not getting any younger

2-1152 QUANTUM QUEST 125 (D) H Bromhead (ire) 6-10-10... J J Slevin 89
Runs: 9 Wins: 2 Places: 3 £21,802
Unexposed, fair effort at Cork in Dec, back from break, check betting

25825 IDEM 30 L Russell & M Scudamore 8-10-9... Patrick Wadge 93
Runs: 21 Wins: 4 (2GS,2G) Places: 7 £55,601
Back to his best when fifth in Pertemps at Chelms, each-way shout

2-1214 KAKA'S COUSIN 35 (BF) J & A O'Neill 6-10-9... Jonjo O'Neill Jr 97
Runs: 6 Wins: 2 (S,G) Places: 3 £16,824
Unexposed, solid effort at Sandown last time, step up in trip will suit

333291 LIHYAN 22 (H;D) R Menzies 8-10-9... William Maggs (3) 95
Runs: 34 Wins: 7 (2GS,5G) Places: 7 £80,470
Given clever ride to win at Newbury latest, still fairly treated, claims

BETTING: 9-2 Supreme West, 11-2 Hold The Serve, 8 Kaka's Cousin, Absolutely Doyen, Ikarak, 12 Jeriko Du Reponet, Fortune Timmy, Duke Silver, Bold Endeavour, 20 Quantum Quest, Kikijo, Good To Be Alive, Get On George, Idem, Ace Of Spades, 25 Lihyan, Harbour Lake, Eagle Fang, Wade Out, Push The Button

TEMPLEGATE'S VERDICT

HOLD THE SERVE has done nothing but improve this season and looked a Grade horse in the making when winning a hot handicap at Kempton last time. He picked up really strongly when asked there and showed the speed you need to prosper at Aintree. It will be disappointing if he can't improve past a mark of 130 with Sean Bowen in the saddle. Kaka's Cousin would ideally like it a bit softer given how impressive he was in the mud at Kelso two runs ago. He then ran a good fourth in the decent race at Sandown last month and is on the upgrade. Supreme West landed a big gamble in the Pertemps Final at Cheltenham having absolutely tanked along under Harry Skelton. A 9lb rise for that means he'll have to produce a bit more but he's a proven stayer who likes good ground and won't be far away. There are some good horses at big prices including Absolutely Doyen who didn't get the best of runs when eighth in the Pertemps Final after winning five lesser races in a row around this trip. He looks solid each-way with Harry Cobden up. Fortune Timmy is dropping down from Grade 1 level after his respectable effort in the Turners at the Cheltenham Festival. He was a good third at Prestbury Park two runs ago and could improve for this longer trip. He hasn't been clobbered with his mark for this handicap debut and can't be written off. Good To Be Alive ran a decent race at Kelso last time and could nick a place if finding more.

1.20

1.20 WILLIAM HILL HANDICAP HURDLE (1) winner £42,202; 3m 1f (22 runners) 1-2250 JERIKO DU REPONET 30 (BF) N Henderson 7-12-0... Nicos De Boinville 97
Runs: 14 Wins: 5 (S,GS,G) Places: 3 £100,588
Better hurdler than chaser, return to this sphere helps, solid claims

in association with



# NATIONAL FESTIVAL

## 1.20, 1.55, 2.30, 3.05 & 4.00

**GOOD TO SOFT (GOOD)**

<b>1.20</b> <b>Hold The Serve</b>	<b>1.55</b> <b>Montemares</b>	<b>2.30</b> <b>Mr Hope Street (tbl)</b>	<b>3.05</b> <b>Air Of Entitlement</b>	<b>4.00</b> <b>JAGWAR (nap)</b>	<b>5.00</b> <b>Bass Hunter</b>
<b>Kaka's Cousin</b>	<b>Montemares</b>	<b>Bad</b>	<b>Jingko Blue</b>	<b>JOHNNYWHO (nap)</b>	<b>The Perfect Poet</b>
<b>Fortune Timmy</b>	<b>Soldier Reeves</b>	<b>Deep Cave (nb)</b>	<b>Jingko Blue</b>	<b>JAGWAR (nap)</b>	<b>Riskia Obsession</b>
<b>Duke Silver</b>	<b>Bossman Jack</b>	<b>Brave Fortune (nb)</b>	<b>Honesty Policy</b>	<b>QUAI DE BOURBON (nap)</b>	<b>Bass Hunter</b>
<b>Supremely West</b>	<b>Bossman Jack</b>	<b>Mr Hope Street</b>	<b>Home By The Lee</b>	<b>Jagwar (nb)</b>	<b>BASS HUNTER (nap)</b>
<b>Supremely West</b>	<b>Ballyfad</b>	<b>Mr Hope Street (nb)</b>	<b>Honesty Policy</b>	<b>PANIC ATTACK (nap)</b>	<b>Bass Hunter</b>
<b>Bold Endeavour</b>	<b>Scorpio Rising</b>	<b>Konfusion</b>	<b>Strong Leader</b>	<b>IROKO (nap)</b>	<b>Look Me</b>
<b>Kaka's Cousin</b>	<b>Scorpio Rising (nb)</b>	<b>Cruz Control</b>	<b>Jingko Blue</b>	<b>MONTY'S STAR (nap)</b>	<b>Makingplansfor</b>

### 1.55 TURNERS MERSEY NOVICES' HURDLE (GRADE 1) £56,270; 2m 4f (13 runners)

- 1-1120 **BALLYFAD 31**  
G Elliott (ire) 5-11-7 ..... Jack Kennedy 98  
Runs: 6 Wins: 4 Places: 1 £42,645  
Runner-up in Grd 1 at Leopardstown, no show at Chells, can do better
- 1-3116 **BOSSMAN JACK 31**  
D Skelton 6-11-7 ..... Harry Skelton 99  
Runs: 5 Wins: 3 (2S,GS) Places: 1 £15,943  
Progressive, late mistake cost him a place at Cheltenham, major player
- 3-2112 **CAME FROM NOWHERE 22 (BF,D)**  
J Scott 7-11-7 ..... Lorcan Williams 92  
Runs: 8 Wins: 3 (3S) Places: 5 £40,736  
Useful, given poor ride in a novice at Newbury latest, place shout
- 1-1212 **KOSAC D'OUDAIRES 42**  
J Snowden 6-11-7 ..... Gavin Sheehan 91  
Runs: 8 Wins: 4 (2S,GS) Places: 1 £35,280  
Chasing type, fair second to Montemares at Kelso, find this too sharp
- 1-121 **MASKED MAN 119 (D)**  
N & W Twiston-Davies 5-11-7 ..... J J Slewin 90  
Runs: 4 Wins: 3 (GS,G) Places: 1 £26,405  
Lightly raced, future lies over fences, jumping needs to improve, e-w claims
- 1141 **MONTEMARES 42 (D)**  
T Lacey 5-11-7 ..... Stan Sheppard 96  
Runs: 4 Wins: 3 (2GS,G) Places: 1 £58,896  
Impressive Kelso win, improving with every run, ground suits, player
- 7-13116 **ONLYFORFRANKIE 49**  
A Ralph 6-11-7 ..... Cianan Gethings 82  
Runs: 9 Wins: 3 (GS,G) Places: 1 £25,884  
Two wins prior to poor G2 run at Kempton, needs more at this level
- 11513 **ROOSTER CROWING 20 (B)**  
M Seror 5-11-7 ..... Bryony Frost 90  
Runs: 18 Wins: 4 (2S,GS) Places: 3 £189,676  
Useful French form, solid G2 third, ground fine, scope to hit the frame
- 3-1111 **SCORPIO RISING 35 (D)**  
O Murphy 6-11-7 ..... Sean Bowen 96  
Runs: 6 Wins: 4 (3S,GS) Places: 1 £67,165  
Rapid improver, won top hcup with authority at Sandown, improving fast
- 1-31234 **SOLDIER REEVES 31**  
D Skelton 5-11-7 ..... Tristan Durrell 96  
Runs: 6 Wins: 1 (S) Places: 2 £37,766  
Flew home for fourth in Turners at Chells, might be flattered on that effort
- 11 26-211 **ZANNADAB 133 (D)**  
A Martin (ire) 7-11-7 ..... Daniel King 93  
Runs: 11 Wins: 2 (GS,G) Places: 4 £34,253  
Won last two starts at Sedgemoor/Newcastle, may lack class at this level
- 12-22121 **CHARISMA CAT 21**  
A King 6-11-0 ..... Tom Bellamy 90  
Runs: 10 Wins: 5 (S,4GS) Places: 4 £82,905  
Progressive mare, strong hcup win at Newbury, but this is way tougher
- 2445 **LORD BYRON 29**  
F Bramley 4-10-11 ..... Harry Cobden 88  
Runs: 4 Wins: 1 Places: 1 £14,965  
Improved effort in Triumph, step up in trip helps, could go well at a price

**BETTING:** 11-4 Bossman Jack, 7-2 Ballyfad, 13-2 Soldier Reeves, 8 Montemares, Scorpio Rising, 12 Charisma Cat, Rooster Crowing, 16 Masked Man, Kosac D'oudaires, 20 Came From Nowhere, Zannadab, Lord Byron, 25 Onlyforfrankie

**WHERE FAVOURITES FINISHED:** 1 3 1 7  
2025: Honesty Policy 5-11-7, M Walsh 5-1 (G Elliott ire), 9 ran.

**THE Placepot** is a bet where you select a horse to be placed in the **FIRST SIX** races of any meeting. You can pick more than one horse in a race – you just multiply the number of selections in each race to calculate your stake. So for staking it's 2x2x2x2x2x2 which adds up to 64 lines.

You can stake what you want upwards from 5p a line which would cost a total of £3.20. 10p a line is £6.40 and so on. Provided at least one in each race is placed, we get a payout!

## POT LUCK

- TODAY'S PICKS AT AINTREE**
- LEG 1** .....Salvator Mundi, Kala Conti  
**LEG 2** .....Hold The Serve, Kaka's Cousin  
**LEG 3** .....Ballyfad, Montemares  
**LEG 4** .....Mr Hope Street, Cruz Control  
**LEG 5** .....Air Of Entitlement, Impose Toi  
**LEG 6** .....Jagwar, Johnnywho

## TEMPLEGATE'S VERDICT

**MONTEMARES** created a big impression when winning a Grade 2 contest at Kelso last time out. He travelled like it was a Sunday morning canter under Stan Sheppard (*below*) before clearing nicely away from his rivals for a comfortable success. That was over a slightly shorter trip but Kelso demands plenty of stamina and he'll have no problem seeing out 2m4f around Aintree. Trainer Tom Lacey is in decent form and has every chance of another big success. Gordon Elliott has won the past four runnings of this and has major claims again with **Ballyfad**. He didn't seem at home when midfield in the Turners at Cheltenham last time but showed his quality when beaten a short head in a Leopardstown Grade 1 at the Dublin Racing Festival. He has to prove his staying power but that yard is a good one for the eye. **Bossman Jack** was running a mighty race in the Turners until clattering into the final hurdle. He kept going for sixth to confirm his staying ability. He runs for the Skeltons along with **Soldier Reeves** who was a length ahead of his stablemate in the Turners. He came from a mile back and is another who has proved his stamina now so could be more prominent today. **Scorpio Rising** just keeps on winning and they haven't been egg-and-spoon races either. He had plenty in hand when taking the novices' final at Sandown last time when he powered up the hill. This is a hike in class but he's on the upgrade. **Charisma Cat** improved for the step up in trip when winning at Newbury last time. She gets the 7lb mare's allowance that brings her into the each-way picture.



## Sunracing FORM

**SOLDIER REEVES** (11-7) 150-1 held up, plenty to do 2 out, not fluent last, kept on strongly run-in, 4th of 21 (btn 3/4) to King Rasko Grey (11-7) **BOSSMAN JACK** (11-7) 18-1 took head, held up, headway 3 out, ridden in 4th when bad mistake last, but **BOSSMAN JACK** (11-7) 18-1 prominent, ridden after 3 out, kept on last, 10th (btn 7/4) (21 ran) (Cheltenham 2m 5f nov hdlr G1 (1) £84,405 good to soft).

**CAME FROM NOWHERE** (11-12) 13-8 fav midfield, led going best 2 out, mistake 6/10 padded last, held finish, btn 7/4 by Le Fimeur (11-8) (8 ran) (Newbury 2/2m nov hdlr G3 £169 good).

**MONTEMARES** (11-5) 6-11 midfield, travelled smoothly 2 out, led under hands and heels when jumped right last, went clear run, readily, but **BOSSMAN JACK** (11-5) 10-1 prominent, led 3 out, ridden when headed last, no chance with winner towards finish, 6/1 **LORD BYRON** (10-7) 9-1 midfield, not fluent 5/11, outpaced 2 out, landed awkwardly last, weakened, 4th (18) (10 ran) (Kelso 2/2m nov hdlr G2 £245,774 good).

**MASKED MAN** (11-6) evens fav made all, asserted 2 out, pushed out under minimum effort run-in, but Hello Fortune (11-0) 2/1 (5 ran) (Lingfield 2m 3f nov hdlr (4) £4,193 soft).

**ONLYFORFRANKIE** (11-9) 17-2 chased leaders, clubbed on 2 out, weakened before last, 6th of 12 (btn 22) to Kugh De Revo (11-8) (Kempton 2m nov hdlr G2 (1) £45,560 good to soft).

**ROOSTER CROWING** (10-1) 40-1 handy, pressed leader 2 out, no extra and lost 2nd before last, 3rd of 6 (btn 2/4) to Leader Sport (10-1) (Auteuil 2m 3f Grd 2 (1) £61,264 soft).

**SCORPIO RISING** (11-11) 9-2 jf fav mid-division, smooth headway 2 out, led last travelling strongly, readily, but Get On George (11-1) 2/1 (17 ran) (Sandown 2/2m nov hcup hdlr (1) £45,116 soft).

**ZANNADAB** (11-5) 10-3 in touch, going easily 2 out, led last, went clear flat, readily, but Spreadsheet Guru (10-1) 6/1 (8 ran) (Newcastle 2/2m nov hdlr (2) £10,406 good to soft).

**CHARISMA CAT** (11-12) 6-1 prominent, pressed leader 3 out, led going well 2 out, kept on well flat, but Pismo Beach (10-5) 3/4 (15 ran) (Newbury 2/2m nov hcup hdlr (1) £33,820 good).

**LORD BYRON** (11-2) 80-1 held up, pushed along 2 out, stayed on run-in, lost 4th towards finish, 2nd of 20 (btn 3/1) to Apollon De Charmie (11-2) (Cheltenham 2m 1f hdlr G1 (1) £84,405 good).

### 2.30 WILLIAM HILL HANDICAP CHASE (1) winner £56,270; 3m 1f (18 runners)

- 1-1P235 **LEAVE OF ABSENCE 32 (D)**  
A Honeyball 9-12-0 ..... Sam Twiston-Davies 98  
Runs: 13 Wins: 5 (2GS,3G) Places: 3 £112,473  
Solid Cheltenham run, stays well, conditions fine, respected
- 3-3311 **LOOKAWAY 49**  
N King 9-12-0 ..... Jack Quinlan 97  
Runs: 20 Wins: 9 (S,3GS,4G) Places: 5 £239,921  
Dual Kempton wins, thriving, stays this trip well, handles ground, claims
- 1U113F **KONFUSION 32**  
J Parkinson & S Smith 8-12-0 ..... Gavin Sheehan 94  
Runs: 17 Wins: 5 (2S,GS,2G) Places: 4 £107,877  
Progressive, strong staying form, last flat forgiven, trip ideal, big chance
- 2-5618 **IMPERIAL SAINT 32 (C)**  
P Hobbs & J White 8-11-13 ..... non-runner 97  
Runs: 19 Wins: 7 (4GS,2G) Places: 5 £154,531  
Peter Marsh winner, excuses last time, stays, runs in Grand National
- P-140P **AMIRITE 37 (D)**  
H Bromhead (ire) 10-11-13 ..... non-runner 90  
Runs: 23 Wins: 4 (2G) Places: 3 £119,281  
Out of sorts lately, but he's fairly useful, late runner for the National
- 15423 **BAD 49**  
B Pauling 7-11-12 ..... Ben Jones 94  
Runs: 24 Wins: 4 (S,GS,2G) Places: 9 £162,398  
Consistent, untested over 3m, ground suits, but finishing effort a concern
- 9P16/F **AIN'T THAT A SHAME 42 (D)**  
T Ellis 12-11-11 ..... Jack Andrews 86  
Runs: 17 Wins: 3 (3S) Places: 7 £128,167  
Smart at best but absent and fell last time, needs sharp return to form
- 1-F4P0 **MYRETOWN 32 (D)**  
L Russell & M Scudamore 9-11-9 ..... non-runner 94  
Runs: 15 Wins: 5 (2S,2GS) Places: 1 £111,755  
Ultima winner last term, needs return to best to feature here, out
- 7P1-6P **CRUZ CONTROL 120 (GD)**  
T Lacey 9-11-9 ..... Stan Sheppard 95  
Runs: 21 Wins: 7 (4S,2GS,G) Places: 4 £159,030  
Won last two renewals, will be at his peak for this, strongly fancied
- 1-1150 **DEEP CAVE 49**  
C Williams 8-11-9 ..... Jack Tudor 96  
Runs: 20 Wins: 7 (3S,GS,G) Places: 1 £186,584  
Won hcup hurdle on this card last year, capable if jumping holds up
- 5-3142 **BRAVE FORTUNE 83 (BF,D)**  
J O'Brien (ire) 7-11-7 ..... J J Slewin 97  
Runs: 15 Wins: 4 (3G) Places: 6 £32,573  
Progressive, good recent second, step up in trip suits, very interesting
- 59-1F7 **UNCLE BERT 77 (C)**  
N & W T-Davies 9-11-6 ..... Toby McCain-Mitchell (5) 91  
Runs: 25 Wins: 6 (6S) Places: 4 £104,289  
Won here in Dec, jumping led him down since, stays, risky but capable
- P-73F4 **IN LOVE 35 (B)**  
H Merienne 8-11-3 ..... Jordan Gainford 85  
Runs: 29 Wins: 3 (2S) Places: 5 £355,789  
French form solid, stays well, but others stronger in this handicap
- 4-0P30 **STOLEN SILVER 32**  
G Nicholls 11-11-2 ..... Miss Olive Nicholls (5) 92  
Runs: 32 Wins: 6 (3S,2G) Places: 5 £157,369  
Veteran, well beaten lately, stamina fine but hard to fancy now
- 11262P **JOSH THE BOSS 42**  
N & W Twiston-Davies 7-11-0 ..... Mr Jamie Neild (7) 97  
Runs: 22 Wins: 6 (2S,2GS,2G) Places: 2 £100,471  
Won well earlier this term, poor last run, stamina concerns at this trip
- 23-634 **MR HOPE STREET 35**  
D Skelton 8-10-13 ..... Harry Skelton 99  
Runs: 16 Wins: 3 (2S,GS) Places: 3 £35,291  
Lightly raced chaser, improving, step up in trip helps, potential threat
- 341PPP **GLENGOULY 30 (V\*)**  
F Bramley 10-10-12 ..... Sean Bowen 87  
Runs: 30 Wins: 5 (S,GS) Places: 4 £131,793  
Cheltenham winner earlier this term, pulled up since, visor now tried
- 191400 **CHANGE ANOTHER ONE 49**  
E Mullins (ire) 7-10-12 ..... Donagh Meyler 92  
Runs: 14 Wins: 4 (3G) Places: 1 £26,216  
Below par last time, earlier win solid, stays well, needs bounce back

**BETTING:** 11-4 Mr Hope Street, 6 Cruz Control, 7 Brave Fortune, 15-2 Lookaway, Konfusion, 8 Leave Of Absence, 10 Deep Cave, 12 Change Another One, 16 Uncle Bert, Amirite, Bad, 20 In Love, Josh The Boss, 66 Glengouly, Stolen Silver, 100 Aint That A Shame, **WHERE FAVOURITES FINISHED:** 1 2 4-FE 8 2  
2025: Cruz Control 8-10-11, S Sheppard 10-1 (T Lacey), 12 ran.

## Sun FORM

**LEAVE OF ABSENCE** (11-3) 20-1 in touch, ridden 3 out, stayed on flat, 5th of 22 (btn 13) to Johnnywho (11-3) **IMPERIAL SAINT** (10-12) 20-1 midfield, kept on through beaten rivals 2 out, 8th (btn 23) **MYRETOWN** (10-13) 7-1 ridden 3 out, weakened next, 13th (btn 35) **STOLEN SILVER** (10-11) 150-1 tailed off 3 out, 14th (btn 48) **KONFUSION** (11-2) 22-1 fell 13th, (Cheltenham 3m 1f hcup ch (1) £84,405 good to soft).

**LOOKAWAY** (11-2) 3-1 fav pressed leader, ridden to lead 2 out, kept on well, but The Doyen Chief (11-2) 2 **DEEP CAVE** (4) 38-1, but The Doyen Chief (11-2) no chance, 10th (well btn) **CHANGE ANOTHER ONE** (10-8) 11-2 lost place 4 out, weakened, 11th (btn) (13 ran) (Kempton 3m hcup ch (1) £55,425 good to soft).

