



The

INDEPENDENT

MONDAY 20 JULY 2026

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PUTIN LAUNCHES MAJOR BALLISTIC MISSILE ATTACK ON UKRAINE



Charlotte Cripps First sharks, now toxic pufferfish – I'll never go in the water again



Spain beat Argentina in extra time to win second World Cup

Spain celebrate win over Lionel Messi's side after World Cup winners trophy is presented by Donald Trump

Trump weighs in on Burnham's North Sea oil drilling plan

As new PM prepares for first day in No 10, US president claims rumoured switch to issue more licences – breaking fossil fuel manifesto pledge – has led to 'dancing in the streets of Aberdeen'



Trump weighs in on North Sea row hours before Burnham becomes PM

President says expected drilling announcement will stop UK being a ‘poverty-stricken disaster’

Millie Cooke Political Correspondent



Donald Trump’s comments mark the start of a potentially turbulent relationship with Britain’s fifth prime minister in four years (AP)

Donald Trump has weighed in on rumoured plans for controversial new drilling in the North Sea, claiming Andy Burnham will open oil fields “all the way”.

In an intervention just hours before the new prime minister enters Downing Street, the US president – a vocal supporter of fossil fuels who has repeatedly dismissed the scientifically backed evidence behind the climate crisis – said the move would prevent Britain from becoming a “poverty-stricken disaster”.

Mr Burnham previously insisted he would stick to Labour's manifesto pledge not to issue new North Sea licences. But he has also refused to deny reports that he is considering approving new production.

On his Truth Social platform, Mr Trump said: "The People of Aberdeen, in Scotland, are dancing in the streets because the new Prime Minister, Andy Burnham, has stated that he will be opening up, all the way, the invaluable North Sea Oil!"

The comments mark the start of a potentially turbulent relationship with Britain's fifth prime minister in four years.

In his first Downing Street address today, Mr Burnham will call for steadiness in government, arguing that the "unprecedented turnover in national leadership underlines the need for a more stable and responsible politics".



Incoming prime minister Andy Burnham is set to take the reins at No 10 today (PA Wire)

He enters office amid growing speculation over his cabinet picks and questions over which policies will make up his plan for

government.

While his pitch for power has so far been thin on detail, he is understood to be keen to unveil a blitz of policies as part of an attempt to reset the dial and capitalise on what is expected to be a short honeymoon period.

Mr Burnham is not thought to have spoken to Mr Trump ahead of assuming the role of prime minister, but the US president repeatedly criticised Sir Keir Starmer's approach to energy.

In his social media post, Mr Trump wrote: "[The North Sea] is one of the Greatest Sources of quality Oil on Earth, has hundreds of years of Capacity left, with much not even found yet, and will make the United Kingdom, from a Poverty Stricken Disaster, to one of the Richest Countries anywhere in the World!

"Britain pays Norway Billions of Dollars a year to buy its Oil, which they get from a less valuable part of the North Sea — How ridiculous is that!"

And in his latest attack on wind power, the president suggested the UK would "move the old and horrible looking windmills, which loom over and destroy the City of Aberdeen".

It comes despite Labour's deputy leader Lucy Powell saying there would be no break with the party's manifesto under Mr Burnham, instead dubbing his plans for the North Sea a "change in emphasis" as he weighs up approving further oil and gas drilling.



Donald J. Trump

@realDonaldTrump

The People of Aberdeen, in Scotland, are dancing in the streets because the new Prime Minister, Andy Burnham, has stated that he will be opening up, all the way, the invaluable North Sea Oil! It is one of the Greatest Sources of quality Oil on Earth, has hundreds of years of Capacity left, with much not even found yet, and will make the United Kingdom, from a Poverty Stricken Disaster, to one of the Richest Countries anywhere in the World! Britain pays Norway Billions of Dollars a year to buy its Oil, which they get from a less valuable part of the North Sea — How ridiculous is that! Also, word is that the UK is going to move the old and horrible looking windmills, which loom over and destroy the City of Aberdeen. That will be a big day for the Country, and will be very much appreciated by everybody. Such great potential in the UK, but it all starts with OPENING NORTH SEA OIL. WE LOVE YOU SCOTLAND! President DONALD J. TRUMP

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Jul 19, 2026, 3:05 PM

The US president's social media post about Burnham's plans for North Sea oil and gas licences (*Screenshot/ TruthSocial @realDonaldTrump*)

Labour's 2024 manifesto, which the Makerfield MP has promised to honour, said the party would not issue new North Sea licences, arguing they would “not take a penny off bills” or improve energy security while accelerating climate change. But the incoming prime minister is now said to be “open-minded” about the policy.