**IMPERIAL SAINT** (10-7) 7-2 in touch, led 2 out, pressed run-in, held on, but Richmond Lake (10-3) **KNONFUSION** (11-0) 10-3 jf fav led 3 out, headed 2 out, no extra, 3rd (btn 2/4) **MYRETOWN** (10-11) 7-2 led, bad mistake and headed 3 out, no extra flat, 4th (3/4) (6 ran) (Haydock 3/1m hcup ch (1) £56,950 good).

**AMIRITE** pulled up latest, earlier (12-0) 8-1 tailed off, 12th of 14 (well btn) to Final Orders (11-5) (Cheltenham 3m 5f crs entry hcup ch (2) £21,784 good).

**BAD** (11-13) 7-2 mid-division, ridden 3 out, no chance with first two after 2 out, 3rd of 9 (5) to Callet Evn Vol (11-5) (Kempton 2/2m hcup ch (2) £20,932 good).

**AIN'T THAT A SHAME** fell latest, earlier (10-13) 40-1 plugged on last, 6th of 32 (btn 16) to 1 Am Maximus (11-6) **GLENGOULY** (10-7) 100-1, unseated rider 4 out, (Aintree 4/1m hcup ch (1) £50,000 good).

**KONFUSION** (10-2) 3-1 made all, clear 2 out, bt Deafening Silence (10-8) 151 **CRUZ CONTROL** (11-5) 11-2 weakened 4 out, 6th (btn 35) (8 ran) (Newcastle 2m 7f hcup ch (1) £39,885 good to soft).

**BRAVE FORTUNE** (11-11) 5-2 fav handy, went 2nd before last, kept on run-in, btn 7/4 by Rising Duet (10-12) (14 ran) (Thurles 2m 5f hcup ch £3,600 yielding).

**UNCLE BERT** (11-10) 13-2 ridden and weakened 2 out, 7th of 11 (btn 2/4) to Donnacha (10-8) (Cheltenham 2m 5f hcup ch (1) £56,950 good to soft).

**IN LOVE** (10-7) 14-1 one pace last, 4th of 5 (21) to Secret D'etat (10-5) (Auteuil 2/2m ch Grd 3 £53,926 heavy).

**JOSH THE BOSS** pulled up latest, earlier (10-13) 5-2 fav led, headed 3 out, kept on, 21 by Prairie Wolf (11-8) (7 ran) (Newcastle 2/2m hcup ch (3) £32,420 good).

**MR HOPE STREET** (11-11) 4-1 plugged on 3 out, never a danger, 4th of 5 (btn 9/4) to Soldierofhestorm (10-13) (Sandown 2/2m hcup ch (1) £15,562 soft).

**GLENGOULY** pulled up latest, earlier (10-12) 33-1 made all, never challenged, but Vincenzo (10-13) 1/1 **IMPERIAL SAINT** (11-3) 14-1 held last, 6th (12) (10) (1) (Cheltenham 2m 5f hcup ch (1) £71,188 good to soft).

## TEMPLEGATE'S VERDICT

**MR HOPE STREET** is the latest horse to have been targeted at a hot handicap by the Skeltons and they can pull off another win. This eight-year-old has had a pretty quiet campaign that has seen him run three times from over fences after switching from hurdles. He has run around 2m4f so far and wasn't asked too many questions when fourth at Sandown last month. That should have set him up nicely for this step up in distance which should unlock plenty of improvement from a fair handicap mark of 130.

**Cruz Control** has won the past two runnings of this and the hat-trick is not out of the question. He was pulled up at Cheltenham but he did something similar before taking this 12 months ago so that's not a big worry. He's off a similar mark to last year with the yard in form. It's early days over fences for **Deep Cave** who made one costly blunder at Kempton last time. He won over hurdles at this meeting 12 months ago and can do better. **Brave Fortune** was just pipped in good company at Thurles last time over 2m5f and can't be ignored despite a slightly harsh 9lb hike in the weights, while the enigmatic **Konfusion** could bounce back from a heavy fall in the Ultima.

## 2.30

# Favourite

YOUR No1 RACING PULLOUT

# 2026 Aintree Grand



## LOOK OF THE IRISH

Mark Nevin still searching for that elusive pot of gold

**Sun**

## Grand National lacks old magic

WAY, way back in the day, the Grand National was the race that transcended our sport.

But not any more. I know the safety changes has been done to death in the last few years but the once great race which was always a brilliant spectacle and the ultimate test of the staying chaser is no more.

I accept there is a classier animal competing in the race these days but for 20 horses to still be in a challenging position with two fences to jump clearly suggests that the competitiveness has been exchanged for an overly safe race - like most great sporting achievements the Grand National is supposed to be a test.

You don't suddenly change the distance of the London Marathon because the last couple of miles rips the guts out of you.

It's what makes the achievement worthy because you have to earn it.

It's just a shame that the powers that be couldn't stand strong on this issue because sadly we are forever stuck with dare I say it - a boring modern-day Grand National.

On a more positive note, it's still a good punting race and I reckon the unexposed Jagwar has every chance of going off favourite.

He has a lovely racing weight and his Cheltenham second was a lovely trial for this. The only worry is stamina but he could be fresher than some at the top of the market.

I do like a trio at bigger prices: Scottish National hero **Captain Cody** has everything you want in a Grand National winner.

He stays, travels and has been clearly trained to peak for this race. **Stellar Story** is a notch or two below the very best staying chasers, but this sort of test could suit him especially if he can hold his place early on.

**Quai De Bourbon** has been the forgotten horse of the race. He finished third in the Irish National last season which was no mean feat for a then six-year-old.

He's not had a great season - pulling up on his first two starts - but he bounced back to form with a really solid third over a shorter-than-ideal trip at Leopardstown last month.

A tanner each-way on all three please!



TEAM CAPTAIN... Captain Cody can go well in the Grand National at Aintree

## EYECATCHERS

**TROPICAL STORM** (left) - Musselburgh April 4 - got no luck when down the field in a hot sprint handicap. He made some decent late gains and looks one to follow perhaps at York next month.

**HE'S ON FIRE** (right) - Fairyhouse April 5 - burnt off his rivals in style in a competitive Grade 2 novice hurdle. If he can jump a fence then he's a serious prospect for Cheltenham next year - he could be the best novice hurdler in training.

**GETIN** - Kempton April 6 - could be a Group 1 performer this season. He made a winning return in a Listed contest but it was the style of his victory that impressed most. He clocked a very quick time as well.

# REST OF Aintree COLOURS

## 3.05 JET2 LIVERPOOL HURDLE (GRD 1) value to the winner £140,325; 3m 1f (12 runners)

- 1 -3453P **DODDIETHEGREAT** 30  
N Henderson 10-11-10 ..... Sam Twiston-Davies 85  
Runs: 19 Wins: 5 (2S,3G) Places: 4 £139,886  
Pulled up in Stayers' Hurdle at Chelms last year, plenty to prove, ignore
- 2 1-3711 **HAPPY JACKY** F212  
M Fahey (ire) 12-11-10 ..... non-runner 82  
Runs: 38 Wins: 9 (2S,4G) Places: 9 £126,204  
Won two decent races in summer, out of his depth here, ruled out
- 3 -71457 **HEWICK** 30 (B;D)  
J Hanlon (ire) 11-11-10 ..... Paddy Hanlon 89  
Runs: 51 Wins: 12 (A,G,8G) Places: 10 £796,222  
Outclassed and outpaced in Stayers' Hurdle at Chelms, hard to fancy
- 4 2719-5 **HIDDENVALLEY LAKE** 62 (CD)  
H Bromhead (ire) 9-11-10 ..... Darragh O'Keefe 98  
Runs: 13 Wins: 4 (S,G) Places: 3 £243,295  
Won this race last year and third in 2024, stays well and likes it here
- 5 P6-411 **HOME BY THE LEE** 30 (B)  
J O'Brien (ire) 11-11-10 ..... J J Stevin 899  
Runs: 35 Wins: 12 (5S,3G) Places: 5 £582,357  
Shock Stayers' Hurdle winner, but no fluke about that win, big chance
- 6 112-35 **HONESTY POLICY** 30 (T\*;C)  
G Elliott (ire) 6-11-10 ..... Mark Walsh 97  
Runs: 8 Wins: 3 (G) Places: 4 £177,428  
Too keen in the Stayers' at Chelms, tongue strap on, won here last year
- 7 -112P **IMPOSE TOI** 30 (CD)  
N Henderson 8-11-10 ..... Nico De Boynville 98  
Runs: 18 Wins: 9 (2S,5G,2G) Places: 8 £278,688  
Smart earlier this term, pulled up in Stayers' Hurdle latest, can do better
- 8 1U-721 **JINGKO BLUE** 31  
N Henderson 7-11-10 ..... James Bowen 92  
Runs: 11 Wins: 6 (2S,3GS) Places: 2 £130,590  
Runaway win in a top hcup at Cheltenham, stays 8m, leading contender
- 9 2-1226 **STRONG LEADER** 77 (T\*;CD)  
O Murphy 9-11-10 ..... Sean Bowen 98  
Runs: 20 Wins: 7 (S,2GS,4G) Places: 6 £388,771  
Likes it here, won this in 2024 and solid second last year, dangerous
- 10 17-201 **AIR OF ENTITLEMENT** 29  
H Bromhead (ire) 7-11-3 ..... Jack Kennedy 90  
Runs: 10 Wins: 5 (2S,G) Places: 1 £114,831  
Useful mare, won Martin Pipe at Cheltenham latest, extra trip a plus
- 11 34132 **LAVIDA ADIVA** 30 (C)  
R Jefferson 7-11-3 ..... Harry Cobden 84  
Runs: 20 Wins: 5 (S,3GS) Places: 6 £124,451  
Good second in Pertemps at Chelms, that was a hcup and in deep today
- 12 -62334 **TAKE NO CHANCES** 30 (D)  
D Skelton 8-11-3 ..... Harry Skelton 95  
Runs: 25 Wins: 6 (2GS,3G) Places: 9 £187,532  
Consistent, well-held fourth in Mares' Hurdle at Chelms, needs a career best

**BETTING:** 3 Honey Policy, 10-3 Strong Leader, 9-2 Hiddenvalley Lake, 5 Jingko Blue, 13-2 Home By The Lee, 7 Impose Toi, 12 Air Of Entitlement, 14 Take No Chances, 20 Hewick, 33 Doddie the Great, 40 Lavidia Adiva

**WHERE FAVOURITES FINISHED:** 1 2 3 5 5  
2025: Hiddenvalley Lake 8-11-10, D O'Keefe 124 (H Bromhead Ire), 11 ran.

## BIG-RACE TRENDS

Yr	G	R	W	Age	Jockey	Trainer	SP	Wt	OR	Rel	Days	Form
25	Gd	11	HIDDENVALLEY LAKE	8	O'Keefe, D	Bromhead, H	12/11/10	155	1	72	29P	1327
24	GS	10	STRONG LEADER	7	Bowen, S	Murphy, O	8/11/10	150	0	77	920	243
23	GS	10	SIRE DU BERLAIS	11	Walsh, M P	Elliott, G	8/11/10	160	2	30	1455P	941
22	GS	8	SIRE DU BERLAIS	10	Walsh, M P	Elliott, G	16/11/17	156	1	23	322P	240
21	GS	15	THYME HILL	7	O'Brien, T J	Hobbs/White	5/2/17	152	0	11	311	412
19	Gd	15	IF THE CAP FITS	7	Bowen, S	Fry, Harry	7/11/17	152	0	0	11	232
18	Str	10	IDENTITY THIEF	8	Flanagan, S	Bromhead, H	14/11/17	153	3	32	460	24
17	Gd	11	YANWORTH	7	Geraghy, B	King, A	9/4/17	163	0	25	112	117
16	Str	6	THISTLECRACK	8	Soudamont, T	Tizzard, C L	2/7/17	174	0	23	512	111
15	Gd	9	WHISPER	7	Boynville, N	Henderson, N J	5/11/17	163	0	30	321	25
14	GS	7	WHISPER	6	Geraghy, B	Henderson, N J	4/11/17	159	0	24	413	21

**IMPOSE TOI** can take the Liverpool Hurdle for Nicky Henderson.

Start with age - this is no race for youngsters or veterans, with nine of the last 11 winners aged between six and eight. You want a horse right in their prime, battle-hardened but still improving.

The market is a solid guide without being definitive.

Only three favourites have obliged in that period, but six of the last 11 winners came from the top three in the betting, so don't go hunting wild outsiders.

Fitness is key. Eight of the last 11 winners had run within the last 41 days, and while only three won last time, race sharpness clearly matters.

The Stayers' Hurdle at Cheltenham is a strong pointer too - three winners came from that race, including two who won it.

Form over course and distance are major positives. Eight winners had already run at Aintree, and six had won over this sort of trip. Experience counts.

Class is non-negotiable. 156 winners were rated 155 or higher, and 10 had already won at Grade level.

Looking at this year's field, **IMPOSE TOI** ticks

## Sun FORM

**IMPOSE TOI** (11-8) Evens fav held up, headway 2 out, ridden to chase winner last, no extra run-in, btn 7l by Ma Shantou (11-2) **DODDIETHEGREAT** (11-6) 10-1 chased leader, not fluent 3 out, headway and every chance last, weakened run in, 3rd (btn 12) **STRONG LEADER** (11-9) 9-2 mid-division, outpaced and beaten 2 out, last (45l) (6 ran) (Cheltenham 3m hdl Grd 2 (1) £39,865 soft).

**HAPPY JACKY** (11-3) 2-1 led, reduced advantage straight, ridden and strongly pressed 3 out, joined before 2 out, headed 2 out, kept on, led again run-in, all out, but Tullybeg (11-0) nk (5 ran) (Down Royal 3m hdl £9,300 firm).

**HOME BY THE LEE** (11-10) 33-1 prominent, pressed leader 3 out, edged right but led briefly last, soon headed, rallied to regain lead flat, stayed on strongly, but Ballyhenry (11-10) **HONESTY POLICY** (11-10) 11-10 mid-field, steady headway 3 out, pushed along and made no impression last, faded run-in, btn 67/4l **HEWICK** (11-10) 50-1 jumped right, led, joined after 3 out, ridden 2 out, headed last, weakened flat, 7th **DODDIETHEGREAT** (11-10) 40-1 took keen hold, mid-field, prominent 6th, not fluent 7th, blundered 8th, lost position 2 out, weakened quickly and pulled up last, **IMPOSE TOI** (11-10) 8-1 in touch, mistake 3 out, pushed along 2 out, soon ridden and struggling, no chance when pulled up before last, (10 ran) (Cheltenham 3m hdl Grd 1 (1) £182,878 good).

**HIDDENVALLEY LAKE** (11-12) 15-2 held up behind leaders, closer 4 out, ridden and no extra 2 out, weakened, 5th of 6 (btn 43l) to Staffordshire Knot (11-3) (Navan 2 1/2 m hdl Grd 2 (1) £27,000 heavy).

**JINGKO BLUE** (11-3) 9-2 fav disputed lead, led 2nd, not fluent 7th, awkward 3 out, ridden last, stayed on strongly, but Franciscan Rock (10-7) 6l (24 ran) (Cheltenham 2m 5f hcup hdl (1) £61,897 good to soft).

**AIR OF ENTITLEMENT** (11-10) 10-1 chased leaders, ridden to challenge last, pressed runner-up when carried left last, led final 10/16s, ran on well, but Huss (11-1) 2-1 (24 ran) (Cheltenham 2 1/2 m hcup hdl (2) £38,580 soft).

**LAVIDA ADIVA** (10-9) 2-1 mid-division, not fluent 6th, pressed leader 2 out, went 2nd, not fluent last, kept on flat but no match for winner, btn 37/1 by Supreme West (10-1) (24 ran) (Cheltenham 3m hdl (1) £70,475 good).

**TAKE NO CHANCES** (11-5) 12-1 chased leaders, pushed along 2 out, brief headway last, ridden and weakened flat, 4th of 7 (btn 86l) to Woodhoo (11-5) (Cheltenham 2 1/2 m hdl Grd 1 (1) £70,475 good).

## TEMPLEGATE'S VERDICT

**AIR OF ENTITLEMENT** wouldn't be the first horse to win a Cheltenham Festival handicap before stepping up to strike at Grade 1 level. She was impressive when storming home to take the Martin Pipe last time and shapes as though this step up in trip will be ideal. The staying division would be better named the 'stale' division as most of today's rivals have plenty of miles on the clock and aren't getting any better. Her trainer Henry de Bromhead (*below*) took this 12 months ago with **Hiddenvalley Lake** who is back for another crack. He hasn't fired so far this season but we know trip and track are ideal. **Strong Leader** has had a break and a wind up since his flop in the Cleve Hurdle at Cheltenham in January. He has smart Grade 2 form in the book and comes back with trainer Ollie Murphy in decent form. The tongue tie going on for the first time may help too. **Honesty Policy** is another progressive type in the field and he wasn't disgraced when fifth in the Stayers' Hurdle last month. He won the Grade 1 novice contest here last season and looks a big danger. **Home By The Lee** was the shock Stayers' winner but he was pulled up in this 12 months ago so we could get anything from him today. **Jingko Blue** looks a better bet after his impressive success in the BetMGM at the Festival. He won't mind this step up in distance and is another who could have more to offer.

## 4.00 RANDOX GRAND NATIONAL HANDICAP CHASE (1): Value to the winner £500,000; 4m 2f. (40 runners)

- 1 P82-225 **I AM MAXIMUS** 68 (CD) W P Mullins (ire) 10-11-2 ..... Paul Townend
- 2 17-4423 **BANBRIDGE** 30 (V;C) J O'Brien (ire) 10-11-11 ..... J J Stevin
- 3 35-8481 **GRANGELEA WEST** 49 W P Mullins (ire) 10-11-10 ..... Mr Patrick Mullins
- 4 73-P321 **GERNI COLOMBE** 25 (C) G Elliott (ire) 10-11-10 ..... Jack Kennedy
- 5 1-1912 **HATI COEURS** 29 (C) R Curtis 8-11-10 ..... Sean Bowen
- 6 25-2331 **SPILLANE'S TOWER** 77 J Mangan (ire) 8-11-8 ..... non-runner
- 7 62-1246 **IRKO** 32 G Elliott (ire) 8-11-4 ..... Keith Donoghue
- 8 54-3056 **MONTY'S STAR** 68 H Bromhead (ire) 9-11-3 ..... Darragh O'Keefe
- 9 4-11913 **NICK ROCKETT** 25 (CD) W P Mullins (ire) 9-11-3 ..... Brian Jones
- 10 1-17778 **LECKY WATSON** 68 W P Mullins (ire) 9-11-2 ..... Sean O'Keefe
- 11 3-12557 **CHAMP KIEFLY** 68 W P Mullins (ire) 10-11-11 ..... Danny Mullins
- 12 424-210 **IRKO** 32 O Greenall & J Guerrero 8-11-1 ..... Jano O'Neill Jr
- 13 4-0512 **FAVORI DE CHAMPOUD** 31 (B;F) G Elliott (ire) 11-11-1 ..... Danny Gilligan
- 14 0-8227 **THRE CARDS** 49 (B) G Elliott (ire) 9-11-3 ..... Jordan Gaimford
- 15 2-2114 **OSCAR BROTHER** 31 C King 8-10-13 ..... Daniel King
- 16 11-22P **MR VANGO** 49 (D) S Bradstock 10-10-12 ..... Jack Tudor
- 17 123-29P **HIGH CLASS HERO** 34 W P Mullins (ire) 9-10-11 ..... James Bowen
- 18 22-3383 **STELLAR STORY** 49 (B) G Elliott (ire) 9-10-11 ..... Robert Dunne
- 19 320-4P4 **BEAUPORT** 56 (T\*;D) N & W Twiston-Davies 10-11-10 Sam Twiston-Davies
- 20 31-325 **JAGWAR** 32 (P\*;B;F) O Greenall & J Guerrero 7-10-10 ..... Mark Walsh
- 21 4-11913 **PERCEVAL LEGALLOIS** 100 G Cromwell (ire) 9-10-9 ..... Harry Cobden
- 22 44-245 **GORGES TOM** 40 (B) H Bromhead (ire) 9-10-9 ..... Richie Flanagan
- 23 454-256 **THE REAL WHACKER** 100 P Neville 10-10-9 ..... Gavin Sheehan
- 24 UB3-PP3 **QUAI DE BOURBON** 40 W P Mullins (ire) 7-10-9 ..... Donagh Meyler
- 25 10-8144 **ANSWER TO KAYE** 49 T O'Brien (ire) 10-10-8 ..... John Shinnick
- 26 3-149P **AMIRITE** 37 H Bromhead (ire) 10-10-2 ..... Ben Jones
- 27 3P63151 **FINAL ORDERS** 31 G Cromwell (ire) 10-10-5 ..... Conor Stone
- 28 3250-12 **MARBLE SANDS** 106 D Killahena & G McPherson 10-10-5 ..... Kielan Woods
- 29 12-113 **PANIC ATTACK** 29 D Skelton 10-10-5 ..... Harry Skelton
- 30 4P-192 **TOP OF THE BILL** 56 N & W Twiston-Davies 10-10-5 Toby McCain-Mitchell
- 31 25-5351 **JOHNNYWHO** 32 J & A O'Neill 9-10-4 ..... Richie McLernon
- 32 770-17 **TWIG** 28 (C) B Pauling 11-10-4 ..... Beau Moron
- 33 32569FF **PIED PIPER** 31 G Elliott (ire) 8-10-3 ..... non-runner
- 34 42-618 **IMPERIAL SAINT** 32 (C) P Hobbs & J White 8-10-2 ..... Callum Pritchard
- 35 4-140P **AMIRITE** 37 H Bromhead (ire) 10-10-2 ..... Philip Enright