Mr Burnham could claim not to be breaking the manifesto pledge by approving projects at the Jackdaw and Rosebank fields, where licences have already been granted.

Ms Powell told the BBC: “I think what Andy's talking about is taking a more pragmatic approach and working with the industry to make sure that it can contribute to that transition and to the mix that is needed over the long-term.

“So let’s see what he’s got to say about that. But I don’t think it’s a change of policy. It’s more a change of emphasis.”

Meanwhile, Mr Burnham has announced plans to scrap Sir Keir’s flagship digital ID programme, describing the move as a “reset of priorities” as money earmarked for implementing digital ID will be redirected to more “tangible” improvements to people’s lives.

Kemi Badenoch criticised Mr Burnham for not setting out more of his plans before today, describing his comments so far as “airy-fairy stuff”. The Conservative leader told the BBC’s *Sunday With Laura Kuenssberg* she thought Mr Burnham was “a people-pleaser” rather than someone who would make “tough

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Home secretary Shabana Mahmood is widely expected to be named as Mr Burnham’s chancellor over the soft left’s preferred choice of Ed Miliband – but *The Independent* has revealed that reports of her impending appointment are already causing tensions with his supporters on the left because of her past support for tax and welfare cuts.



Mahmood's history on tax and welfare sparks tensions among Labour left

David Maddox Political Editor



Shabana Mahmood is expected to be unveiled as chancellor, but criticisms she made behind the scenes of Rachel Reeves's tax policies have already sparked tensions with Andy Burnham's allies (*Getty*)

The frontrunner to be named as Andy Burnham's chancellor is already causing tensions with his supporters on the left because of her past support for tax and welfare cuts.

Home secretary Shabana Mahmood is now widely expected to be named as Mr Burnham's chancellor on Monday over the soft left's choice Ed Miliband.

But the MPs on the left of the party who were the biggest cheerleaders for Mr Burnham being parachuted into parliament

to replace Sir Keir Starmer are now concerned he is picking someone from the right of the party to oversee economic policy.

Party insiders have noted that Ms Mahmood was a major internal critic over Rachel Reeves's tax hikes, which sources claim she privately branded "ridiculous", "anti-aspiration" and "anti-competitive".

While bound by ministerial collective responsibility in the Starmer government, she always publicly supported the policies. However, behind the scenes, she was a critic of hiking employers' national insurance contributions, scrapping non-dom status and putting 20 per cent VAT charges on independent school fees.

Ms Mahmood was one of several senior ministers on the right of the party, including outgoing housing secretary Steve Reed and deputy prime minister David Lammy, who were concerned about the impact of Ms Reeves's tax rises.

Mr Reed and Mr Lammy, who are tipped to leave the government, are both London MPs and have raised concerns about the impact on investment in the capital of ideologically driven tax measures, particularly the ending of non-dom status and putting VAT on school fees.

Ms Mahmood is understood to have complained about how Ms Reeves and the Treasury "failed to consult with the cabinet more widely" on economic policy.

One Labour MP on the left of the party noted that Ms Mahmood is "not the right choice" if, as has been reported, Mr Burnham wants to raise another £38bn in tax.



Louise Haigh is expected to clash with Mahmood over fiscal policy (*Getty*)

She is known to oppose wealth taxes, to which Mr Burnham has left the door open, and would almost certainly clash with Louise Haigh, who is expected to have a major policy role running the engine of government in the Cabinet Office as chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster.

Ms Haigh has already advocated raising capital gains tax to equalise it with income tax in a move businesses have warned would destroy investment in the UK.

And there could be a clash if, as suggested, Mr Burnham goes through with plans to run much of the economic policy out of Downing Street and through the Cabinet Office rather than the Treasury.

Another MP noted: “Shabana is very much on the right of the party. She was one of the biggest supporters of cutting welfare; she wanted to go even further than [Rachel Reeves]. It’s just not acceptable.”

But supporters hail her as a “brilliant minister” with “the guts and determination to get things done”. They note how

immigration figures, both legal and irregular, were brought under control during her tenure in the Home Office.

Another supporter noted: “Andy needs a chancellor who will keep the markets calm and inspire confidence. He has to move on from Rachel Reeves but Shabana is perfect in that respect.”

There are still some hoping that Ed Miliband may be handed the role, but he is currently favourite to get the foreign secretary job. Foreign secretary Yvette Cooper and former health secretary Wes Streeting have also been discussed as options.

“Ed would be much more aligned with the wishes of the PLP [Parliamentary Labour Party],” another MP said.

However, his past failed tenure as leader has made him an unpopular choice for chancellor among Mr Burnham’s inner circle.



Ed Miliband was the left’s option for chancellor but he is now being tipped for foreign secretary (*PA Wire*)

Added to that, Mr Burnham has made it clear that he will allow drilling for new oil and gas in the Jackdaw and Rosebank fields in

the North Sea, a move opposed by Mr Miliband.

It is hoped that the move will help raise extra tax revenue at a time when money is tight, especially after the impact of Donald Trump's war with Iran and the closing of the Strait of Hormuz. But a series of issues have already come to light that Mr Burnham will need to find money for.

His plans for a massive rollout of devolution will “not come cost-free”, one MP has warned. A new chancellor will have to persuade the Treasury to allow income tax powers to be devolved to mayors to help them raise money, similar to the way the parliaments in Scotland and Wales can.

Also, Mr Burnham is coming under huge pressure to make a massive cash injection into special needs education (SEND), which remains in crisis. With the number of SEND children now hitting 1.7 million, 21 police and crime commissioners – 13 from the Tories, six from Labour, one from Reform and one Independent – have warned that a failure to tackle SEND in schools is seeing children and adults failed by the education system recruited into criminal gangs.

In a letter seen by *The Independent*, they warned: “As PCCs, we see at first hand the consequences of systems that fail vulnerable children. We recognise the immense pressures facing the SEND system and support efforts to improve outcomes for children, families and local authorities

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However, we are concerned that reforms focused primarily on reducing costs or limiting access to specialist provision could have profound implications not only for education, but also for crime prevention, community safety and the long-term demands placed upon the criminal justice system.”

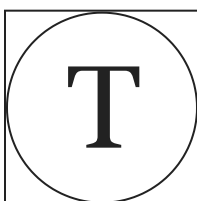


What does Liverpool really think about Manchesterism's architect?

The man who's best known for beating the drum for Manchester is technically scouse by birth. **Katie Rosseinsky** hears how fellow Liverpool residents view Andy Burnham and his politics



Toffee stick: Andy Burnham knows the highs and lows of life as an Everton supporter
(Getty)



here is a joke about Andy Burnham that periodically crops up among Labour MPs, or so the legend goes. In it, a Blairite, a Brownite and a Corbynite all walk into the proverbial bar – only for the barman to respond with “Alright, Andy?”

It's intended as a snarky dig at the new Labour leader's reputation as a bit of a political shapeshifter, all things to all people. But at a stretch, you could craft a pretty similar punchline about his North West roots – a scouser, a “wool” and a Manc all striding into that same bar at once.

Over nearly a decade as mayor, Burnham has beaten the drum for Manchester so hard that you'd be forgiven for assuming he's a city native. They're so synonymous that his political vision is known as “Manchesterism”. He never misses a chance to name-drop New Order and The Smiths, and he got Liam Gallagher to be the voice of the Bee Network tram, for goodness sake.

But Burnham was in fact born about 30 or so miles down the M62 in Liverpool, the North West's other cultural hub. His regional identity, then, straddles one of the UK's great rivalries. It's not just about football – these two cities have been jostling for superiority since the industrial revolution (Liverpool had the docks, but Manchester had the mills).