**WHERE FAVOURITES FINISHED:** PU 2 1 1 3 1  
2025: Nick Rockett 8-11-8 Mr Patrick Mullins 30-4 (W P Mullins, Ire), 34 ran

## SEE PAGES 10-11 FOR YOUR GRAND NATIONAL COLOUR CARD, TIPS AND SUNFORM

## 5.00 WEATHERBYS NH FLAT RACE (GRADE 2) winner £28,135; 2m 1f (20 runners)

- 1 0-62 **BARACHIEL** 18 (H\*,T\*)  
R Stephens 5-11-4 ..... Robert Dunne 73  
Runs: 3 Wins: 1 Places: 1 £1,254  
Better behind Arms Park latest, still learning, but this an impossible ask
- 2 P-113 **BASS HUNTER** 31  
C Gordon 6-11-4 ..... Harry Cobden 899  
Runs: 6 Wins: 3 (S,G,S) Places: 2 £26,610  
Class act, brilliant third in Champion Bumper at Chelms, one to beat
- 3 1160 **CHICKER** 31  
F O'Brien 5-11-4 ..... Jonathan Burke 89  
Runs: 4 Wins: 2 (2G) £11,981  
Dual winner earlier, struggled in Champion Bumper last time, but to find
- 4 1-21 **COOLTobecARELESS** 57  
D Skelton 5-11-4 ..... Tristan Durrell 90  
Runs: 3 Wins: 2 (2S) Places: 1 £7,277  
Shaped well when winning latest, open to progress and not ruled out
- 5 1-15 **FORTHFACTOR** 113  
D Skelton 5-11-4 ..... Miss Heidi Palin 91  
Runs: 3 Wins: 2 (S,G,S) £8,131  
Two wins then solid Listed run, stays well, could bounce back here
- 6 8110 **GOVERNORS ROCK** 63 (D)  
W Greatex 5-11-4 ..... James Bowen 81  
Runs: 4 Wins: 2 (S,G) £10,413  
Two wins in Ireland, poor UK debut, plenty to prove now, hard to fancy

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# NATIONAL FESTIVAL

## GOING: GOOD TO SOFT (GOOD)

	<b>7</b>	<b>16 LE ROI REMI 49</b> T Ellis 5-11-4..... Jack Andrews <b>82</b> Runs: 2 Wins: 1 (GS) £4,338 Easy winner on debut, below that since at Kempton, others appeal more
	<b>8</b>	<b>2-1 LOOK ME 49 (D)</b> W Mullins (Ire) 5-11-4..... Paul Townend <b>98</b> Runs: 2 Wins: 1 (S) £21,591 Well regarded, easy win at Fairyhouse, Townend rides, on the shortlist
	<b>9</b>	<b>292 MAKINGPLANSFOR 111</b> P Evans 5-11-4..... Gavin Sheehan <b>78</b> Runs: 3 Wins: 2 £2,383 Consistent without winning, will make a hurdler, flying too high today
	<b>10</b>	<b>31 MERRY AWAY 34</b> B Pauling 5-11-4..... Lorcan Williams <b>86</b> Runs: 2 Wins: 1 (GS) Places: 1 £2,778 Green but won well on debut, open to improvement, lively outsider
	<b>11</b>	<b>232 MOMENTS AWAY 27 (T★)</b> M Keighley 5-11-4..... Sam Twiston-Davies <b>84</b> Runs: 3 Wins: 1 Places: 3 £3,608 Consistent placer, lacks winning edge, tongue tie on, needs step forward
	<b>12</b>	<b>0/1-1 ONE KNIGHT 17</b> E Lavelle 6-11-4..... Jack Tudor <b>97</b> Runs: 3 Wins: 2 (GS,G) £4,901 Two from two, impressive return win at Hereford, strong contender
	<b>13</b>	<b>21 RICES POOL 44</b> B Pauling 5-11-4..... Ben Jones <b>92</b> Runs: 2 Wins: 1 (GS) Places: 1 £2,722 Look's yard Not, easy debut winner, travelled strongly, respected
	<b>14</b>	<b>1-16 RISKY OBSESSION 63</b> D Skelton 5-11-4..... Harry Skelton <b>89</b> Runs: 3 Wins: 2 (GS) £2,513 Won well on debut, poor Listed run since, needs to bounce back
	<b>15</b>	<b>511 RONNIE RUSSET 86 (D)</b> J O'Keefe 5-11-4..... Sean Quinlan <b>95</b> Runs: 3 Wins: 2 (2GS) £4,901 Dual winner, cruised clear to win easily at Newcastle, merits respect
	<b>16</b>	<b>124 SMILE JOHN BOY 49</b> B Pauling 5-11-4..... Charlie Hammond <b>84</b> Runs: 3 Wins: 1 (G) Places: 1 £4,471 Won well on Hereford bow, only fourth at Kempton, up against it
	<b>17</b>	<b>1 THELASTMANFROMPENR 57</b> L Morgan 6-11-4..... Sean Bowen <b>92</b> Runs: 1 Wins: 1 (S) £2,723 Looked a useful prospect when winning on debut at Kelso, dangerous
	<b>18</b>	<b>1 THE PERFECT POET 28</b> B Pauling 5-11-4..... Callum Pritchard <b>90</b> Runs: 1 Wins: 1 (S) £2,451 Looked a stayer when making a winning debut at Fontwell, promising
	<b>19</b>	<b>13 MERLIN ALLEN 49 (BF,CD)</b> J Williams 4-10-10..... Ciaran Gettings <b>96</b> Runs: 2 Wins: 1 (GS) Places: 1 £5,845 Won here earlier, solid Kempton third, handles track, each-way chance
	<b>20</b>	<b>154 NIGHTFLYER 16</b> J & A O'Neill 4-10-10..... Jonjo O'Neill Jr <b>82</b> Runs: 3 Wins: 1 (S) £2,702 Catterick debut win, fair fourth latest, staying on, needs more in this grade

**BETTING:** 7-4 Bass Hunter, 7-2 Look Me, 6 The Perfect Poet, 8 Ronnie Russet, 10 One Knight, Smile John Boy, 20 Risky Obsession  
**WHERE FAVOURITES FINISHED:** 7 5 2 0 1  
2025: Green Splendour 5-1-4, Mr P Mullins 10-3 Fav (W P Mullins Ire), 15 ran.

## TEMPLEGATE'S VERDICT

**BASS HUNTER** was a cracking third in the Champion Bumper at Cheltenham last time and a repeat of that effort would make him hard to beat. He made the running in that classy contest and boxed on strongly when challenged. He should improve for that third start and he's won at Newbury so should be fine with another flat track like Aintree. Willie Mullins is always respected in bumpers and his **Look Me** has Paul Townend on board. He missed Cheltenham after a cosy win at Fairyhouse in February and is likely to take a fair step forward on just his third run. **Ronnie Russet** caught the eye when winning a Newcastle bumper by 11 lengths. That was in January so he comes here nice and fresh. **Risky Obsession** was too bad to be true at Newbury last time and is better judged on his debut win at Warwick. **The Perfect Poet** won nicely at Fontwell on debut and has an each-way shout. At a huge price, canny Flat trainer David Evans runs **Makingplansfor** who went close at Lingfield last time and isn't a noper despite his odds.

**5.00**

## Sun FORM

**BARACHIEL** (11-2) 11-1 took keen hold, chased leaders, pushed along over 2f out, no impression inside final furlong, btm 3/4 by Arms Park (11-2) (6 ran) (Taunton 2m NHF (5) £2,722 good).  
**BASS HUNTER** (11-7) 8-1 led, ridden 1f out, soon headed, just held for 2nd post, 3rd of 21 (btm 2/4) to The Mourne Rambler (11-7) **CHICKER** (11-7) 80-1 took keen hold, always in rear, weakened 3f out, 18th (btm 23) (Cheltenham 2m NHF Grd 1 (t) £45,560 good).  
**COOLTOBECARELESS** (11-7) 4-9 fav prominent, led over 1f out, ridden final furlong, ran on well, bt Beau Speed (11-7) 1/4 (16 ran) (Fakenham 2m NHF (4) £3,268 soft).

**BASS HUNTER** (11-2) 7-5 fav made all, clear 3 out, diminishing advantage final furlong, held on, bt Tally Ho Back (11-2) 11 **FORTHFACTOR** (11-2) 20-1 keen, midfield, headway 2f out, faded inside final furlong, 5th (7/4) (15 ran) (Ascot 2m NHF (1) £14,238 soft).  
**RISKY OBSESSION** (11-7) 10-3 never better than mid-division, 8th of 10 (well btm) to A Likeable Rogue (11-7) **GOVERNORS ROCK** (11-7) 12-1 held up in rear, never on terms, last (well btm) (Newbury 2m Listed NHF (1) £14,238 heavy).

**MERLIN ALLEN** (10-11) 10-3 fav in touch, pushed along 2f out, soon ridden, went 3rd inside final furlong, ran on, 3rd of 13 (btm 4) to Fine Shot (11-4) **SMILE JOHN BOY** (11-9) 4-1 close up, chased clear leader halfway, ridden and every chance 1f out, stayed on, 4th (btm 5/4) **LE ROI REMI** (11-9) 11-2 front rank, ridden and weakened over 2f out, 8th (btm 12) (13 ran) (Kempton 2m NHF (3) £8,845 good to soft).

**LOOK ME** (12-0) 4-9 fav in touch, stayed on to lead under 2f out, assured final furlong, kept on well, comfortably, bt Detroit Maverick (12-0) 51 (4 ran) (Fairyhouse 2m NHF £6,000 soft to heavy).  
**MAKINGPLANSFOR** (11-2) 7-4 mid-division, ridden and led final furlong, headed 110yds out, no match, btm 1/4 by Wilde's Legacy (11-2) (6 ran) (Lingfield 2m Charity NHF (5) £2,451 AW).

**MERRY AWAY** (11-2) 9-2 made all, pushed along 2f out, forged on 1f out, always doing enough, bt Presley (11-2) 1/4 (10 ran) (Warwick 2m NHF (5) £2,178 good to soft).  
**MOMENTS AWAY** (11-0) 5-1 midfield, closed on leader 3f out, led 2f out, ridden when headed 1f out, wandered when weakening final 110yds, no extra near finish, btm 1/4 by Cool Customer (11-0) (8 ran) (Chepstow 2m NHF (5) £2,451 soft).

**ONE KNIGHT** (10-13) 4-5 fav made all, went clear over 1f out, easily, bt Legend D'airy (10-13) 61 (8 ran) (Hereford 2m NHF (5) £2,451 good).  
**RICES POOL** (11-2) 6-4 fav close up, travelled well, led over 3f out, quickened 1f out, ran on well, promising, bt Par Avion (11-2) 1/4 (12 ran) (Taunton 2m NHF (5) £2,722 good to soft).

**RONNIE RUSSET** (11-2) 6-1 tracked leader, ridden to lead 1f out, went clear, easily, bt Cowboy Casanova (11-5) 11 (15 ran) (Newcastle 2m 1f NHF (5) £2,451 good to soft).  
**THELASTMANFROMPENR** (11-7) 7-1 midfield, headway to chase leader final furlong, kept on and led close home, won going away, bt Lion Rose Sivola (11-7) 2/4 (9 ran) (Kelso 2m NHF (4) £2,723 heavy).

**THE PERFECT POET** (10-13) 11-8 fav in touch, pressed leader 3f out, shaken up to lead over 2f out, drifted left when ridden over 1f out, went clear inside final furlong, bt Nimba (11-4) 61 (5 ran) (Fontwell 2/4m NHF (5) £2,451 soft).  
**NIGHTFLYER** (11-9) 22-1 held up in rear, ridden 3f out, kept on inside final furlong, eye-catcher, 4th of 11 (btm 8/4) to Saint Argente (11-2) (Warwick 2m NHF (5) £2,178 good).

## LONGSHOT

**HAITI COULEURS (4.00)** Aintree has already won the Irish and Welsh Grand Nationals and can use his staying power to force his way into the frame in the big one this afternoon.



OUT... Publish ruled out

# Pub out of Guineas

**LEADING 2,000** Guineas contender Publish has been ruled out of the big race following a setback. The promising colt, trained by John and Thady Gosden, was as short as 9-2 for the first Classic of the season. He had been reported to be working well in the last few weeks with connections considering running him in the Craven or the Greenham next week. However, he will now

By **TOM PEPPER** miss the Newmarket showpiece after being found lame on Thursday. The length of time he will spend on the sidelines is unknown until further assessments take place. Juddmonte's European racing manager Barry Mahon said: "We don't know the timeline yet and we'll have to wait until he has scans next week. "However, the first half

of the season is gone - whether we can get him back for the second half will be determined once we've found out more." The news of Publish's absence comes just 24 hours after Andrew Balding's Dewhurst winner and Guineas hopeful Gewan suffered a fatal injury in a gallop at Kempton. **2,000 GUINEAS** odds: 3 Bow Echo, 6 Albert Einstein, Talk Of New York, 8 Gstaad, 10 Distant Storm, Puerto Rico.

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## YOUR KEY TO THE COLOUR CARD

<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>G</b>	<b>H</b>	<b>I</b>	<b>J</b>	<b>K</b>
<b>7</b>	<b>4432-1</b>	<b>H E'S A GOOD THING 28 (BF;CD;T★)</b>								
M Dickinson	11-11-10	John Francoeme	94							
Runs: 24	Wins: 9 (4S,A,3GS,G)	Places: 3	£829,1345							
Great attitude, game win latest, battles, top jockey booked, solid each-way shot										

**A**.....Runner number  
**B**.....Form figures (most recent run on right)  
**C**.....Trainer  
**D**.....Distance  
**E**.....Weight horse must carry  
**F**.....Days since last race  
**G**.....(BF) Beaten favourite on last run  
**H**.....(CD) Course and distance winner  
**I**.....(T) Wears a tongue-tie  
**ALSO:** (C) Course winner, (D) Distance winner, (B) wears blinkers, (P) Wears cheekpieces, (H) Wears hood, (V) Wears visor, ★: Horse is wearing it for the first time in a race  
**J**.....Sunrating handicap (★99 is top-rated)  
**K**.....Price-money value  
**M**.....Jockey  
**N**.....Price-money value  
**O**.....(BF) Beaten favourite on last run  
**P**.....(F) Firm ground, S - Soft ground, G - Good ground, GS - Good to soft ground, A - All-weather surface

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# Favourite

**7-1** WITH Arne Slot under piles of pressure, Paddy Power make ex-Reds star Xabi Alonso 4-11 favourite to replace him at Liverpool. Jurgen Klopp is 7-1.

**16-1** THE top five will be in next season's Champions League — William Hill go 1-80 for Manchester United, 1-10 Villa, 2-5 Liverpool, 11-10 Chelsea, 16-1 Brentford.

**Arsenal v Bournemouth**  
12.30pm, TNT Sports 1 & TNT Sports 2

**ALARM** bells will be ringing if Arsenal fail to make a winning return to the Prem this lunchtime. The leaders signed off with a 2-0 win over Everton last month — but have lost the Carabao Cup final and gone out of the FA Cup since. Bournemouth won at the Emirates last term, and have drawn 15 this term. This can be another. Cherries striker Junior Kroupi (right) has nine goals in the top flight so far this season — and he's 7-2 with MGM to make it ten.

FORECAST: 2-2



Arsenal and Bournemouth to draw 2-2 today

**14-1**

**BETGOODWIN**



**Nott'm Forest v Aston Villa**  
Tomorrow, 2pm, Sky Sports 5

**ONE-TIME** title contenders Villa have seriously lost their way since New Year's Day. They have won just four Prem games in that time but still have a healthy cushion on the sides chasing their Champions League spot. Tomorrow's hosts Forest are not out of the relegation woods and desperately need something here. They are unbeaten in three, can take a point, with 11-goal Morgan Gibbs-White (left) the 7-2 pick to score anytime with Sky Bet.

FORECAST: 1-1

Forest and Villa draw tomorrow, with BTTS

**3-1**

**BETGOODWIN**

**PRO BET**  
Southampton to beat Derby, Plymouth to beat Exeter, Bristol Rovers to beat Crawley, Barnet to beat Barrow, Salford to beat Gillingham. Acca pays 14-1 with Coral.

**RETIREMENT BET**  
Hull to win at Sheff United, Bolton to win at Cardiff, Wimbledon to win at Burton, Reading to win at Doncaster, Stevenage to win at Bradford, Bromley to win at MK Dons, Notts Co to win at Cambridge, Crewe to win at Grimsby. Perm 1 x Acca, 8 x 7-folds, 28 x 6-folds. Acca pays 97,558-1 with bet365.

**AWAY DAY**  
Brighton to win at Burnley, Ipswich at Norwich, Wrexham at Birmingham, Oldham at Shrewsbury. Acca pays 28-1 with Ladbrokes.

**TOP DRAW**  
Brentford v Everton, Charlton v Preston, Leicester v Swansea, Huddersfield v Wycombe. Acca pays 124-1 with Betfair.

**TV SPECIAL**  
Arsenal v Bournemouth draw, Forest v Villa draw, Sunderland v Tottenham draw, Man City to win at Chelsea. Acca pays 122-1 with Betfred.

**DARK HORSE**  
**18-1**

**BRIAN BROBBEY** with six and **Richarlison** with nine goals are Sunderland and Tottenham's top Premier League scorers in this campaign. So back them both to strike anytime tomorrow at the Stadium of Light along with a score draw with William Hill — and get a tidy 18-1 return.

# De Zerbi a break

## SPURS HOPE GAMBLE ON ROBERTO PAYS OFF



NO TIME TO WASTE... De Zerbi must work quickly at Tottenham

**ROBERTO DE ZERBI** goes to Monte Carlo... well, he's going to need a bit of luck to keep Tottenham up.

With the prospect of their £billion home playing host to Stockport or Stevenage in the Championship next term, it was no surprise that when it came to sticking or twisting on Igor Tudor's short-lived reign as boss, Spurs opted to see another card.

And what a card they've turned, bringing in the maverick former Brighton and Marseille manager.

The Italian coach inherits a squad on its knees, who haven't won a Premier League game in 2026. It is a run that's left the North London giants a point above the drop zone with seven games left.

**RELEGATION ODDS** (best price): 1-100 Wolves, Burnley; 6-5 West Ham; 2-1 Tottenham; 6-1 Forest; 15-2 Leeds.

And if it's luck you're after, you wouldn't choose the Black Cats as your first opponents — but that's who De Zerbi faces tomorrow in his first game in charge.

Promoted Sunderland have defied the odds themselves this season, maintaining an outside chance of securing European football on the back of one

By **KEVIN DUNNE**



of the best home records in the Premier League.

They've lost just three times in 15 outings at the Stadium of Light so far — a mark bettered only by Arsenal, Manchester City and Manchester United.

And they come hot-foot from completing a double over bitter North East rivals Newcastle.

But what Spurs have at least now — in the absence of form, results and confidence — is a manager they can believe in.

De Zerbi took the Seagulls to a best-ever league finish of sixth in the Premier League and delivered European football for the first time. On the Cote

**SUNSPORT'S** Kevin Dunne knew where the net was last week, slamming in a couple of FA Cup belters. He landed an 11-4 winner with Man City beating Liverpool and over 3.5 goals, then left it late for a 10-1 payout as West Ham struck twice in injury time to draw 2-2 with Leeds.

d'Azure, he led Marseille to second in Ligue 1 and back into the Champions League. The right man at the right time, reckons Coral's John Hill.

He said: "De Zerbi's a good signing, especially getting him now rather than in the summer."

"Spurs have eased slightly in the relegation betting following the appointment — and I think they'll have enough to stay up in the end."

"I'm expecting an improved performance from them tomorrow. But at 8-5, they are far too short for me, so I'm backing the draw at 12-5."

"It will be a good away point and a point for Sunderland that keeps them in the hunt for a top-half finish — at 5-2, by the way!"

Yes, the new manager bounce should be a factor for Spurs but the Cats are bedded in under Regis Le Bris and will leave nothing in the dressing room.

Draw and BTTS then is the call, a best-priced 7-2 with BetVictor. Unsurprisingly, 1-1 heads the correct score market at 6-1 with Betfred. But with the gloves off tomorrow, 2-2 at 14-1 with bet365 gets the nod.

Whatever happens, at some point we can look forward to the sequel — De Zerbi goes bananas.

JOY... Sunderland players celebrate beating Newcastle



Sunderland and Spurs to draw 3-3 tomorrow

**50-1**

**BETGOODWIN**



**Chelsea v Man City**  
Tomorrow, 4.30pm, Sky Sports main event

**IT'S** Chelsea's misfortune to host a Manchester City side tomorrow in their best form of the season by some distance.

Pep Guardiola's boys arrive having humiliated Liverpool 4-0 in the FA Cup last weekend and burying Arsenal in the Carabao Cup final.

They've won on four of five visits to the Bridge — and can maintain their pursuit of Arsenal here.

Electric Estevao (left), though, is a fine 17-4 shot to score anytime for the Blues with Betway.

FORECAST: 1-3

Man City to win 3-1 at Chelsea tomorrow

**12-1**

**BETGOODWIN**

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5-1

BERNARDO SILVA looks set to leave City in the summer. Bet365 go 3-1 Barcelona is his next destination. Then it's 5-1 any MLS club, 5-1 PSG and 8-1 Juventus.

# GOODWINNERS ENCLOSURE

**STEADY Eddie is looking a little unsure on his feet as the curtain closes on a season where his Toon haven't really kicked on.**

After ending their 56-year trophy drought by winning the Carabao Cup last season, the wheels look to have fallen off for Newcastle this term.

Out of all the cups, with Europe a pipe dream, and victims of a shock double at the hands of local rivals Sunderland, Howe is now 8-1 to be the next manager to be sacked.

And we think the Saudi-backed Northerners could look "close to home" for their next boss.

The Magpies love pinching managers and players from Bourne-mouth — and we've got Andoni Iraola at 3-1 to be the next one to make the long trip to St James'.

The big result for us over here at BetGoodwin Towers last weekend was the misfiring Gunners falling to Southampton in the FA Cup.

The Saints marching on ruined plenty of accas, although big wins for Chelsea and City helped punters cop their handicap bets!

Man City are our clear jollies for the competition at 1-2, with Chelsea in the other semi priced at 11-4.

Leeds have pulled off great results against both Chelsea and City in the Prem already this term, and at 9-1, we think they could be a great pick outside the two favourites.

Southampton's heroics earned them a place at Wembley against Pep's machine — and they are 20-1.

When it comes to the Champions League, Arsenal still head the market at 2-1, with Bayern second at 9-4 following their win in Madrid.

Paris Saint-Germain are third in the book at 11-4, whilst Atletico, 2-0 winners at Barcelona, are the outsiders of the midweek winners at 10s.

Atleti, though, remain our picks to lift the trophy — we had them out at 33s at the end of February!

Something we're not so sure about is the Roberto De Zerbi appointment at Spurs, especially as he has a history of slow starts.

West Ham remain favourites to drop at 10-11, with Spurs next at 5-4. With a tricky set of fixtures coming up, we're not convinced Spurs will have enough to stay up.

And we reckon Sunderland can spoil RDZ's welcome party tomorrow. Black Cats to win and Brian Brobbey to score anytime could be bet of the weekend material at 100-30.

Our weekend Nap Acca is Arsenal, Brighton, Liverpool, Coventry and Middlesbrough all to win for a bumper 6-1!



**FIRING LINE**  
... Howe is 8-1 to be the next boss axed

# HOWE'S ED ON TOON BLOCK

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**WITH** upwards of £200million at stake, the runners and riders in the race to get out of the Championship are coming round the turn with a circuit left.

Leaders Coventry are home and hosed under a dream ride from Frank Lampard.

Ipswich are tucked in behind but the Tractor Boys will fear coming a cropper in today's Old Farm derby at Norwich.

The form horse is Southampton, who've had a week they can scarcely have dreamed of, beating Arsenal and pummeling Wrexham.

Saints can put another contender out of the running today when Derby visit.

Middlesbrough, Millwall and Hull all have chances but the smart money's on Ipswich to nick the automatic spot.

**CHAMPIONSHIP PROMOTION OUTRIGHTS** (best price): 1-1000 Coventry; 1-3 Ipswich; 5-4 Middlesbrough; 9-4 Millwall; Southampton; 14-1 Hull; 25-1 Wrexham; 33-1 Derby.

### YARMOUTH

TEMPLEGATE		TOM PEPPER	
2.02	Merapi	2.02	The Ubermensch
2.37	Del Maro	2.37	Del Maro
3.12	Harriet Quimby	3.12	Harriet Quimby
3.42	Stouxfonic	3.42	A Major Payne
4.25	Generic	4.25	Enemy Agent
5.06	Organise	5.06	Organise
5.40	Pixie Diva	5.40	Pixie Diva
6.10	Station Bar	6.10	Blue Celestial

**TIC-TAC:** Left-handed oval, flat, galloping track of 1m 4f, straight mile course.  
**DRAW:** High runners best on the straight course, especially in large fields.  
**LEADING TRAINERS (2021-2026):** W Haggas 37-127, J & T Gosden 35-148, M Bell 26-137, G Boughey 21-136, **TOP JOCKEYS (2021-2026):** W Buick 34-127, J Mitchell 24-169, D Muscutt 24-191, David Egan 19-168, **LONGEST TRAVELLER:** Patagonia Girl (3,42) trained at Malpas. Round trip of 514 miles. **FIRST RUN SINCE WIND OP:** Le Peletrin (2,02), Queen Of Good News (2,02). **LIVE ON SKY SPORTS RACING**

### 2.02 TIGERBET.CO.UK GRAND NATIONAL SPECIALS HCAP (Class 6); winner £3,768; 1m. (16 runners)

1 (15)	7-848 KAMAWAY 14 (BF) E J-Houghton 4-9-9	non-runner 97
2 (9)	6245753 NO KNEE NEVER 15 J Owen 5-9-9	Clifford Lee 98
3 (13)	383307 LE PELETRIN 156 W Knight 4-9-9	Cieren Fallon 85
4 (2)	154-05 DASHING DONKEY 38 (CD) W Stone 5-9-9	Georgia Dobie 87
5 (7)	0632 THE UBERMENSCH 5 M Bell 4-9-9	Hector Crouch 99
6 (16)	242548 MISS MONTE CARLO 540 A Carson 5-9-8	Jack Doughty 91
7 (14)	9987-8 DEVIUS DEVAN 16 W Muir & C Grassick 5-9-8	Lewis Edmunds 90
8 (6)	636-168 MURPHY 77 E Dunlop 4-9-3	Osian Murphy 90
9 (3)	33384 QUEEN OF GOOD NEWS 176 P Owens 4-9-7	Benoit Sayerette 93
10 (10)	7480-06 MINI MAC 46 (B,D) J Macey 4-9-7	Daniel Muscutt 88
11 (5)	0171-56 SOUTH KENSINGTON 14 (E*) A Kirby 5-9-6	Colin Keane 96
12 (2)	4840-75 MERAPI 25 M Keady 4-9-6	Darragh Keenan 90
13 (4)	945-53 POTTERS PRINCE 37 M Crawford 4-9-6	Salifu Osborne 90
14 (4)	431527 BORDERLINE MADNESS 117 (CD) W Stone 4-9-5	Jack Mitchell 92
15 (8)	55-2443 THE SPOTLIGHT KID 40 (B,C,D) D Ivory 7-9-2	David Egan 91
16 (8)	94-5494 GRAND CITEDEL 17 (B) M Fenton (Ire) 5-9-1	John Egan 84

**BETTING:** 5 No Knee Never, 6 The Ubermensch, 15 South Kensington  
**WHERE FAVOURITES FINISHED:** 3, 4, 6  
**2025:** Rising Force 4-8-12 Jack Callan 6f (R Eddy) drawn 1, 15 ran.

### 2.37 TIGERBET.CO.UK NATIONAL EXTRA PLACES PAID NOVICE STAKES (3); 3-y-o; £6,480; 1m 2f. (5 run)

1 (5)	1 KNOWLEDGE 84 S & E Crisford 9-11	James Doyle 85
2 (3)	2322-D MARO 182 C Appleby 9-11	William Buick 99
3 (6)	FLORENTINE LAW M Bell 9-4	Hector Crouch 99
4 (4)	POINT OF LAW J & T Gosden 9-4	Robert Havlin 91
5 (2)	32 SINTRA 25 A Balding 9-4	Cieren Fallon 93

**BETTING:** 5-4 Del Maro, 4 Sintra, 9-2 Knowledge, 5 Point Of Law, 8 Florentine Law  
**WHERE FAVOURITES FINISHED:** 3, 5  
**2025:** Alpine Trail 9-11 James Doyle 7f (C Appleby) drawn 1, 7 ran.

### 3.12 TIGERBET.CO.UK FAST SIGN UP FILLIES' NOVICE STAKES (3); winner £5,480; 1m 2f. (9 runners)

1 (3)	1 BINT KILFRUSH 100 J Tate 3-9-4	Hector Crouch 97
2 (2)	21 OTTOMAN EMPRESS 172 (C) C Appleby 3-9-4	William Buick 99
3 (5)	5 BINTSALEH 187 W Haggas 3-8-11	Cieren Fallon 96
4 (4)	EMERALD ROILE J & S Birkett 3-8-11	Sean D Bowen 90
5 (8)	3 HARPER VINEY 169 (BF) K R Burke 3-8-11	Clifford Lee 94
6 (1)	32 HARRIET QUIMBY 172 (BF) S & E Crisford 3-8-11	Harry Davies 98
7 (1)	10 THE ONE J & T Gosden 3-8-11	Osian Murphy 90
8 (1)	MALDIVES K De Fay 3-8-11	David Egan 91
9 (5)	5 PREMIER CRU 87 J Fanshawe 3-8-11	Jack Doughty 90

**BETTING:** 5-2 Ottoman Empress, 7-2 Harriet Quimby, 5 Bint Kilfrush, 6 Harper Viney  
**WHERE FAVOURITES FINISHED:** 3, 5  
**2025:** Winter's Song 3-8-11 Cieren Fallon 11-2 (C Appleby) drawn 5, 6 ran.

### 3.42 MA AND PA PEAK BIRTHDAY HANDICAP (4); value to the winner £5,653; 1m 2f. (13 runners)

1 (4)	21-3 SIOUXFONIC 62 J Owen 5-9-10	Mason Paelet (S) 94
2 (13)	8265-47 SHIKOU 38 (H) J Owen 5-9-9	Christian Mudge 99
3 (12)	7-435-YAIA MIN 17 H Barton 4-9-7	Jack Callan (S) 95
4 (9)	35130-PATAGONIA GIRL 255 (D) H Palmer 4-9-7	Osian Murphy 98
5 (10)	332328-SALAMANCA CITY 206 (D) J Fanshawe 5-9-6	Daniel Muscutt 97
6 (2)	517764-BINTABUHA 233 (D) H Charlton 4-9-6	Lewis Edmunds 85
7 (1)	227263-A MAJOR 199 W Bell 5-9-4	Hector Crouch 99
8 (8)	0400-52 SOMETHING 66 (BF) S Williams 5-9-4	Clifford Lee 99
9 (1)	917755-BEACH POINT 164 (CD) W Knight 5-9-3	Cieren Fallon 90
10 (3)	2-4587-SILVER GUNN 170 (C,D) M Boti 8-9-2	David Egan 93
11 (7)	71140-MCTED 137 (CD) M Dunne 8-9-0	Alice Bown (T) 96
12 (6)	4965-97 DESERT HEART 30 E Walker 4-8-11	Kieran Shoemark 92
13 (6)	268665-CURRUMBIN 1176 (H) M Keady 5-8-11	Sean D Bowen 87

**BETTING:** 7-2 Something, 11-2 Siouxfonic, 6 Yaa Min, 7 A Major Payne, 8 Patagonia Girl, 10 Salamanca City, 12 Shikou, 14 Silver Gunn, Beach Point  
**WHERE FAVOURITES FINISHED AND 2025:** No corresponding race.

### AND YOUR SOUTHWELL CARD

TEMPLEGATE		HANDICAP (Class 4); 3-y-o; winner £5,653; 1m 4f. (9 runners)		HANDICAP (5); winner £4,397; 1m 3f. (9 runners)	
4.45	Wicksey	1 (2)	641 GAILLEAU QUALITY 187 K R Burke 9-9-9	2 (1)	822 KING KING HIGH 29 (C) R Burdon 4-9-10
5.15	Bint Al Daar	2 (1)	431 MAGNETUDE 26 (D) J Owen 9-7	3 (3)	-111 WICKSEY 46 (CD) B Haslam 8-13
5.45	King Of Thebes	3 (3)	-111 WICKSEY 46 (CD) B Haslam 8-13	4 (1)	Magnitude 99, Gallean Quality 98, Wicksey 97
6.15	Saucy Jane	4 (1)	13-8 Magnitude, 15-8 Wicksey, 2 Gallean Quality	5 (15)	30P-OPTICAN 200 M Herrington 6-9-9
6.45	Shades Of May	5 (2)	-036 ROBBO 17 T Faulkner 5-9-8	6 (2)	2158 BINT AL DAAR 8 (V,C,D) K Frost 6-9-6
7.15	Captain Pickles	6 (6)	6322 PLEASANT MAN 15 (V,C,F,C) R Ramsden 8-9-5	7 (4)	42 SAILOR SON 14 (BF) C Appleby 3-8-10
7.45	Kirkdale	7 (7)	6523 TORTURED SOUL 17 (BF,CD) A Carroll 6-9-4	8 (3)	31 RIFLE T D Cunha 3-8-10
8.15	Piperstown	8 (3)	-380 BYSTANDER 8 S Williams 6-9-4	9 (5)	6-2 STEPANOV 18 B Bethell 3-8-10
4.45	Magnetude	9 (4)	-665 SWORD OF WESSEX 17 J Owen 4-9-4	10 (9)	9-4 Pleasant Man, 7-2 Tortured Soul, 9-2 Sword Of Wessex, 7 Robbo, 10 Bystander, 14 Optican, Everyoneknowsadave
5.15	Tortured Soul	11 (5)	25-4 KING OF THE WELLS 92 (CD) J Macey 4-8-6	1 (1)	9 GUTHURN 38 P Morris 5-10-2
5.45	Al Azd	12 (1)	9-4 Pleasant Man, 7-2 Tortured Soul, 9-2 Sword Of Wessex, 7 Robbo, 10 Bystander, 14 Optican, Everyoneknowsadave	2 (6)	30 MASTERPIECE 38 P Morris 6-10-2
6.15	Ambishio	13 (8)	9-4 Pleasant Man, 7-2 Tortured Soul, 9-2 Sword Of Wessex, 7 Robbo, 10 Bystander, 14 Optican, Everyoneknowsadave	3 (2)	222 AL AZD 22 (B) R Vanria 3-8-10
6.45	Timely Affair	14 (5)	9-4 Pleasant Man, 7-2 Tortured Soul, 9-2 Sword Of Wessex, 7 Robbo, 10 Bystander, 14 Optican, Everyoneknowsadave	4 (4)	42 SAILOR SON 14 (BF) C Appleby 3-8-10
7.15	Captain Pickles	15 (4)	9-4 Pleasant Man, 7-2 Tortured Soul, 9-2 Sword Of Wessex, 7 Robbo, 10 Bystander, 14 Optican, Everyoneknowsadave	5 (3)	31 RIFLE T D Cunha 3-8-10
7.45	Farandaway	16 (5)	9-4 Pleasant Man, 7-2 Tortured Soul, 9-2 Sword Of Wessex, 7 Robbo, 10 Bystander, 14 Optican, Everyoneknowsadave	6 (2)	6-2 STEPANOV 18 B Bethell 3-8-10
8.15	Piperstown	17 (4)	9-4 Pleasant Man, 7-2 Tortured Soul, 9-2 Sword Of Wessex, 7 Robbo, 10 Bystander, 14 Optican, Everyoneknowsadave	7 (5)	6-2 STEPANOV 18 B Bethell 3-8-10

### 4.45 HANDICAP (Class 4); 3-y-o; winner £5,653; 1m 4f. (9 runners)

1 (2)	641 GAILLEAU QUALITY 187 K R Burke 9-9-9	P Jamini
2 (1)	431 MAGNETUDE 26 (D) J Owen 9-7	L Morris
3 (3)	-111 WICKSEY 46 (CD) B Haslam 8-13	A Mullen

**Magnitude 99, Gallean Quality 98, Wicksey 97.**  
**13-8 Magnitude, 15-8 Wicksey, 2 Gallean Quality**

### 5.15 HANDICAP (5); winner £4,397; 1m 3f. (9 runners)

1 (5)	30P-OPTICAN 200 M Herrington 6-9-9	D Hogan
2 (2)	-036 ROBBO 17 T Faulkner 5-9-8	Z Lewis (T)
3 (4)	2158 BINT AL DAAR 8 (V,C,D) K Frost 6-9-6	J Mason
4 (1)	42 SAILOR SON 14 (BF) C Appleby 3-8-10	Maresques
5 (6)	6322 PLEASANT MAN 15 (V,C,F,C) R Ramsden 8-9-5	R Rodriguez
6 (7)	6523 TORTURED SOUL 17 (BF,CD) A Carroll 6-9-4	R Ryan
7 (3)	-380 BYSTANDER 8 S Williams 6-9-4	M Ghiani
8 (4)	-665 SWORD OF WESSEX 17 J Owen 4-9-4	J Watson
9 (5)	9-4 Pleasant Man, 7-2 Tortured Soul, 9-2 Sword Of Wessex, 7 Robbo, 10 Bystander, 14 Optican, Everyoneknowsadave	

### 5.45 MAIDEN STAKES (3); winner £6,480; 1m 3f. (7 runners)

1 (1)	9 GUTHURN 38 P Morris 5-10-2	J Sullivan
2 (6)	30 MASTERPIECE 38 P Morris 6-10-2	D Fentiman
3 (2)	222 AL AZD 22 (B) R Vanria 3-8-10	R Scott
4 (4)	42 SAILOR SON 14 (BF) C Appleby 3-8-10	C Planas (S)
5 (3)	31 RIFLE T D Cunha 3-8-10	T Moore (T)
6 (2)	6-2 STEPANOV 18 B Bethell 3-8-10	G Wood
7 (5)	6-2 STEPANOV 18 B Bethell 3-8-10	C Beasley

**Al Azd 99, Stephanov 97, Sailor Song 96.**  
**15-4 Al Azd, 2 Sailor Song, 3 King Of Thebes, 15-2 Stephanov, 20 Sir Griffel, 6 Guthurn, 14 Maresques**

### 6.15 HANDICAP (4); 3-y-o; winner £5,653; 1m 4f. (7 runners)

1 (5)	112-COMIC STRIP 18 (BF,CD) S & E Crisford 9-9-0	R Ryan
2 (1)	2-21 HAYTUM 46 (CD) J Gosden 9-10-0	R Scott
3 (6)	6-44 SAUCY JANE 12 (D) J Morland 9-8-9	C Shepherd
4 (3)	60-1 AMBISHIO 78 (CD) M Appleby 9-7	H Doyle
5 (7)	244-ICE COLD ALEX 201 (D) O Pears 9-5	C Hardie
6 (2)	143-PORPO 154 (D) C Hills 9-4	J Watson
7 (4)	718-RIFA SPIRIT 200 C Carroll 9-0	Z Wheatley (S)

**Havynah 99, Ambishio 98, Comic Strip 97.**  
**9-4 Haytahn, 10-3 Comic Strip, 7-2 Ambishio, 5 Profit, 10 Saucy Jane, 16 Ice Cold Alex, Rifa Spirit**

### 6.45 HANDICAP (6); winner £3,768; 1m 3f. (11 runners)

1 (2)	7171-AIM FOR THE BULL 17 (CD) M Murphy 4-9-9	C Shepherd
2 (1)	9-90 KITT'S DREAM 187 (P) E Dunlop 4-9-9	R Ryan
3 (1)	9665 PINK SOCKS 14 (CD) S Cassidy 7-9-9	R Kavanagh (S)
4 (1)	152-TIMELY AFFAIR 12 (BF,C) W Knight 4-9-8	N Callan
5 (10)	4245 DUNDGON 17 (BF) A Carroll 5-9-8	M Coppins (T)

### GOING: GOOD

#### 4.25 IN MEMORY OF ROGER CLARKE - VET RESTRICTED NOVICE STAKES (4); £5,400; 1m. (12 runners)

1 (2)	1 ENEMY AGENT 17 (D) S & E Crisford 3-9-8	Harry Davies 89
2 (1)	53 AL MASLOO 37 B Haggas 3-9-1	Cieren Fallon 98
3 (9)	2 GENERIC 17 A Balding 3-9-1	Osian Murphy 97
4 (6)	32 MASTER OF KERAUNOS 42 J & S Quinn 3-9-1	Colin Keane 95
5 (4)	2-MY MATE ROGER 129 T Clover 3-9-1	David Egan 98
6 (10)	84 KALIBRO 60 (H,C) H Charlton 3-9-1	Kaiya Fraser 99
7 (3)	34-STRONG VOICE 163 W Knight 3-8-13	Jack Mitchell 93
8 (7)	50-TIMELY SALLUTE 156 W Knight 3-8-11	Kieran Shoemark 83
9 (11)	SIERRA SUE J Horton 3-8-10	Jack Callan (S) 90
10 (8)	WHOLE LOTTA ROSIE J Fanshawe 3-8-10	Jack Doughty 91
11 (12)	MOKATA A Kirby 3-8-6	Sean D Bowen 90
12 (5)	SHARP ROMANCE P McBride 3-8-6	Salifu Osborne 90

**BETTING:** 3 Generic, 4 My Mate Roger, 11-2 Enemy Agent, 13-2 Thunderbolt, 15-2 Al Masloo, Master Of Keraunos, 8 Strong Voice, 20 Sierra Sue  
**WHERE FAVOURITES FINISHED AND 2025:** No corresponding race.