The prime minister-to-be spent the first year of his life in Old Roan, part of Aintree, the town best known for hosting the Grand National each spring. When his father Roy, a telecoms engineer, got a promotion that meant he'd be working in Manchester, the family decamped to the village of Culcheth, near Warrington, bang in the middle of the two cities.



Liverpool's Metro mayor Steve Rotheram (right) is a longtime friend of Burnham's (AFP/Getty)

It's one of those nearly-scouse-but-not-quite hinterlands, so according to the vaguely Byzantine rules that govern who's in and who's out, scouse-wise, Burnham grew up as a "wool" (the jokily derogatory term levelled at out-of-town "woollybacks", who'd provide scab labour in the city's docks). "Definitely a plazzy scouser" is how James*, who has lived in both Liverpool and Burnham's Manchester, describes him – plazzy being plastic, a sort of fake or put-on scouseness that can raise eyebrows among more quote-unquote authentic Liverpudlians.

So how, then, is all this chatter about Manchester's future No 10 North going down in Burnham's birthplace? "My issue is that 'the North' just seems to be Manchester," says Gina*, who lives in Liverpool city centre; for her, Manchester just feels like "London 2.0". There is a sense that it is already a big focus for investment – and that we could do with spreading the love elsewhere and recognising that the North is not a monolith.

And while Manchester has undoubtedly boomed under Burnham, the explosion of developments has also made it a far

less affordable place to live for renters; this summer, stats showed it has overtaken London as a hub for buy-to-let investment from would-be landlords. This is not a slice of “Manchesterism” that many of us on the other end of the motorway would rush to embrace.

Speak to business leaders in Merseyside about Burnham, though, and they’re pretty positive. Paul Corcoran, founder of Liverpool’s Agent Marketing, says he is “genuinely excited by the prospect of a prime minister who understands the realities of running and growing businesses outside of London”, adding that it “feels refreshing” for that “to be represented at the highest level”.

Meanwhile, Jane Gaston, chief executive of Net Zero North West, believes that Burnham’s roots “give him a genuine understanding of both Liverpool and Manchester, and that broader perspective could be valuable”. Although the latter has “often been held up as a success story”, she notes, “this shouldn’t be viewed as a competition between northern cities”.



Burnham at the Hillsborough 25th anniversary service in 2014 (AFP/Getty)

Liverpool has certainly been an important influence on Burnham. He traces his political awakening back to watching *Boys from the Blackstuff*, Alan Bleasdale's drama that followed five scouse tarmac layers against a backdrop of post-industrial decline; when it aired in 1982, it resonated as a grim indictment of mass unemployment under Margaret Thatcher.

For Burnham's mother Eileen, whose father drove a lorry around the docks for the sugar company Tate & Lyle, the show hit home. "There was one particular episode that was very much about the decline of the Liverpool docks and I remember as a child turning to see my mum with tears coming down her face," he recalled in *Look North*, the book he co-wrote with Steve Rotheram, mayor of the Liverpool City Region, a longtime close friend and ally.

There's the Everton connection, too. Burnham is a lifelong supporter of the Toffees, and during his 2015 Labour leadership run admitted that he would never give up his season ticket, even if he became prime minister.

His Evertonian identity has become a key part of Burnham's "everyman" schtick – here's a guy, this persona suggests, who understands the travails of supporting your childhood team through interminable frustration and brief bouts of euphoria. Enduring the gruelling rollercoaster of supporting Everton is, I'd argue, a test of resilience akin to political high office – the highs, the lows, the humiliations.

It's surely no coincidence that, when he was photographed out jogging shortly after he'd announced his intention to run in the Makerfield by-election, he did so in a 1979-80 season Everton shirt. Not everyone's won over by Burnham's fandom, though. "Him 'being an Evertonian' is going to be the new 'my father was a toolmaker,'" one friend suggests.