### 5.06 TIGERBET.CO.UK BEST ODDS GUARANTEED NOVICE STAKES (4); winner £5,400; 1m. (6 runners)

1 (3)	7-HENGEST J31 D Cunha 4-10-2	Mason Paelet (S) 77
2 (4)	1-ORGANISE 136 J & T Gosden 3-9-8	James Doyle 98
3 (6)	1 OUTBACK HEAT 66 (D) H Charlton 3-9-8	Kaiya Fraser 97
4 (1)	31 KALIBRO 60 (H,C) H Charlton 3-9-8	Kieran Shoemark 83
5 (2)	5-2 PONTHEWILL 38 G Boughey 3-9-1	Jack Callan (S) 96
6 (5)	4 WEHEDD W Haggas 3-9-1	Cieren Fallon 90

**BETTING:** 11-8 Organise, 9-2 Yaa Karim, 5 Pontonville, 11-2 Outback Heat, 6 Wehedd, 25 Hengest  
**WHERE FAVOURITES FINISHED AND 2025:** No corresponding race.

### 5.40 TIGERBET.CO.UK PRICE BOOSTS' HANDICAP (4) winner £5,653; 1m. (7 runners)

1 (7)	935-58 TWILIGHT JET 70 (B,D) J & S Best 7-9-9	Colin Keane 86
2 (3)	227-61 PIXIE DIVA 15 (D) G Scott 4-9-8	Osian Murphy 99
3 (2)	30307-BRAVE NATION 185 (H,D) M Bell 6-9-7	Hector Crouch 95
4 (3)	4230-5 GOLDEN LONG 50 (BF) L Souza 5-9-6	John Egan 97
5 (4)	34-242 ALMATY STAR 33 (V,D) R Cowell 6-9-5	Jack Mitchell 98
6 (3)	7029-9 THUNDER STAR 13 (CD) J Macey 6-9-2	Lewis Edmunds 95
7 (5)	0470-1 SKELLIG ISLE 16 (D) P McBride 4-8-9	Cieren Fallon 93

**BETTING:** 2 Pixie Diva, 3 Golden Long, 9-2 Almaty Star, 6 Skellig Isle, 8 Brave Nation, 14 Thunder Star, 20 Twilight Jet  
**WHERE FAVOURITES FINISHED AND 2025:** No corresponding race.

### 6.10 TIGERBET.CO.UK DOWNLOAD OUR APP HANDICAP (5); 3-y-o; winner £3,768; 1m. (8 runners)

1 (4)	0022-4 STATION BAR 17 E J-Houghton 9-9	Charles Bishop 90
2 (1)	9954	

# 2026 GRAND NATIONAL SWEEP KIT



**ROCKETT MAN . . .** Nick Rockett (above) and Patrick Mullins jump the last to win last year's Grand National

**WILL** the all-conquering Willie Mullins make it three wins in a row in the world's greatest race? Or can an English-trained runner keep the prize at home for the first time in 11 years? Whoever you fancy, have a flutter and join in the fun with our super Sunracing Sweepstake Kit. It's easy to play and you could get lucky. Simply cut out all the runners and place them in a bag or bowl. When the pick has been made, write the name of the person next to the horse on the checklist below. There are 34 runners so you could charge £2 a pick to give you a £68 kitty. You could give £40 to the winner, £20 to the runner-up and eight quid to the third. Or play winner-takes-all. Good luck!

## SWEEPSTAKE CHECKLIST

Runner Name

- 1 I AM MAXIMUS.....
- 3 BANBRIDGE.....
- 4 GRANCECLARE WEST.....
- 5 GERRI COLOMBE.....
- 6 HAITI COULEURS.....
- 8 FIREFOX.....
- 9 MONTY'S STAR.....
- 10 SPANISH HARLEM.....
- 11 LECKY WATSON.....
- 12 CHAMP KIELY.....
- 13 IROKO.....
- 14 FAVORI DE CHAMPODU.....
- 15 THREE CARD BRAG.....
- 16 OSCARS BROTHER.....
- 17 MR VANGO.....
- 18 HIGH CLASS HERO.....
- 19 STELLAR STORY.....
- 20 BEAUPORT.....
- 21 CAPTAIN CODY.....
- 22 JAGWAR.....
- 23 PERCEVAL LEGALLOIS.....
- 24 GORGEOUS TOM.....
- 25 THE REAL WHACKER.....
- 26 QUAI DE BOURBON.....
- 27 ANSWER TO KAYF.....
- 28 JORDANS.....
- 29 FINAL ORDERS.....
- 30 MARBLE SANDS.....
- 31 PANIC ATTACK.....
- 32 TOP OF THE BILL.....
- 33 JOHNNYWHO.....
- 34 TWIG.....
- 36 IMPERIAL SAINT.....
- 37 AMIRITE.....

NON-RUNNERS: Nick Rockett (3), Spillane's Tower (7) and Pied Piper (35).

**1. I AM MAXIMUS**

TRAINER: Willie Mullins  
JOCKEY: Paul Townend  
Won this in 2024 and second last year, strongly fancied **7-1**

**3. BANBRIDGE**

TRAINER: Joseph O'Brien  
JOCKEY: J J Slevin  
Classy, King George winner but doubtful stayer over 4m+ **50-1**

**4. GRANCECLARE WEST**

TRAINER: Willie Mullins  
JOCKEY: Patrick Mullins  
Unlucky third last year, won best trial last time, go close **10-1**

**5. GERRI COLOMBE**

TRAINER: Gordon Elliott  
JOCKEY: Jack Kennedy  
Runner-up in Gold Cup in 2024, not at that level since **25-1**

**6. HAITI COULEURS**

TRAINER: Rebecca Curtis  
JOCKEY: Sean Bowen  
National specialist, already won Welsh and Irish, dangerous **18-1**

**6. FIREFOX**

TRAINER: Gordon Elliott  
JOCKEY: Keith Donoghue  
Just below top class, non-stayer in Gold Cup, hard to fancy **50-1**

**9. MONTY'S STAR**

TRAINER: Henry de Bromhead  
JOCKEY: Darragh O'Keefe  
Dined at the top table for a while now, one to keep in mind **14-1**

**10. SPANISH HARLEM**

TRAINER: Willie Mullins  
JOCKEY: Brian Hayes  
Recent form figures not ideal but he could outrun his odds **40-1**

**11. LECKY WATSON**

TRAINER: Willie Mullins  
JOCKEY: Sean O'Keefe  
Touch of class, but has shown nothing this season **33-1**

**12. CHAMP KIELY**

TRAINER: Willie Mullins  
JOCKEY: Danny Mullins  
Struggled for form since promising return, bit to prove **33-1**

**13. IROKO**

TRAINER: Oliver Greenall/Josh Guerriero  
JOCKEY: Jonjo O'Neill Jr  
Given too much to do when fourth last year, can do better **16-1**

**14. FAVORI DE CHAMPODU**

TRAINER: Gordon Elliott  
JOCKEY: Danny Gilligan  
Back to form, solid second at Chelms but this is tougher **40-1**

**15. THREE CARD BRAG**

TRAINER: Gordon Elliott  
JOCKEY: Jordan Gainford  
Useful, but a non-stayer last year and similar story again **50-1**

**16. OSCARS BROTHER**

TRAINER: Connor King  
JOCKEY: Daniel King  
Unexposed, classy effort at Cheltenham, needs softer ground **18-1**

**17. MR VANGO**

TRAINER: Sara Bradstock  
JOCKEY: Jack Tudor  
Runner-up in Becher Chase, pulled up last two starts, risky bet **80-1**

**18. HIGH CLASS HERO**

TRAINER: Willie Mullins  
JOCKEY: James Bowen  
Pulled up last two starts but he does have back class **50-1**

**19. STELLAR STORY**

TRAINER: Gordon Elliott  
JOCKEY: Robert Dunne  
Stout stayer, may lack a gear early on but he will be finishing well **28-1**

**20. BEAUPORT**

TRAINER: Nigel/Willy Twiston-Davies  
JOCKEY: Sam Twiston-Davies  
Best form is in the mud, only 12th last year, hard to fancy **100-1**

**21. CAPTAIN CODY**

TRAINER: Willie Mullins  
JOCKEY: Jonathan Burke  
Scottish National hero, potential to do better over 4m+ **16-1**

**22. JAGWAR**

TRAINER: Oliver Greenall/Josh Guerriero  
JOCKEY: Mark Walsh  
Imposing, excellent trial at Cheltenham, strongly fancied **10-1**

**23. PERCEVAL LEGALLOIS**

TRAINER: Gavin Cromwell  
JOCKEY: Harry Cobden  
Fancied when fell last year, lightly raced since, could surprise **33-1**

**24. GORGEOUS TOM**

TRAINER: Henry de Bromhead  
JOCKEY: Sean Flanagan  
Doubtful stayer, ground will suit but others appeal more **22-1**

**25. THE REAL WHACKER**

TRAINER: Patrick Neville  
JOCKEY: Gavin Sheehan  
Highly tried in his prime, but best days behind him now **66-1**

**26. QUAI DE BOURBON**

TRAINER: Willie Mullins  
JOCKEY: Donagh Meyler  
Third in Irish National last season, can nick a place at big odds **25-1**

**27. ANSWER TO KAYF**

TRAINER: Terence O'Brien  
JOCKEY: John Shinnick  
Won Troytown Chase, but has disappointed since, best watched **66-1**

**28. JORDANS**

TRAINER: Joseph O'Brien  
JOCKEY: Ben Jones  
Shrewd trainer has had this race as his main aim, place hope **33-1**

**29. FINAL ORDERS**

TRAINER: Gavin Cromwell  
JOCKEY: Conor Stone-Walsh  
Jumped his rivals silly in Cross Country at Chelms, this is tougher **25-1**

**30. MARBLE SANDS**

TRAINER: D Killahena & G McPherson  
JOCKEY: Kielan Woods  
Proved his stamina at Cheltenham in Nov, lacks a touch of class **50-1**

**31. PANIC ATTACK**

TRAINER: Dan Skelton  
JOCKEY: Harry Skelton  
Enjoyed brilliant season with two big hcap wins, respected **8-1**

**32. TOP OF THE BILL**

TRAINER: Nigel/Willy Twiston-Davies  
JOCKEY: Toby McCain-Mitchell  
Career-best in Haydock National trial in Feb, tough task **66-1**

**33. JOHNNYWHO**

TRAINER: AJ & Jonjo O'Neill  
JOCKEY: Richie McLernon  
Career-best at Chelms, has experience of National fences, sniff **12-1**

**34. TWIG**

TRAINER: Ben Pauling  
JOCKEY: Beau Morgan  
Won Becher, in line for a big bonus if he wins, tough task **40-1**

**36. IMPERIAL SAINT**

TRAINER: Philip Hobbs/Johnson White  
JOCKEY: Callum Pritchard  
Likes this track, in off a light weight, and could surprise a few **50-1**

**37. AMIRITE**

TRAINER: Henry de Bromhead  
JOCKEY: Phillip Enright  
Fourth in Topham last year, likely to outrun insulting 100-1 odds **100-1**

thesun.co.uk/football

Saturday,  
April 11,  
2026

# Goals

PAPER APP ONLINE

in association with

William HILL



GRAND PLANS ...  
Tottenham's new boss  
Roberto De Zerbi is focused  
on the next seven games —  
starting with Sunderland



# I WANNA WIN DE TITLE!

Err...  
which  
one?

## RDZ eyes top spot — and not of the Championship

By TOM BARCLAY

**ROBERTO DE ZERBI'S first mission is to save Spurs from relegation — then take them to top of the Premier League.**

The Italian, 46, last week took over relegation-threatened Tottenham on a lucrative five-year contract, though he insists he has not come for the money.

He says he is in it for the long haul at N17 and has an ambitious target to take the club from the depths of despair to summit special.

Before his first game in charge at Sunderland tomorrow, De Zerbi said: "I would like to stay four or five years, for a long time."

"My plan is to try to put Tottenham — I'm not speaking about the titles as it's not the right moment now — but to put Tottenham in the first position in the Premier

Turn to Page 3

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18+

# Goals

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## PREMIER LEAGUE TODAY'S FIXTURES

(3pm unless stated)

Arsenal v Bournemouth (12.30pm)

Brentford v Everton

Burnley v Brighton

Liverpool v Fulham (5.30pm)

## TOMORROW (2pm unless stated)

Chelsea v Manchester City (4.30pm)

Crystal Palace v Newcastle

Nottm Forest v Aston Villa

Sunderland v Tottenham

## MONDAY

Manchester United v Leeds (8pm)



## A NEW ANGLE? SPURS' GOALS UNDER BOSSES

	Games	Goals scored	Goals per game
Ange Postecoglou	101	181	1.79
Thomas Frank	38	59	1.55
Igor Tudor	7	9	1.28

## AND DE ZERBI'S LAST TWO CLUBS...

	Games	Goals scored	Goals per game
Brighton	89	152	1.70
Marseille	69	156	2.26



**CHEMSDINE TALBI** has scored four Prem goals this season – the only Sunderland player to net more while aged 20 or under in a single season. He is Danny Welbeck, who got six in 2010-11.

4

**BEST BET**  
Sunderland to win 13-8

# IT'S POST

## Spurs boss De Zerbi is a

By TOM BARCLAY

**THE Ange Postecoglou era may not be over after all – as Roberto De Zerbi wants to bring back his swashbuckling style at Tottenham.**

Big Ange's two-year spell was a wild ride as Spurs soared initially, playing thrilling football and even going five points clear at the top... before nosediving down the table.

His memorable second season saw him win the Europa League, ending their 17-year trophy drought but finish 17th in the league – which led to the Aussie, 60, being sacked.

De Zerbi takes over a Tottenham team in severe danger of the drop with seven games to go.

His initial focus is on rescuing the team from sliding into the Championship but long term he would love a return to the entertaining, possession-dominating days of Postecoglou.

Former Brighton chief De Zerbi, 46, said: "I want to keep the ball. I want to see again the Tottenham I watched with Postecoglou.

"Because in my second season at Brighton, there was Postecoglou here with a lot of these players and it was one of the best teams in terms of quality of play.

"With Pedro Porro, with [Destiny] Udogie, with [Micky] Van de Ven, with [Cristian] Romero and I would like to see it again."

Lewis Dunk claimed De Zerbi's exciting but complicated philosophy had left Brighton's players "baffled" during the Italian's first fortnight at the Amex in 2022.

Albion failed to win any of their first five games but then flourished, reaching Europe for the first and only time in their 125-year history.

De Zerbi has no time to waste at Spurs, given their perilous position.

For all the talk of tactics, he insists the biggest change he must make is to his players' "mentality", promising not to confuse the squad with any unnecessarily elaborate instructions at this stage.

His big challenge is to lift the players' shattered confidence after failing to win a single Premier League game in 2026.

None more so than goalie Antonin Kinsky, set to start his first game since being hauled off by predecessor Igor Tudor on 17 minutes after two howlers

**Sunderland v Tottenham**  
Tomorrow, 2pm, sky sports

against Atletico Madrid. De Zerbi is still missing regular No1 Guglielmo Vicario ahead of his first game tomorrow at Sunderland after the keeper's hernia surgery.

But the Italian said: "I haven't spoken yet with Kinsky as I think he doesn't need to speak too much."

"I have confidence. He has to be strong but he is strong enough to show what he can do.

"Not more, not less. I think his qualities are enough to play at Spurs. The players believe in him."

"He has to stay calm and confident. He is playing at Tottenham, so he has to be stronger than the mistakes, and to move on."

He may not have spoken to Kinsky yet but De Zerbi has held individual talks with most of his squad.

That includes skipper Cristian Romero, who is set to keep the armband – despite the issues he has caused on and off the pitch this season.

They include being banned for seven games for red and yellow cards and sniping at the hierarchy with thinly-veiled social-media digs.

Yet De Zerbi explained: "I have spoken with Cristian. I think Cuti is crucial for us."

"He's the captain, he is maybe the most important player in our squad."

"Like Richarlison, to achieve our goal, we need the best of Romero."

De Zerbi begins his rescue mission at the Stadium of Light, before home games against old club Brighton, Leeds and Everton – along with trips to Wolves, Aston Villa and Chelsea.

And the former Marseille manager is bullish on his chances of

keeping Tottenham in the Premier League – despite their plight. Asked what gives him such confidence, he replied: "The qualities of the players."

"The guys know the situation is very difficult but if you watch them against Liverpool and also Atletico Madrid in Madrid, they showed their qualities and they showed sometimes the right spirit."

"We now have to show this for 90 minutes and we have to believe in ourselves."

"The most important part in football is the mental part."

"You are used to speaking too much about the style of play, the tactical disposition, blah, blah, blah. "But, in the end, the mental part is crucial in every work, especially in football, especially in this moment at Tottenham."

Meanwhile, De Zerbi claimed he was not surprised by the supporter backlash ahead of his appointment because of his support of Mason Greenwood at Marseille.

Greenwood had charges of alleged rape and assault dropped against him in 2023.

De Zerbi described the England striker as a "good guy" who "paid a heavy price" – comments which prompted three Spurs fan groups to campaign against his hiring.

And the Italian added: "I wasn't surprised. I was a bit sad and sorry it happened because I'm sorry if somebody took offence."

"This topic is very close to me, I'm very sensitive about this topic, because of the person I am and because I have a daughter."

"I have always been against – always – any type of violence, especially against women."

"But not only violence, even just sexist jokes or other sexist behaviour. I have a daughter and I'm directly affected by it."

"I know who I am, I know the type of person I am, so I wasn't annoyed by the questions – I'm just sad about them."

Asked if he hoped fans would accept his apology, De Zerbi added: "Yes, also because I'm not going to go back over this topic."

"I spoke about it in my first interview, I spoke about it today and it wouldn't be right to go back over this topic again."



**BIG ROLE**  
...skipper Romero



**FUN, IF NOT SPURFECT**... Big Ange ended trophy drought during chaotic two-year reign



# SCRIPT

## big fan of Big Ange



IT'S MATCH OF THE GRAY... Archie Gray trains yesterday



TOP CAT... Le Bris is doing well

## Stadium of blight

By GARY STONEHOUSE

**REGIS LE BRIS** is desperate to ruin idol Roberto De Zerbi's Tottenham debut.

The Black Cats manager has often said the Italian boss and Pep Guardiola are his biggest coaching influences.

However Le Bris insists there will be no red carpet rolled out for De Zerbi and his strugglers at the Stadium of Light.

Le Bris, 50, said: "Tottenham are a big club with top players but they have struggled to generate momentum this season.

"You never know how you create this vicious circle — doubt, injuries, efficiency. It means this league is unforgiving, demanding and hard to break.

"It doesn't mean they are not good. They've quality but when there's doubt it's hard to manage.

"The new coach is great, strong experience, clear identity. "With Roberto De Zerbi, you can see a team, you don't even need to know the jersey but you can identify them.

"But we still want to win. The main goal of the season is achieved. Now we want to grow."

## TITLE

From Page 1

League because there are all parts to reach that level. I believe to keep [Spurs in] the Premier League, first of all. It has to be clear to everyone.

"I want to work in the Premier League and I believe I deserve to work in the Premier League.

"But the main sense of my work is more than the league.

"If I sign my contract in April I have to be ready to stay, no matter what, in the next season.

"I want to stay focused on Sunderland and the other six games. But my idea is very clear."

Spurs first tried to hire De Zerbi in February, after sacking Thomas Frank when they were five points above the relegation zone.

But De Zerbi, who left Marseille the same day Frank exited Tottenham, wanted a break.

Yet he was convinced to take over with the club in a more perilous position after Igor Tudor's dismal interim reign. De Zerbi



said: "I am not better than Frank or Tudor because I consider them very good coaches.

"I try to bring my style, my character, my personality and my strengths to achieve our target, which is the most important part now."

The Italian also offered his squad a boost. He added: "I'm sure about the level of the players because I was very, very close to bringing many of these players to my former teams in the past."

RDZ is thought to be on around £12million a year, making him the third best-paid Prem boss.

But the ex-Brighton chief insisted: "Money never changed my focus on my work. The focus is on seven games, to keep them in the Premier League."

De Zerbi's fight to stay up has not been helped by a new setback to forward Mohammed Kudus (above), who is believed to have damaged his quad again and may need surgery.

# QUESTION OF Sun SPORT

Compiled by Russell Lanning

## MISSING IN ACTION



WHO is our encrypted player jumping over Ryan Sessegnon after Fulham's win over Tottenham last year?

**JULY 18 2005** **MOVING STORY** Name this player switch **MAN CITY TO CHELSEA £21M**

**THE 1% CLUB** GIMME five?...Can you name our five players who wear the No 5 shirt for these Prem clubs this season

ARSENAL					A
MAN CITY					E
C PALACE					I
BRENTFORD					O
LEEDS					U

**IT'S MY BIRTHDAY** Clue 1: I made my professional debut against Cambridge City in the FA Cup when I was just 16.

Clue 2: I helped my first club to a League Cup shock over Man Utd before a £5m move to a Prem club when I was 18.

I have won 37 England caps but have not played for the country since I was 23.

30 today, but who is it?

**DO THE MATHS** NUMBER of England games managed by Thomas Tuchel since his debut as boss in March 2025? + NUMBER of draws Andoni Iraola's Bournemouth have recorded in their last ten Premier League games? =

**BOSSY BEAUTS** Name the manager (Full-time jobs only)

2010-16 Ajax → 2016 Inter Milan → 2017 Crystal Palace → 2018-20 Atlanta Utd → 2020-21 Holland → 2023 Al Jazira

**Sun FUN** WITH the amazing pictures in space and the solar eclipse from Artemis II, here is our Moon XI from outer space.

**MOON XI**

David Button Moon

Bradley Orr-bit Dan Correction Burn To Steve Boldly Go Stewart Houston

Lunar Modric Flynn Count Downes Harry Artermis Carl Shutt-le

Marko Astronautovic Rocket Santa Cruz

TEAM: Al-Nasa MANAGER: Gianfranco Solar

ANSWERS: MISSING IN ACTION: Rodrigo Muniz; MOVING STORY: Shaun Wright-Phillips; THE 1% CLUB: Peto Hincapie, John Stones, Maxence Lacroix, Ethan Ampadu, Pascal Struijk, Frank de Boer

# Goals

PAPER APP ONLINE

In association with  
**William HILL**

APR 14  
2001



# REWIND

25 YEARS AGO

By **STEPHEN CARR**

PREMIER LEAGUE	
<b>SUNDERLAND (2) 2</b>	Kilbane 3 Quinn 12
<b>TOTTENHAM (0) 3</b>	Clemence 53 Doherty 75, 88

(Stadium of Light)  
Att: 48,029

## HOW PREM TABLE LOOKED ON APRIL 14, 2001

Pos	Team	Pld	GD	Pts
1	Man Utd (1)	33	+50	76
2	Arsenal (2)	33	+21	60
3	Ipswich (5)	33	+12	56
4	Leeds (4)	33	+11	56
5	Chelsea (6)	32	+21	51
6	Liverpool (3)	31	+18	50
7	<b>SUNDERLAND (7)</b>	33	+4	49
8	Aston Villa (8)	33	+5	48
9	<b>TOTTENHAM (12)</b>	33	-2	45
10	Charlton (9)	33	-4	45
11	Leicester (13)	33	-6	45
12	Southampton (10)	32	-6	44
13	West Ham (15)	33	-3	39
14	Newcastle (11)	31	-8	39
15	Everton (16)	33	-10	38
16	Middlesbrough (14)	33	-1	35
17	Derby (17)	33	-22	35
18	Man City (18)	34	-23	30
19	Coventry (19)	33	-23	30
20	Bradford (20)	32	-34	21

(Final positions in brackets)

## PREMIER LEAGUE ON APRIL 13 & 14, 2001

### GOOD FRIDAY, APRIL 13

**BRADFORD (0) 2 CHARLTON (0) 0**  
Blake 74 (pen)  
Carbone 80  
(Valley Parade, 17,511)

**LIVERPOOL (0) 1 LEEDS (2) 2**  
Gerrard 55  
Ferdinand 4  
(Anfield, 44,116)

### SATURDAY, APRIL 14

**ARSENAL (0) 0 MIDDLESBRO (2) 3**  
Edu (og) 34  
Silvino (og) 38  
Ricard 58

**ASTON VILLA (1) 2 EVERTON (1) 1**  
Dublin 2, Taylor 81  
Unsworth 21  
(Villa Park, 31,272)

**CHELSEA (1) 1 SOUTHAMPTON (0) 0**  
Poyet 43  
(Stamford Bridge, 35,136)

**IPSWICH (0) 1 NEWCASTLE (0) 0**  
Stewart 76 (pen)  
(Portman Road, 24,028)

**LEICESTER (1) 1 MAN CITY (1) 2**  
Akinbiyi 41  
Goater 17, Wanchope 67  
(Fillbert Street, 20,224)

**MAN UTD (2) 4 COVENTRY (2) 2**  
Yorke 12, 27  
Hartson 10, 33  
Giggs 81, Scholes 87  
(Old Trafford, 67,637)

**SUNDERLAND (2) 2 TOTTENHAM (0) 3**  
Kilbane 3, Quinn 12  
Clemence 53  
Doherty 75, 88  
(Stadium of Light, 48,029)

**WEST HAM (3) 3 DERBY (0) 1**  
Kanoute 5  
Gudjonsson 83  
(Upton Park, 25,319)



ALMOST 25 years to the day, **STEPHEN CARR**, 49, looks back a quarter of a century to when his old club Tottenham came from 2-0 down to win 3-2 at Sunderland — with Gary Doherty the unlikely star.

Carr reflects on the game in 2001 and the atmosphere Spurs will face playing at the Stadium of Light tomorrow — and how he believes they just need to win ugly between now and the end of the season to avoid the drop.

**GARY DOHERTY** was our unexpected superhero as his two goals in the space of 13 minutes won us the game at Sunderland.

The player we dubbed the 'Ginger Pele' scored his first with 15 minutes left with a left-footer from inside the box. And his second was a scrappy rebound that he had the easy task of tapping home.

Neither were memorable but they are the type of goals that new Tottenham manager Roberto De Zerbi will be dreaming of tomorrow.

Gary was a top lad and could switch from being centre-half to a centre-forward.

However he was so awkward to play against because he would still play as a defender when he was up front!

My Ireland team-mate Niall Quinn put the home side two up and Sunderland were dreaming of a European place after being promoted the previous season.

It almost mirrors where the Black Cats are now.

But if somebody had talked about tomorrow's fixture at the start of the season and told me that it would be Spurs and not Sunderland desperately needing to get something to steer clear of the relegation zone, I'd have thought they were crazy.

Playing at the Stadium of Light is a tough ask, too. I also had the pleasure of playing for Newcastle and there is a completely different atmosphere in the North East.

The support is more localised so virtually the entire crowd live in the area, work all week to watch their team and create a passionate support that is

# 'GINGER PELE' OUR HERO

**DOH'S A DEAR...**  
Gary Doherty salutes his Sunderland winner — much to the delight of Spurs team-mate Stephen Carr (below)



unlike anywhere else in the country.

Glenn Hoddle had just taken over as Tottenham manager around about the time of this game — it was something like his third game in charge.

Working with Glenn was great and there is no doubt he improved my game. But I also enjoyed working under former boss George Graham.

Because of his history with Arsenal, George faced a difficult task being accepted at Tottenham but I will always be grateful to George. His philosophy

and priority was being solid at the back before you can go forward, so my defensive role improved immediately.

But you'd be surprised to learn how important he worked on my offensive side and he allowed me to have the freedom to attack.

Fast forward 25 years and De Zerbi signing a five-year deal is a statement of intent that he is looking at this as a long-term stay, regardless of what happens over the next seven games.

And it doesn't matter how the team gets results between now and then, it's just all about results. Ugly wins will do.

It's also about every player taking on the role as a leader and captain when they are on the pitch.

During their slump in form this year, 20-year-old Archie Gray has been an absolute shining light for Tottenham.

And if they all adopt his commitment and attitude they will glide through these next seven matches.

Interview: **RUSSELL LANNING**



Manager: **Peter Reid**



HOW



THEY LINED UP

Manager: **Glenn Hoddle**



**REID AND HOD FIND IT'S GOOD TO YELL**  
Bosses rant at stars

HITTING THE HEADLINES...  
SunSport's report on Tottenham's 3-2 victory over Sunderland back in 2001 was a tale of two bosses

thesun.co.uk/football  
**Goals**

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**PREMIER LEAGUE**



KADIOGLU... good vibrations

# Fer feels real deal

By NICK SZCZEPANIK

**BRIGHTON** and Turkey star Ferdi Kadioglu believes a World Cup feel-good factor can boost the Seagulls' European chances. Versatile full-back Kadioglu helped his nation come through qualifiers against Romania and Kosovo to reach this summer's tournament and even scored the winner in their play-off semi-final.

He will be up against Brighton team-mate Diego Gomez when Turkey face Paraguay in Group D.

While four Seagulls players face off in Group F — Holland's Bart Verbruggen and Jan Paul van Hecke, Kaoru Mitoma (left) of Japan and Sweden midfielder Yasin Ayari.

Kadioglu said: "We were speaking about it. 'Who's the favourite in your group? Is it Japan? Netherlands?'"

"Because Japan won against England. No group is easy, so anything can happen."

"After 24 years, Turkey are back in the World Cup, so that's massive."

And Kadioglu is sure the positive feeling can fuel their push for Europe, starting with today's trip to Burnley.

The Seagulls are five points behind sixth-place Chelsea and he added: "A lot of players are in a good mood."

"Burnley will not be easy but it doesn't matter against who we play, we can win. We showed that in the past."



**BURNLEY** and Brighton have drawn seven of their 13 Prem games — one of just eight fixtures to have been played 12+ times and had more than half of them end all square.

**7**

**BEST BET**  
Brighton over 2.5 cards 21-10

# Worlds apart!

## TUANZEBE HOPES CONGO HEROICS INSPIRE CLARETS

JUST WHAT THE DR ORDERED...

Tuanzebe raises his fist in celebration as he scores the extra-time winner to beat Jamaica in their play-off final and send DR Congo to the World Cup



By VIC HOLLY

**AXEL TUANZEBE** hopes the greatest moment of his career can inject some much-needed positivity into Burnley's relegation fight.

The DR Congo centre-half is still buzzing ten days after his extra-time winner against Jamaica in the play-offs took his country to their first World Cup since 1974 — and only their second ever.

Tuanzebe admitted that moment at the Guadalajara Stadium in Mexico topped anything he achieved during his 17 years at Manchester United or while on loan at Aston Villa and Napoli.

And he wishes he could bottle the feeling and sprinkle it around his Burnley teammates as they attempt to stay up.

Scott Parker's side are ten points from safety ahead of today's clash with Brighton at Turf Moor.

Tuanzebe, 28, said: "Initially, it didn't quite dawn on me the scale of what we've done — it was just the relief of getting through."

"But getting over that last line and seeing all the hard work that was put in towards it was just unbelievable."

"And to put the icing on the cake with my goal in front of my dad and brother was a very proud moment. It's the greatest moment of my career."

"Playing for big clubs has been good but in terms of my personal standpoint and what it means for the country and the people, it's just such a massive moment."

"I want to implement it now at Burnley by having that positive energy."

"We have seven games left, 21 points to fight for and it's still very much possible."

"This position we're in now, having a good energy around the place, being positive and really going for something that's difficult to achieve but can be achieved, is the way forward."

Tuanzebe, who was born in Bunia in DR Congo, before emigrating to Rochdale with his family as a

**Burnley v Brighton**  
3pm



small boy, says the celebrations in the capital Kinshasa were incredible.

He said: "They started from the airport and went all the way to the People's Palace."

"That journey could take you maybe 45 minutes but it took us **FIVE HOURS**."

"That gives you an idea of what it was like. I don't know how many were there — all we could see was an ocean of people."

"People were just so ecstatic, chanting, running, chasing the bus, music blasting, it was just a great environment to be in."

"It was just pure elation, giving the people something to celebrate."

Sebastien Desabre's side will now face Portugal, Colombia and Uzbekistan in World Cup Group K.

Tuanzebe added: "The manager spoke to me after the game and was so emotional, he was in tears."

"We've had our fair share of uncertain moments. We want the country to move forward and this is definitely something that can spark that."

Tuanzebe is having a roller-coaster few months after the birth of his second child in January, a daughter, qualifying for the World Cup and fighting relegation with Burnley.

He said: "When you reflect on it, there are so many highlights to look back on but they are so easy to miss as you carry on with day-to-day life."

"Right now, the buzz is still there and I want to do everything I can to help Burnley survive."

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**PREMIER LEAGUE**

**NEEDS A GOAL, PALMER**

**COLE FOR CHELSEA THIS SEASON**

Games	26
Starts	22
Minutes	1,795
Goals	10
Goals excluding pens	5
Assists	3
Shots	56
Chances created	28

**LOST HIS FORM**

AFTER his blistering start at Chelsea, Cole Palmer's form has dropped off dramatically since the middle of January 2025 — with just six open-play goals in that time.

**PALMER'S CHELSEA DROP**

Before Jan 15, 2025	Since Jan 15, 2025	
68	Games	55
39	Goals	14
12	Penalties scored	6
21	Assists	10
141	Mins per goal	296
204	Mins per non-penalty goal	519
262	Mins per assist	415

**DOZEN'T LOOK GOOD LAST 12 MEETINGS**

Sep 25, 2021	Prem	0-1
Jan 15, 2022	Prem	1-0
Nov 9, 2022	LC	2-0
Jan 5, 2023	Prem	0-1
Jan 8, 2023	FAC	4-0
May 21, 2023	Prem	1-0
Nov 12, 2023	Prem	4-4
Feb 17, 2024	Prem	1-1
Apr 20, 2024	FAC	1-0
Aug 18, 2024	Prem	0-2
Jan 25, 2025	Prem	3-1
Jan 4, 2026	Prem	1-1



**AFTER** scoring 19 times in 17 games before Christmas, City striker Erling Haaland has scored three in his last 12 Prem matches — two of which have been penalties.

**3**

**BEST BET**  
Manchester City  
win 23-20

# Liam in



**CLASS IS PERMANENT...**  
Chelsea boss Liam Rosenior has confidence in Cole Palmer, despite the star's startling dip in form

# IT'S APRIL

## Pep says let's have month to remember

**PEP GUARDIOLA** knows his team will have to continue to bring their A-game in April if they are to reel in Prem leaders Arsenal.

Manchester City have an incredible record in the penultimate month of the season — winning 23 of their last 31 Premier League matches.

And that will be a worry for Gunners boss Mikel Arteta — Pep's former No2 — as he looks to guide his team over the line for a first title in 22 years.

Not least because his side visit City in their favourite month for next Sunday's showdown.

The only April defeat during Guardiola's ten-year reign was a 2-1 behind-closed-doors game against Leeds at the Etihad back in 2021.

Even then it proved to be a mere bump in the road as City were well clear at the top and on course for yet another title.

This time, though, the manager knows his team will have to be perfect if they are to win a seventh Prem title under him.

The Gunners go into the weekend nine points clear and that could go to 12 if they beat Bournemouth at the

Emirates this lunchtime. It is only the fact City have a game in hand and also host their rivals next weekend that means the title race is still on.

However, when winter turns to spring, they have a history of putting winning runs together.

They racked up nine games the last time they won the league, in 2024, and back in 2019 it was a 14-match streak to edge out Liverpool.

When his amazing April record was put to win, Pep, 55, said: "Hopefully, we can do a lot of points again."

"The situation in the Premier League, we need to win all of them, otherwise it will not give us a chance."

Asked if he always feels more excited at this stage of the season, he admitted: "Well, I have a lot of yellow cards — that shows how excited I am."

"I've had good energy and I still have good energy."

Many felt City gained an edge over Arsenal by beating them 2-0 in the Carabao Cup final three weeks ago.

It would undoubtedly give Guardiola's men a huge lift if their rivals drop points this afternoon. The Spaniard has

By **MARTIN BLACKBURN**

# Cole comfort

## ROSENIOR'S ARM AROUND THE SHOULDER FOR PALMER

By LLOYD CANFIELD

**LIAM ROSENIOR has been reminding Cole Palmer just how good he is as he searches for ways to get him back to his goalscoring best.**

Chelsea's midfield star Palmer is enduring his worst spell at the club since arriving from Manchester City in a £42.5million deal in the summer of 2023 – a situation that has not been helped by injuries in his season.

So boss Rosenior has been working overtime to find out what has gone wrong for a player who scored 25 goals in his debut campaign at Stamford Bridge and was crowned the club's Player of the Season.

And the Blues gaffer has taken a deep dive into the stats – which do not make for good reading this term.

Palmer, 23, might have scored nine Premier League goals but FIVE have been penalties and he only has one assist to his name.

He managed 33 goal contributions in his first season and 24 last term, including a massive drop in form after Christmas 2024.

Palmer is looking for a strong end to the campaign – firstly helping Chelsea qualify for the Champions League before heading to the World Cup with England.

And there is no better place to start than against former club City tomorrow.

Rosenior said: "You have to give him confidence, point out the things he's doing well. You point out the things that are still very,

**Chelsea v Man City**  
 Tomorrow, 4.30pm **sky sports** main event

very positive in his game. In terms of chance creation, I've gone through the stats.

"The chances he's created in our difficult times were very, very high for the league.

"We just didn't take the chances he created. I showed him that.

"You can overanalyse at times but that's not what I want Cole to do.

"Cole's an intuitive player. He needs to be free to express himself.

"How we have tried to manage Cole before this period is that there were question marks about why he was coming off, why he wasn't starting games.

"We wanted him fresh for this period and so far he looks really, really good for that."

In January, SunSport exclusively revealed that Palmer would be open to quitting the Bridge and could be tempted to join Manchester United in the summer.

Enzo Fernandez and Marc Cucurella have both flirted with moves away from Chelsea but Rosenior was keen to highlight Palmer's commitment to the club.

He added: "I have to give Cole so much credit because he's put himself up to play for this club, maybe at times where other players

wouldn't. A lot of people speak about Cole's commitment to this club, how much he buys into what we're doing.

"He's fully invested in what we do, in many ways. I'm delighted with him, as a player, as a character, what he stands for, what he wants to achieve.

"He's going to be a huge part of things for me and the years to come."

Chelsea host title-chasing City having lost three of their last four Prem games – a slump which has dented their Champions League hopes.

But the Blues are only one point off Liverpool in fifth place – which was confirmed as a Champions League spot this week.

And Rosenior is confident they can upset the odds and beat Pep Guardiola's City for the first time in almost five years.

Asked if Chelsea can spring a surprise tomorrow, he said: "Of course we can. We're a very good team.

"We've gone through a difficult run, even though we were punished for mistakes.

"There were good moments. When I analysed the games, we've caused every team problems but haven't had the results for that.

"We need to make sure we keep the back door shut. We need to not switch off.

"We need to not make mistakes because Manchester City will punish you. But I still want us to go out and play our game.

"What's happened before this game has no relevance. We need to focus on what's going to be a really difficult game."



HIGH LIFE... Moyes has eyes on Europe

# Euro shot has Moyes all a quiver

**Brentford v Everton**  
 3pm

By KEN LAWRENCE

**DAVID MOYES admits he would get the shakes if he forced Everton into a Champions League place.**

He believes the side he has transformed in just over a year would not be ready to join Europe's elite next season.

But the Toffees boss knows just how much it would mean to make even the lower reaches of Europe.

The Scot, 62, joked: "At this club, if it was the tiddlywinks competition we'd be excited about it!"

Yet going for the game's most prestigious club prize is now a tantalising prospect for Moyes, who returned to stave off relegation and has the Toffees sat eighth in the Prem.

Victory over Brentford, above Everton only on goal difference, would take them level on points with fifth-placed Liverpool before the Reds face Fulham this evening.

Moyes makes no bones over his desire to claim a European place.

He said: "It would be fantastic for the club, for the players and especially the fans.

"Our supporters have suffered so much over the past few years, so it would be especially great for them if we made it.

"And yes, a Champions League place could be possible and this is the best chance we've had in a long time.

"But the thought of playing in it next year? That makes me shake a bit.

"Even just talking about what might be achieved this season shows how much we've progressed in the past year."

Moyes, who took West Ham to a first major trophy in 43 years by winning the Europa Conference League in 2023, said: "I'd love more great European nights like we had then – they were great.

"Whatever competition in Europe we did get into would be a real positive. While I don't really want to talk about getting there, I am as I know what it would mean here.

"You are wary of getting caught out and there are clutch of teams – like Brentford – who all have a similar opportunity.

"But if you had said we'd be in this position this time last year, I'd have taken it. And, wary or not, we're going for it."

Boss Keith Andrews (above), 45, says his Bees are buzzing ahead of their first game for three weeks.

Brentford have lost just three games since Christmas.

He said: "It's a big game. It's a game where the pressure on us is everything we put on ourselves, not external pressure.

"We've set the bar high and want to continue to do that. Everton are playing very well with key players performing.

"It's been nice to get back together. The energy and the verve around the place this week has been really good. We've had to wait a while since the last one."