In 2009, during his stint as culture secretary, Burnham delivered a speech at Anfield to mark the tragedy's 20th anniversary, but was drowned out by heckles and boos from the crowd

One thing no one can deny is the weight of Burnham's most important football-related contribution to the city – his commitment to gaining justice for the victims of the Hillsborough disaster and their families. "I've always thought him a great guy with integrity, and will always be grateful for him taking the Hillsborough cause and running with it," Liverpudlian Joy Swift tells me.

Ninety-seven people died after being injured in the crush at a football match between Liverpool and Nottingham Forest in April 1989, the UK's worst-ever sporting tragedy. It was eventually ruled that they were unlawfully killed, after multiple failings by the police and the emergency services, but it took decades of campaigning to reach this point.

In 2009, during his stint as culture secretary, Burnham delivered a speech at Anfield to mark the tragedy's 20th anniversary, but was drowned out by heckles and boos from the crowd. "It felt like I was standing on the edge of the abyss between the government I was in and the people with whom I had grown up," he later reflected.

Not long after, he told the then prime minister Gordon Brown that he planned to raise Hillsborough in their next cabinet meeting. It was a move that would lay the foundations for the Hillsborough Independent Panel, which concluded no Liverpool fans were responsible for the deaths, dispelling vile myths that had been spread in the wake of the tragedy.



Burnham with Hillsborough campaigner Margaret Aspinall last week (PA)

One of Burnham's last moves during his previous time in Westminster was to introduce a Hillsborough Law bill to parliament, aiming to prevent future institutional cover-ups by creating a legal obligation for public officials to act transparently.

Last week, it was finally approved, bringing the returning MP full circle. "He has always striven to serve the 'ordinary' people and listen to what we have to say," Liverpool resident Paula* tells me, highlighting not just his work for the Hillsborough campaign, but also his advocacy for Grenfell victims and nuclear test veterans.

That certainly goes down well in a city that tends to value solidarity and transparency. "I like him very much as a person – he comes across as sincere, intelligent, engaged," Paula adds.

She is also pleased that he looks set to drop the NHS's partnerships with Palantir, the controversial US tech company that holds contracts with US Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and the Israeli military, which she describes

as “a great start”. She does, however, fear “that he will fall victim

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For the most part, though, she says she is hopeful that he will be a force for change within the Labour Party and politics as a whole. It’s a lot to put on the shoulders of one “plazzy scouser”. He’ll be back in his birthplace for the Labour conference come September. Whether he gets a hero’s welcome from the locals will depend on whether he can live up to the hype.

**Names have been changed for anonymity*



Ailing Thames Water faces being put into a special administration regime

Millie Cooke Political Correspondent



Thames Water's chief executive Chris Weston has called for urgent clarity from the prime minister-in-waiting over his plans for the sector (*House of Commons/UK Parliament*)

Incoming prime minister Andy Burnham is reportedly planning to put Thames Water into a special form of administration as he pledged to take greater “public control” of Britain's utilities.

Britain's biggest water firm – which has been left on the brink of nationalisation as it struggles under a £20bn debt pile – is facing being put into a special administration regime (SAR) that would allow essential services to keep running until a buyer is found.

Thames Water has warned it will run out of money by the end of 2026 if a deal is not found with its creditors and the government.

The Sunday Times reported that an emergency SAR is being considered, a plan which would risk leaving the taxpayer liable for the £2bn that the company estimates it needs to keep running until the end of 2027.

Thames Water's chief executive Chris Weston told the newspaper: "If they put us into a SAR, the government would have to fund us for the period of time that we were in the SAR."

Meanwhile, an ally of Mr Burnham said: "If it is going to cost the taxpayer £2bn to keep the company afloat, then the taxpayer needs to receive something in return – that means control, so that we can fix the company and secure the water supply for thousands of families and businesses."

There is currently no precedent for a water company being put into an SAR. However, energy supplier Bulb was put into a similar set of measures in 2021 before its assets were sold to Octopus Energy. It was forced to repay £3bn to the government as part of a pledge to return the taxpayers' funds it received for rescuing the firm.



The UK's biggest water supplier serves 16 million customers across London and the South East (*Reuters*)

Mr Weston has called for urgent clarity from Mr Burnham over his plans for the sector as he revealed the stricken utility could run out of cash within months unless a funding deal is struck.