**LIAM ROSENIOR needs to be brave to beat Manchester City's four-man block tactic.**  
 In the latest Tactics Exposed Team Talk, Dean Scoggins explains how Chelsea can get the better of Pep Guardiola's new 'non-press press'.  
 Arsenal were bamboozled in last month's Carabao Cup final,

### STOP THE PRESS

with goalkeeper Kepa Arrizabalaga unable to play out with Pep's four-man line in front of him.

But Chelsea boss Rosenior can use Moises Caicedo as a single pivot in midfield, enabling

his partner to roam with Cole Palmer to find a way around City's block shape.

By pushing Estevao Willian up alongside Joao Pedro in attack, long balls from Robert Sanchez can create overloads in midfield, too.

Dean even reveals a new Pep tactic in the full video below.

SCAN HERE TO WATCH



# WOWERS!

been in this situation plenty of times before and said: "Whether we play before or later, we have to win every single game.

"We have not been consistent enough, we drop points when we know we should have taken them. That's why we are in a position we are now."

Guardiola's men dropped points against Chelsea in January, when a scrambled, injury-time goal from Enzo Fernandez earned a 1-1 draw.

However, the last time the West Londoners tasted victory against City was the Champions League final in 2021, so they will see this game as an opportunity to stay in the title race.

Meanwhile, Pep insists his skipper Bernardo Silva has yet to tell him that he is definitely leaving this summer.

Assistant Pep Lijnders appeared to let the cat out of the bag last Saturday, while the Portuguese international, 31, has told friends he will move on after nine years in the North West.

But Guardiola joked: "I'm so grumpy with Bernardo because a month ago I said, 'If you take a decision, I have to be the first to know'."

"I don't know if he has already decided. I said, jokingly, 'Tell me, I

deserve it' but he didn't so I don't know what's going on."

While Silva rarely gets a mention when it comes to the Prem's individual awards, Pep said he is a manager's dream.

He gave the ex-Monaco man the armband in the summer and says it was the best decision he has made this season.

Guardiola added: "I'm pretty sure all the managers he has had would say how much they love him.

"He is always thinking, incredibly competitive, fire inside – in the toughest moments on the biggest stages he is always there.

"He has been an incredible signing and I would love him to stay and finish his career here but he's going to decide when he is going to decide.

"I define players in bad moments, when everything is difficult, how he always said, 'I'm here to help'."



TITLE CHANCE... Pep knows City cannot slip up in what has historically been a brilliant month for them

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**PREMIER LEAGUE**

# It's 'early days' on Carrick

**Man United v Leeds**  
 Monday, 8pm, sky sports 5

By **ROSS HEPPENSTALL**

**DANIEL FARKE insists it is "too early" to judge Michael Carrick's impact at Manchester United.**

Carrick has led the Red Devils to seven wins in ten games since replacing the hapless Ruben Amorim on an interim basis in January.

There have been calls for the ex-midfielder to be handed the reins permanently if the Old Trafford outfit qualify for the Champions League.

Amad Diallo and Bryan Mbeumo claimed this week Carrick should stay in charge beyond this season, when his contract is due to end.

But Leeds boss Farke, who takes his side to United on Monday, said: "After a few weeks it's a bit too early to judge. But Michael played at the top level and with world-class players, so he was able to win trophies and this experience has helped him."

"I always liked his work, for example we crossed paths in the Championship when he was in charge of Middlesbrough."

"His team plays with lots of confidence and freedom in their offensive movements so it's difficult to control them."

"He also gives his offensive players lots of freedom – he plays offensive-minded football."

"I like his style a lot and I think it suits a Man U team with many, many top players and players full of potential."

"It's also no coincidence that he had so many good results, especially in the home games."

"It will be a difficult task on Monday night."

United face Leeds after a 24-day break while Farke's side beat West Ham last weekend to reach their first FA Cup semi-final in 39 years.

Farke (above) added: "Not playing can be an advantage, and a disadvantage, because they didn't have any games or players getting injured."

"On the other hand, you can injure yourself in training."

"Both managers and teams are experienced enough to adapt to the situation."



**BEST BET**  
 Manchester United  
 win 8-13



GET A GRIP . . . Maguire and sporting director Wilcox



HOUSE PARTY . . . United boss Carrick (left) strolls to training at Carton House



SMILES BET

# Who Killed

# wins

# IRISH CAM HAS HELPE BIG MICK T KEEP UNITE BUZZ GOIN

By **SAMUEL LUCKHURST**  
 Manchester United correspondent

**"DID you like that?" a gleeful Harry Maguire asked Jonath Woodgate.**

Manchester United coach Woodgate was standing yards away when Maguire leathered the ball into a mini-goal during a training drill.

"Oh H! H!" boomed Woodgate. There is bound to be a natural kinship between two gifted Yorkshire-bred centre-halves.

That set the tone for an uplifting few days for United, across the Irish Sea for their four-day training camp.

Maguire's new contract, a near fully-fit squad and the imminent end to a whopping 24-day gap between games all fuelled the feel-good factor.

There is a breeziness about the Red Devils camp that those who have covered them for years are unaccustomed to.

Even Maguire half-joked about the potential outcome of his charge by the Football Association.

Club sources believe the blend of hard work and social activities in Ireland has galvanised the squad further to ensure third-placed United finish as high as possible in the Premier League.

They flew to Dublin on Monday night and spent three nights at the opulent Carton House in County Kildare before they left on Thursday afternoon.

The return of Lisandro Martinez from a two-month absence due to a calf injury was particularly welcomed as the Argentine defender brings a specific competitiveness to practice matches.

Key to United's mini-revival is not just the choice of Michael Carrick as head coach but his backroom staff.

First-team coach Travis Binnion, promoted from Under-21 coach, led the start of the open training session at Carton House on Tuesday morning.

Binnion placed players into groups of five in front of mini-goals.

They took turns to dribble away from their group, weaving between cones, before ping-pong the ball over the goalframe for each team-mate to exchange a one-touch pass before finishing into the goal.

Kobbie Mainoo had such a rusty start that Binnion congratulated him on his "tackle". After that, Mainoo deftly flicked the ball and later cushioned it with his chest.

United used to primarily start open training sessions with generic keep-ball exercises, known as "rondos" by football hipsters.

The intensity could vary and footage could be unflattering. What we were treated to in Ireland this week was more engaging, more testing and, judging by the players' reactions, more fun.

It also broke up the cliques. The two keep-ball groups tended to divide into Spanish and Portuguese speakers and the more Anglicised contingent.

In front of more pairs of eyes and more camera lenses, none of the United players under-hit their passes.

Manuel Ugarte, in a group with Maguire and Mainoo, has been drained of confidence for a year – but his 30-yarders hit the target every time.

Carrick initially observed before getting involved in a passing drill. Players can be privately scathing about coaches who get involved in ball-work exercises but, as Amad Diallo said, Carrick's "relationship with every player is good". The session was

only open to the media for 15 minutes – but that was enough to notice that Carrick and his staff have freshened up United's training regime.

Overall, the players had three thorough sessions on the grass at Carton House followed by rigorous gym work after more than two weeks away.

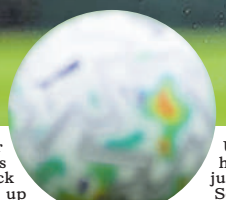
Forward Bryan Mbeumo said: "For a football player, you want to play games every single week. It's a little bit of rest for us."

"It's hard to find the rhythm but that's why we're here, to get ready for the next game and just be as strong as possible."

"It's clear for everyone with the position we are in now, we want to finish as strong as possible and reach the top of the position in the table, hopefully playing in the Champions League."

Players ended up staying after sessions to make the most of the head-tennis court. Bruno Fernandes and Matheus Cunha were the undefeated doubles partners.

The wisdom of flying to Ireland when



United hub justified. Some parkland while others or the spa. There was activity, aside friendly with Irish popstar Tuesday and academy team. A young Red Woodgate was Striker Ben Park, the ver Leeds, to pose Sesko lives footballer but ing knowledge watched some This trip w United's failure season and t



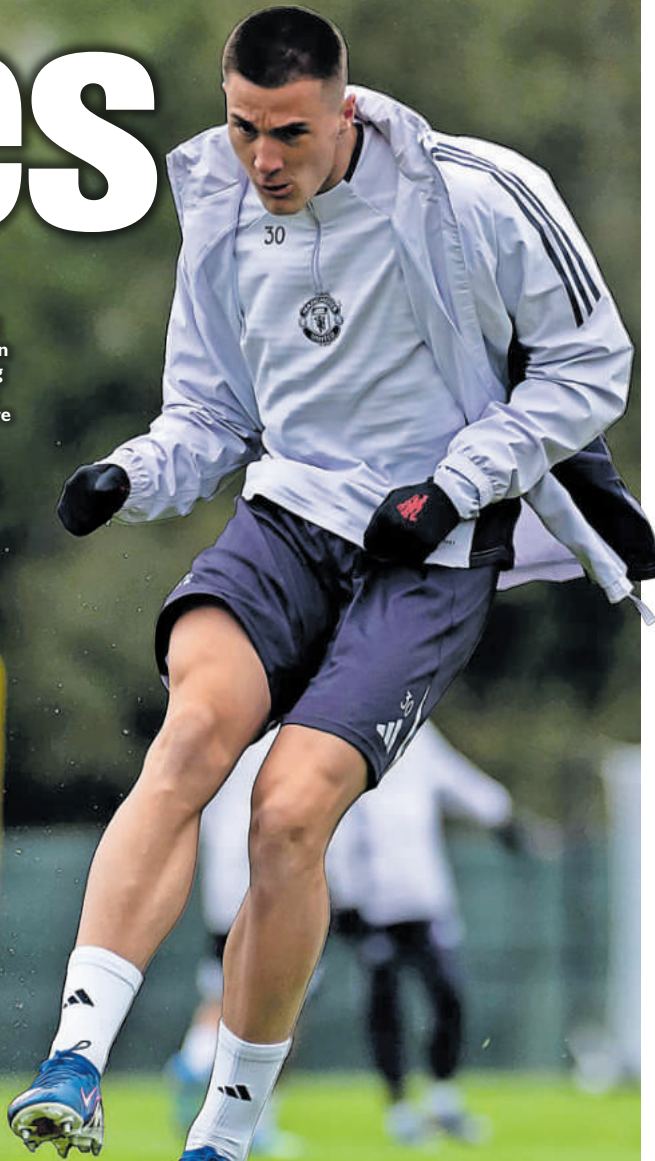
**BEST FOOT FORWARD . . .** Matheus Cunha on the ball in training



**BEST FOOT FORWARD . . .** Matheus Cunha on the ball in training

# dares

**IRISH FLING . . .** Red Devils striker Benjamin Sesko in action during the four-day training camp in County Kildare



ed have a £50million training that opened in August was used by activities for players. played golf on the O'Meara course on Tuesday afternoon, opted for clay-pigeon shooting

some obligatory commercial from plugging the August Leeds.

Nicky Byrne was present on caught up with his old Leeds mate Woodgate.

Red Devils staff member thought just an avid Westlife fan.

Benjamin Sesko visited Croke Park for United's game with for promotional material.

Carrick had stayed at the resort before and breathes the life of a pro also showcased some surprise of Gaelic football, having of it on his hotel-room TV.

was only possible because of to qualify for Europe this their early exit from the FA

Cup. That afforded the staff and players the chance to tune into the midweek Champions League quarter-finals.

The group watched both last-eight ties on the box on Tuesday night, so United do not necessarily find Arsenal to be a turn-off.

Carrick and his staff have been fixtures at academy games but could not attend the Under-21s' 4-2 defeat to Real Madrid Castilla at Old Trafford on Tuesday. The coaches still watched it via MUTV.

United could return to Carton House for a training camp towards the end of pre-season, when most of their World Cup stars are back from their three-week breaks.

Carrick had stayed at the resort before and staff were impressed by the plush facilities and pristine pitches.

Long-time United observers were taken aback by the fanaticism from their Irish support. Thousands gathered over the three days at Carton House, with 3,000 estimated to have turned up by Wednesday. Every

player spent at least 20 minutes signing autographs and posing for pictures.

One staff member estimated Fernandes scrawled his signature at least 1,000 times. The Portuguese playmaker also visited the Sligo supporters branch and received their player-of-the-year award.

The press conference Amad and Mbeumo jointly chaired on Tuesday afternoon was typically lighthearted.

There was a chuckle when the Ivory Coast and Cameroon internationals were asked about the Africa Cup of Nations final controversy, when winners Senegal were stripped of their title.

Amad chuckled "no comment", while Cameroon ace Mbeumo kept schtum.

Amad, 23, is one of the younger members of the squad but an authentic talker and has now chaired press conferences in Ireland, Hong Kong and Los Angeles.

He could clearly be trusted to speak warmly about Carrick – and back his credentials to earn a longer contract.

Like Woodgate, Carrick will also like that.

## INITIALLY SPEAKING

### PREMIER LEAGUE'S S-MILE-HIGH CLUB

CAN you figure out the players who have covered the most miles in the Prem this season - and the top five who have recorded the highest distance in a single game - just by their initials? All you have to do is work them out. When you have found all 15, answer the following question:

**Q** Of the players below, who is the only one yet to score a Premier League career goal?

Let us know the name of that player by Thursday and you could be winner! Send your entry to [sportsquiz-sm@the-sun.co.uk](mailto:sportsquiz-sm@the-sun.co.uk) for a chance to win £50. (Winner's bank details will be required).

MOST MILES COVERED IN PREM THIS SEASON (Up to, and including, March 23)		MILES COVERED
E	A	212.75
J	G	210.86
M	R	210.17
S	B	206.28
M	Z	204.99
A	T	203.82
M	G - W	199.31
E	A	197.99
E	F	197.63
J	B	197.55
MOST MILES COVERED IN A SINGLE GAME BY DIFFERENT PLAYERS THIS SEASON		
B	G	8.23
B	S	8.16
P	G	8.15
P	F	7.98
J	H	7.97

**LAST WEEK'S WINNER:** Alex Louise Hillery, Durham  
**LAST WEEK'S ANSWER:** Kolo Toure  
**PLAYERS WHO HAVE PLAYED FOR MANCHESTER CITY & LIVERPOOL IN THE PREMIER LEAGUE:** Nicolas Anelka, Mario Balotelli, Craig Bellamy, Scott Carson, Nigel Clough, Robbie Fowler, Dietmar Hamann, David James, Mark Kennedy, Steve McManaman, James Milner, Albert Riera, Raheem Sterling, Kolo Toure. It is missing PLAYED in the title...

## INSIDE TRADING

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### TOP TIPS FROM TRADING FLOOR

**WHAT a day of sport! Loads of football, including the return of the Premier League, the Grand National, The Masters third round and top-class boxing with Tyson Fury in action.**

You've also got a brand new £50,000 Final One Standing game starting, where if you last longer than Robbie Lyle you share the jackpot.

Let's start off with an accumulator with Acca Boost. I'm going for two in the top flight, two in the Championship and two in the Scottish Premiership, where the league has split and Hearts have 67 points, Rangers 66 and Celtic 64.

Celtic will want revenge over St Mirren after their League Cup final defeat and I think they will. I'll go Hearts to stay top of the table by beating Motherwell.

In the Prem, I'll go Everton over Brentford with their great away form, Brighton to win at all-but-relegated Burnley. Then

**ADVERTORIAL**

into the Championship where Middlesbrough must beat struggling Portsmouth if they want to go up automatically.

And finally, a massive game in the race for the play-offs at St Mary's.

How can you not fancy Southampton at the moment? Unbeaten since mid-January, an FA Cup semi-final on the horizon and they stuck five past Wrexham midweek.

If you're picking up your Grand National winnings, we've got Liverpool v Fulham and here's a Bet Builder.

The Reds' Champions League hopes are hanging by a thread after a 2-0 defeat in Paris midweek.

And with Paris Saint-Germain's visit to Anfield coming up on Tuesday, they're surely not going to be fully focused here.

I fancy Fulham to win, both teams to score and Harry Wilson to net, with Impact Sub active too.

thesun.co.uk/football

# Goals

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**William HILL**

**PREMIER LEAGUE**



**3**

**ANTHONY GORDON** has scored in his last three Prem games — he could be the first Toon man to net in four in a row since Joe Willock (seven) in April and May 2021.

**BEST BET**  
Palace-Newcastle draw and BTTS 16-5



**EAGLE STAR...** Mateta nets against Fiorentina and goes off to fans' cheers and applause from Palace boss Glasner

# KNEESY DOES IT

## Oli breaks in JP

By ISABELLE BARKER

**OLIVER GLASNER will not get carried away by Jean-Philippe Mateta's comeback.**

The France striker ended his three-month injury hell with a penalty against Fiorentina to put Crystal Palace on the brink of the Conference League semi-finals.

It was Mateta's first start since he tried to quit the club in January and only a knee injury scuppered his move to AC Milan.

And there were cheers of appreciation from fans when he was subbed on Thursday instead of the boos he faced coming on in the previous round against AEK Larnaca.

Mateta, 28, filled in for the suspended Jorgen Strand Larsen.

But Eagles boss Glasner appeared to scotch suggestions the hitmen could face Newcastle tomorrow as a pair following Mateta's 83-minute Euro run-out.

The Austrian said: "He had a tough period. It was six weeks, he couldn't hit the ball and couldn't train on the pitch.

"He was really working hard to

**C Palace v Newcastle**

Tomorrow, 2pm, sky sports action

get back. I'm pleased for him, he's a great player and he's a great striker. We will need him.

"He will need to rest against Newcastle. But it's great to have Jorgen Strand Larsen back."

Tyrick Mitchell also scored in the 3-0 Thursday's win but urged Palace to "stay humble" ahead of Thursday's second leg in Italy.

The left-back, 26, said: "We know how dangerous they are and we're going to their ground. They're going to be up for it and we know we have to match them."

Newcastle are still without Bruno Guimaraes for tomorrow's trip to Selhurst Park despite being back in training after two months out with a hamstring issue.

Boss Eddie Howe said: "Bruno suffered from mumps on his return from Brazil. That's delayed his return so he won't be involved."

# Final One Standing

By *William HILL*

# Simply Beat Robbie

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# Vit out to avoid disaster

## PER'S PRIORITY

**ON A MISSION . . .**  
Pereira wants Prem survival more than Europa League glory



By CHARLIE WYETT

**VITOR PEREIRA** dreams of guiding Nottingham Forest to Europa League glory.

But the City Ground chief has his priorities clear and is desperate to avoid relegation.

After claiming a 1-1 draw at his old club Porto – where Pereira won the competition as Andre Villas-Boas' No2 in 2011 – Forest are back to focusing on staying up, starting with tomorrow's home Prem clash with Aston Villa.

The rivals could meet in the semi-finals of Europe but Pereira knows the importance of continuing his mini-revival since becoming the club's fourth boss of a crazy season at the City Ground.

After taking over from Sean Dyche in February, he lost his first two Prem matches in charge.

But Forest are now unbeaten in three – including last month's crucial 3-0 win at Tottenham.

Pereira, 57, said: "Against Porto next Thursday, we need to be at a better level than the first leg but I cannot forget the Premier League.

"We are in the quarter-finals of the Europa League.

"I want to win the Europa League. If we are not in the

**N Forest v A Villa**  
Tomorrow, 2pm,

Premier League, it will be a disaster. And a disaster I don't want to have the responsibility for."

Relegation would see Forest play 46 games in the Championship – while winning the Europa League gets them a spot in next season's Champions League.

Meanwhile, Villa striker Ollie Watkins is backing himself to show he is good enough to be in England's World Cup squad.

He was snubbed for the friendlies with Uruguay and Japan.

But the former Brentford striker responded with a crucial double in Thursday's 3-1 Europa League last-eight first-leg win at Bologna.

Watkins has 12 goals this term and just three Prem strikes in 2026.

He told the BBC: "I haven't been at the level I wanted to. I set an expectation when I hit a new level in terms of scoring goals in Europe.

"I speak to Michael Owen quite a bit. He was saying that when I play angry and I am a nuisance, that's when I am at my best."

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thesun.co.uk/football

# Goals

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CHAMPIONSHIP

## TODAY'S FIXTURES

(3pm unless stated)

Charlton v Preston	QPR v Bristol City (12.30pm)
Coventry v Sheffield Wednesday (12.30pm)	Sheffield United v Hull
Leicester v Swansea	Southampton v Derby
Middlesbrough v Portsmouth	Stoke v Blackburn
Norwich v Ipswich (12.30pm)	<b>TOMORROW</b>
Oxford v Watford	Birmingham v Wrexham (12pm)

## HE'S GOT MOMENTUM

### TOURE'S CAREER

		GAMES	GOALS
2020-22	Adelaide United	44	7
2022-24	Reims	3	0
2023-24	Paris FC (loan)	11	1
2024-26	Randers	48	12
2026-	NORWICH	5	5
2023-	Australia	5	2



NUNEZ... target

## Nunez is OK with O'Shea

By JON WEST

MARCELINO NUNEZ is being urged to keep on winding up Norwich fans by Ipswich captain Dara O'Shea.

The Chilean midfielder, 26, returns to Carrow Road today for the first time since a £7.5million switch to Town in August, the only one between the clubs since Andy Marshall in 2001.

Most players tone it down against a former side.

But Nunez became Norfolk's Most Hated following Ipswich's 3-1 home win in October, which saw him barracked by the away end.

After the final whistle he shouted 'Come On Tractor Boys!' into a TV camera and posed for pictures with a banner poking fun at previous praise from Norwich fans.

Nunez, who played 119 games in yellow, is certain to get a hot reception in today's lunchtime derby.

But defender O'Shea, 27, backed him to shrug it off and continue to annoy the Canaries — on and off the pitch.

He said: "I want to let the boys be themselves.

"It's great for us to have personalities as long as their energy is being used in a positive way.

"Marcelino is just Marcelino — he doesn't change. That boy, fair play to him, he just cracks on.

"He's going to have a bit of hatred towards him and he understands that.

"It's what makes the game great — the passion and rivalries."

Boss Kieran McKenna added: "In terms of temperament, there's not many better than Marcelino so I've no worries about him. "But I wouldn't want him thinking that he's going to wind anyone up."

The October success was Ipswich's first East Anglian derby victory in 16 years but it is 20 since they won at Carrow Road. And Town last beat them twice in a season in 1992-93.

O'Shea added: "It's been a long time since we've done the double so it's in the back of our minds."

# My dad lived in a refugee camp for 14 years

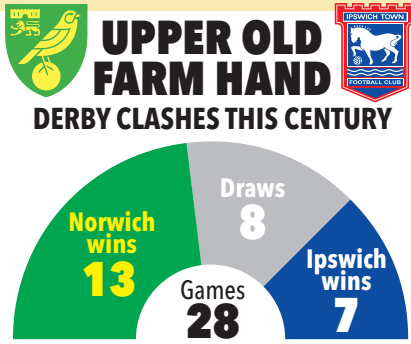


CAN DO ATTITUDE... Canaries star Mo Toure's family (right) fled the Liberian Civil War



HOME... Mo (left) on visit back to Guinea

## MO REVEALS HORROR OF FAMILY PAIN



## LAST TEN AT CARROW ROAD

Apr 22, 2007	Norwich	1-1	Ipswich
Nov 4, 2007	Norwich	2-2	Ipswich
Dec 7, 2008	Norwich	2-0	Ipswich
Nov 28, 2010	Norwich	4-1	Ipswich
Mar 1, 2015	Norwich	2-0	Ipswich
May 16, 2015	Norwich	3-1	Ipswich*
Feb 26, 2017	Norwich	1-1	Ipswich
Feb 18, 2018	Norwich	1-1	Ipswich
Feb 10, 2019	Norwich	3-0	Ipswich
Apr 4, 2024	Norwich	1-0	Ipswich

(All Championship except \* - play-off semi-final)

**IPSWICH** have not won at Carrow Road for more than 20 years, since a 2-1 victory in February 2006 when Jimmy Juan (left) levelled before a Gary Doherty own goal won it.

**BEST BET**  
Over 4.5 cards in Norwich v Ipswich game 19-20



LINC-UP PLAY... futsal is key to Skubala's philosophy

# Skub sees the future

**MICHAEL SKUBALA** now knows that what was good enough for Pep Guardiola remains good enough for him.

By **KEN LAWRENCE**

Lincoln boss Skubala this week took his side back up into the second tier of English football after a 65-year absence. Finishing this history-making season as League One champions is all but a certainty as they go into today's home clash with Leyton Orient 12 points clear at the top. And Skubala, 43, points to his background in futsal as a key factor in why he has become a success less than three years after being in charge of Leeds' U-21s. Manchester City chief Guardiola, with six Prem titles, also cites the five-a-side game as an inspiration during his earlier days coaching Barcelona. Skubala played the sport for England before being appointed as head coach of the national futsal team by the FA.

He added: "Being able to wear both hats as an ex-futsal coach gives me a unique way of looking at the game. "Futsal has a massive influence on coaches across the world. For those in Spain and Brazil especially, it was also part of their journey. "My experience of it has probably given me a unique, European way of looking at the game. "Futsal is totally transferable. Every day in training, clubs are doing small-sided games. "And set-pieces are a huge thing in futsal. "Futsal is hard work, mentally exhausting as well as physically. "And as Pep might tell you, without both you can't play football the way he likes to play it."

## MO TOURE has opened up on the hurt caused by people telling migrants to go back home.

The Norwich striker is to lead the line today in the cauldron atmosphere of Carrow Road for the East Anglian derby against bitter rivals Ipswich. But while that will be fierce, an uglier conflict has been simmering nationwide. As small boats continue to cross the Channel, some angry protestors have taken to the streets with a blunt three-word message: "Go back home." Yet Toure - before moving to Australia as a baby - was born on a West African refugee camp after his parents fled the Liberian Civil War in 1990. The 22-year-old opened up to SunSport about the squalor of his early months and the 18-day journey his dad made by foot to save his own life. He said: "It hurts. As an immigrant the videos hurt more when I see people telling migrants to go home - because where we came from was very tough. "You can't let one person's actions define immigrants. "There are good people who just want a better and safer life for their kids - especially those fleeing war." To understand Toure's message you have to understand the nightmare his dad Amara escaped. When the war in Liberia turned his world to ash, he did not have a plane ticket or visa - only his feet. The Norwich hero said: "My dad walked for 18 days to reach the Guinea border and lived in a refugee camp for **FOURTEEN** years. "It was there he met my mum Mawa, who is also from Liberia. "It was also where my older brother Al Hassan and I were born. "We moved to Australia while I was still a baby - so I was never able to fully comprehend how life was for my parents until we went back with my dad to visit ten years

EXCLUSIVE by **JUSTIN ALLEN**

ago. He built a mud-hut to live in and every day they just had to wake up in there. "It was crowded, unhygienic, humid and hot. The toilet was so close to the kitchen, where you shower, everything was compact. It's not like in a normal house where you can just walk around and do different things. "It was an eye-opener and served to motivate me even more. "Dad didn't want us having that life and that's why he got us out." It was during a chance meeting with a charity relief worker called Kristine Galloway that Toure's parents pursued a move to Australia - she told them their family would be welcomed Down Under. They moved to Adelaide and Toure and his brother Al Hassan ended up taking up football and becoming professionals capped by Australia.

really hurt me because you need to know what these immigrants go through." African hardship is something close to Toure's heart.

The continent has suffered famines, extreme poverty and wars. Toure has supported a number of African charity initiatives - particularly in removing financial barriers to help children play sport. He said: "I feel that people like us who have left the continent should try to give something back. "Two prime examples are Sadio Mane and N'Golo Kante. They use their wealth and influence to invest back home. "If everyone could do something small, it could make a big difference." Toure has been brilliant since signing for the Canaries from Danish club Randers in January. He became the first Norwich player to score a hat-trick on his full debut since Laurie Sheffield in 1966 - netting the opener in **51 SECONDS!** The striker had to sit out a month of action after a groin injury but has come off the bench in the last two games and is expected to start today. Norwich go into the game on the back of six wins and a draw out of their last eight games under former Monaco and Rangers boss Philippe Clement.

But the transition from a camp to immigrants in a new country was not easy. Toure said: "It's hard when you move to another country with no connections and have three kids. You don't get to live the life you planned. "My dad sacrificed a lot. He went back to school and got an education. He went to university so he could get a better job to take care of his family. "At that time neither parent had a driving licence so mum took us to school by bus and then went home by bus. "And if we missed the bus, she'd worry about us being late. "Mum made a lot of sacrifices taking care of us as refugees coming into a new country. She couldn't speak good English so the language barrier was the hardest." Australia gave the Toure family an opportunity to live a better life and when he watches anti-immigration videos on TV or social media it hits a nerve. Yet despite this Toure says he is not angry and even **FORGIVES** people for holding those views. He said: "Although it hurts, I forgive them because they don't understand. "You can't really judge somebody who hasn't lived a certain life. So it's not something I'm angry about - I feel like it's just understanding. If you don't understand something, your opinion can't

All of that is a far cry from the awful start to the season under ex-boss Liam Manning, who was sacked in November with the club in the relegation zone. Toure said: "It was a great start. I never imagined I'd make that kind of impact so quickly. "And the team has been in good form. The management deserve all the credit. "The manager's mentality and the demands he makes have been great. "He knows how to get us to be the best version of ourselves. He has been the mastermind." This summer Toure has a World Cup to look forward to with Australia - as they take on Turkey, USA and Paraguay. He said: "We've already been written off. USA celebrated when they were drawn against us. I can't wait to play them! "But it's going to be a proud moment to represent a country that gave my family a home and a chance of a better life."

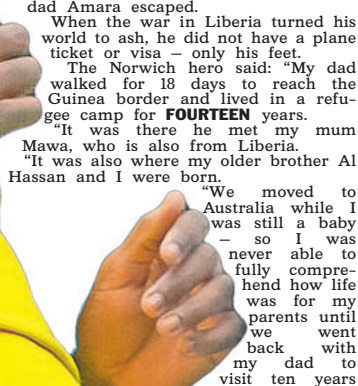


TABLE	
	P W D L F A Pts
Lincoln City	41 27 9 5 77 35 90
Cardiff	40 23 9 8 74 42 78
Bradford	41 21 8 12 52 45 71
Bolton	41 18 16 7 59 42 70
Stockport City	40 19 10 11 59 50 67
Stevenage	40 18 10 12 42 38 64
Plymouth	41 19 8 17 64 56 62
Reading	42 16 14 12 54 62
Huddersfield	41 17 10 14 62 53 61
Luton	41 17 10 14 57 50 61
Wycombe	42 16 11 15 60 48 59
Mansfield	39 18 14 12 48 41 53
Peterborough	40 15 6 19 59 55 51
Barnsley	39 13 12 14 60 64 51
Leyton Orient	41 14 8 19 56 64 50
AFC Wimbledon	41 14 8 19 49 52 50
Doncaster	41 14 8 19 42 64 50
Wigan	41 12 13 16 44 55 49
Burton Albion	42 12 12 18 45 56 48
Blackpool	42 13 9 20 48 64 48
Exeter	42 12 10 20 45 53 46
Rotherham	40 9 10 21 35 59 37
Northampton	41 9 8 24 34 60 35
Port Vale	39 8 10 21 30 54 34

LEAGUE ONE	
TODAY'S FIXTURES	
(3pm unless stated)	
Blackpool v Peterborough	
Bradford v Stevenage	
Burton v AFC Wimbledon	
Cardiff v Bolton (12.30pm)	
Doncaster v Reading	
Huddersfield v Wycombe	
Lincoln v Leyton Orient (12.30pm)	
Plymouth v Exeter (12.30pm)	
Rotherham v Barnsley	
Wigan v Mansfield	

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**Goals**

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**VERTU TROPHY FINAL**



EXCITED... Stockport's Norwood

# Norwood on level with Jack

By GARY CARTER

**OLIVER NORWOOD admits he knew Jack Wilshere was "levels above" when he first played alongside him.**

The Stockport midfielder will tomorrow bid to stop the now Luton boss lifting the Vertu Football League Trophy 20 years after lining up with him for England Under-16s in 2006. Back then, Wilshere (below) was a school year younger than many of his team-mates as he tore through Arsenal's academy. And Norwood can clearly recall announcing back then that the 14-year-old was something very special.

Norwood said: "Jack was a school year younger but you could see the ability he had."

"He was levels above. The injuries he had curtailed his career but he was a great lad and a good person."

"I was like, 'Who's this younger kid?' but he was built like a young man."

"I could see he was a different level, hence why he played at the level he did and what he did in his career."

"The injuries he had were a real shame, otherwise he probably would have been in the argument for being England's best player. He was that good."

Norwood has no immediate plans to follow Wilshere, who worked under the likes of Arsene Wenger, into management.

Norwood, 34, added: "Obviously, he had his plans in place to go on and coach."

"He's got a big job for his first job and I wish him all the best - apart from this weekend. 'I'd love to go into coaching but I've got plenty of time left playing yet. There are still points to prove, there's still the fire burning inside."

"Once that stops, I think I'll stop, but I want to play as long as I can."

This will be Norwood's fourth Wembley appearance for a fourth club but he insisted: "I'm still as excited as the first one."

"As a young kid starting off, you always dream of playing at Wembley. It's not an opportunity to turn your nose up at."



# It's care Jordan!

## CLARK'S DEBT TO FANS

EXCLUSIVE by JUSTIN ALLEN

**WHEN Jordan Clark walks out at Wembley tomorrow he will not just be playing for a trophy.**

Luton take on Stockport in the battle of the Hatters in the Vertu Football League Trophy final.

And Clark wants to repay a debt to Town fans and help get the club moving back in the right direction.

The midfielder has experienced ultimate polar opposites at Kenilworth Road.

He scored in the 2023 Championship play-off final and penalty shootout against Coventry to help guide the Hatters into the Premier League for the first time.

But he was also there for the brutal slide that followed - consecutive relegations that left them down in League One.

While many headed for the exit, Clark, 32, felt he could not walk away.

He told SunSport: "I felt like I had a bit of a debt to pay, I wanted to stay to help get the club back to where it belongs."

"After two relegations, you go into the history books for the wrong reasons, which was horrible. It hit me hard."

"I struggled for a little bit. I felt like we'd let so many people down. I never expected it. I gave my all to try to not let it happen but it wasn't enough."

Relegation from the Premier League was one thing - but to go down again from the Championship shocked many.

After a slow start, they now sit only three points behind the play-off spots.

For Clark, the trophy represents more than just silverware, it is a chance to change the energy around a club.

He said: "It would mean everything. Reaching a Wembley final should never be sniffed at. To lift a trophy for this club again would be so special."

"We want to use it as a springboard to kick us on to the end of the season. It would be massive for the confidence of everyone."

The man tasked with rebuilding that confidence is manager Jack Wilshere.

Since taking over in October in his first permanent job as a boss, the 34-year-old former Arsenal and England star has made a big impression on the veteran midfielder.

Clark said: "For someone still so young, he's very tactically good."

"He's got that clear identity. He wants to play one way. He wants attacking football."

"He wants people to get on the ball, be creative and try to score goals."

"Jack has definitely helped my game a lot. It's no coincidence I've scored the most and had the most goal

Luton v Stockport  
Tomorrow, 3pm, Sky Sports Football, MASH

involvements than at any other time throughout my career."

But Clark reveals the calm persona Wilshere often shows on camera is not the only side to the boss.

He said: "He can switch. We've had a few games this year where he's sort of lost his temper, which was justifiable. But Jack is very measured."

"He usually prefers to leave it until the Monday after watching the game back. He trusts us to hold each other accountable."

Talk of Wembley for Luton fans inevitably brings back the memory of Tom Lockyer's collapse on the pitch during that 2023 play-off final due to a heart problem.

It remains etched in Clark's mind.

He said: "It was a tough game, because there were so many different emotions going through it. With everything that happened with Tom, you're praying he's OK. It's one of the most harrowing things I've seen."

"At half-time, we got the message he was OK. Rob Edwards, our boss at the time, just said, 'We've got to do it for him now'."

He'd been such a leader for us - one of the best captains I've ever had."

Lockyer is back in the public eye as an ambassador for the Every Minute Matters campaign and playing for Bristol Rovers.

And Clark said: "It's unbelievable. Seeing him out there trying to make a difference to get people learning CPR is massive. And to see him playing again is so special. I'm so pleased for him and his family."

As for Clark's family, his wife Chelsea and sons George, 4, and Charlie, 2, will be in the stands tomorrow.

He said: "George was a baby when I was last there - so I'm hoping he can experience the special feeling of winning at Wembley."



**DOWN NOT OUT...** Clark cuts a dejected figure as Luton edge closer to the drop last season



**JORD ABOVE...** midfielder Clark leaps for joy after scoring in the 2023 play-off final to help Luton to the Premier League

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**Goals**

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**LEAGUE TWO**



**LONDON FALLING**

**DONS' LAST NINE v LONDON SIDES**

MK DONS host fellow promotion candidates Bromley at lunchtime — but the omens are not good for Paul Warne's side.

The Dons have failed to earn maximum points in any of their last nine league games home or away against sides from the capital, since a 3-1 victory over AFC Wimbledon in January 2024.

They have never beaten Bromley in their three meetings — the Ravens won two and the other was a draw.

Mar 2, 2024	AFC Wimbledon (a)	1-0
Apr 24, 2024	Sutton (h)	4-4
Sep 14, 2024	AFC Wimbledon (a)	3-0
Sep 28, 2024	Bromley (a)	1-1
Jan 25, 2025	AFC Wimbledon (h)	0-0
Feb 8, 2025	Bromley (h)	1-0
Oct 25, 2025	Bromley (a)	2-1
Nov 8, 2025	Barnet (a)	2-2
Mar 21, 2025	Barnet (h)	1-1

**LEAGUE TWO**

**TODAY'S FIXTURES**

(3pm unless stated)

Accrington v Fleetwood
Barnet v Barrow
Bristol Rovers v Crawley (12.30pm)
Cambridge v Notts County
Chesterfield v Tranmere
Grimsby v Crewe
MK Dons v Bromley (12.30pm)
Newport v Harrogate
Salford v Gillingham
Shrewsbury v Oldham
Walsall v Cheltenham



**STEVE EVANS'** Bristol Rovers have won seven of their last eight home games — and the last five in a row. They last won six on the spin at home in 2016 (ten matches).

**5**

**BEST BET**

Oldham's Mike Fondop-Talom to score at Shrewsbury 9-5



**MELLON GOT IT SWEET**

**Leading Latics' revival**

**MICKY MELLON is at the forefront of the family affair creating a phoenix-style revival at Oldham.**

By **KEN LAWRENCE**

Just four years ago, the Latics were on the brink of going bust under the disastrous regime of former owner Abdallah Lemsagam as they became the first former Premier League club to drop out of the EFL.

Yet they are now bidding for a remarkable return to League One, while a £70million SportsTown complex is being created at what so nearly became a football ghost town.

Boss Mellon and striker son Michael — close to a return after hamstring surgery — are the public face of the Latics.

And the side is now roared on every week by around 9,000 fans when in season 2021-22 barely a quarter of that number were turning up.

Plenty of those were throwing tennis balls on to the pitch in protest at the way Moroccan former football agent Lemsagam was running the club.

But local businessman Frank Rothwell stepped in to buy Oldham, installing daughter Sue and son Luke to oversee the running of the club.

On the board is Joe Royle, the legendary former manager — who over a dozen years guided Oldham into the old Division One in 1991 — before then becoming founder members of the Premier League a year later.

Royle's son Darren was made chief executive officer soon after Rothwell Sr took over and in October 2023 tasked Mellon with the getting promotion from the National League.

Ironically, it was his Tranmere Rovers side that sent Latics down there, with a 2-0 win in the second last game of the 2021-22. And Mellon said of that day's opponents: "They were a sad sight."

"In fact, all that season it was sad to

watch what was happening at Oldham — a proud club with fantastic traditions. "When I got here, the club was still in a bad place."

"The fans were angry and upset, those following us to places like Wealdstone not happy at all."

"I'd had that same experience at Tranmere — I took over there in 2016 the year after they went down into the National League and for a while that was a bad place too."

Yet he took them back up via Wembley play-off success against Boreham Wood in 2018 and enjoyed the same success last June with a dramatic extra-time 3-2 triumph over Southend United.

Now the only way continues to be up — victory over another of his former clubs Shrewsbury Town today could take Mellon's men into the play-off places.

He is hoping that if they can get there Michael (left) will be back after scoring ten goals before the on-loan front man from Burnley, 22, suffered his injury at the turn of the year.

Mellon, 54, the manager of the month for March, insisted: "What's happening here is

fantastic, inspirational. "Frank came in and saved the club, Sue and Luke deserve so much credit for the way they oversee what's going on behind the scenes."

"Darren is a brilliant CEO and what can you say about Joe? He's an amazing, calm, guiding light."

"What is being built here is fantastic for the club and the town — SportsTown is going to have public hospital facilities, a health and education campus."

"We've got our own training complex — Little Wembley."

"This club so nearly went bust but it was really a sleeping monster and it's awake now... and getting bigger again."



**BRAD'S KING COLE**

IT has been Cole not dole for Bristol Rovers' Brad Young.

For the Gas goalie reckons pitting his wits against Cole Palmer set him up for life.

Young, 23, was left baffled by Chelsea star Palmer's sublime skills when they were together with England Under-19.

But he made such a lasting impression that Young reckons being in the firing line against the rising star kept him off the football scrapheap.

And he is now helping Steve Evans' side climb clear of relegation with five wins on the

By **ROB STEWART**

spin going into today's lunch-time clash with Crawley.

Young (right) said: "Playing with the likes of Cole Palmer was a different level and that was the moment the penny dropped for me."

"He set such a high standard and I realised that's the level you need to aim for."

"In shooting practice he could bamboozle me but that was an invaluable lesson."

The 6ft 3in former Leicester

keeper added: "To train with players like Cole really puts you on your way and, fingers crossed, one day I'll come up against him again."

"I got on well with Cole who's just like what people see through the media — a great lad, very humble and not at all big-headed."

"And the reason why his career took off is because of his habit of producing the goods when it's mattered in the big moments and it's been great seeing him kick on."



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