Mr Burnham, who is expected to be appointed prime minister today, has signalled he wants to bring in a 10-year plan to renationalise the water industry, saying reform is needed to put the public interest first, leaving a question mark over plans for Britain's biggest water supplier.

Last month, he clarified that he would not advocate for immediate, full renationalisation due to its complexity and expense, instead suggesting a staggered implementation.

Speaking to reporters in Makerfield in June, Mr Burnham stated his belief that the water “industry is broken”.

He said: “It’s not an industry that’s run in the public interest, and you know these are, as I say, industries run with the private vested interest, but the public have no choice but to use them, and therefore they’re trapped, and it’s just not fair. That’s why we

need substantial reform and it is about a 10-year plan of more public control, more public ownership.

“I don’t think you nationalise the whole thing necessarily straight off, because that’s complicated and probably expensive, but you look at the different situations in different parts of the country. Thames Water, I would say there’s a very strong case for public ownership to sort out its problems.

“But elsewhere ... then you know there can be a different timetable for changes in other parts of the country. You’ve got to do it in a way that can be managed financially, but gets us to a water industry that puts the public interest rather than the private interest first.”

Creditors have already been sent back to the drawing board and are battling to secure a rescue deal for the water supplier after environment secretary Emma Reynolds last month warned she did not believe their £10bn plan for Thames Water goes far enough to protect customers or the environment.



Energy supplier Bulb was put into a similar set of measures in 2021 before its assets were sold to Octopus Energy (*Alamy*)

Ofwat was reportedly close to accepting an offer from the London & Valley Water consortium, which proposed injecting £10bn into the debt-laden company in return for a four-year waiver on any new fines over sewage leaks.

Mr Weston said the group is in discussions with creditors about extending funding into 2027 to allow more time for the deal, but said clarity from government is needed, and “the sooner the better”.

He said: “The big unknown is what the new prime minister wants to do when he comes in. We’ve had no conversations with him and it would be better to know what he’s thinking.”

The UK’s biggest water supplier, serving 16 million customers across London and the South East, reported pre-tax profits of £226.4m for the year to 31 March, a marked improvement from last year’s £1.65bn loss.

However, full-year results showed debts swelled to £19.77bn, up

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capital investment.

A Thames Water spokesperson said: “We continue to work with all parties to reach an agreement that supports Thames Water’s long-term financial stability and ensures the uninterrupted delivery of our biggest infrastructure upgrade in 150 years while continuing to meet the needs of our 16 million customers.”

Mr Burnham’s office declined to comment further.



UK seeks extradition as Tate brothers face 38 new charges after arrest in US

Nicole Wootton-Cane



Andrew (left) and Tristan Tate face a potential trial over alleged offences, including rape and sex trafficking

UK prosecutors have authorised 38 new charges against Andrew and Tristan Tate over alleged sexual offences, bringing the total number of charges the brothers face to 59.

The pair were arrested by the US Marshals Service in Miami on Saturday in relation to allegations from four additional victims, the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) said. The CPS has since requested their extradition to the UK, where they would face a potential trial over the alleged offences including rape, sexual assault, and sex trafficking.

The CPS said Andrew was being charged with seven further counts of rape, as well as charges relating to sex trafficking and indecent images of a child. Tristan's charges include two counts of rape and three counts of arranging or facilitating trafficking for sexual exploitation. Both of the Tates have repeatedly denied any wrongdoing.

In a video posted on social media, Assistant Chief Constable Karena Thomas, from Bedfordshire Police, said the charges relate to seven victims spanning a period from 2010 to 2017.

She confirmed the brothers had been detained and urged the public "not to speculate" and to "allow the legal process to be carried out correctly".

"I want to make it clear that there is no place for male violence against women and girls in our society, and we will continue to work tirelessly to support victims and investigate all reports made to us," she continued.

Social media influencer Andrew Tate, 39, is charged with seven further counts of rape, three counts of arranging or facilitating trafficking for sexual exploitation, three counts of assault occasioning actual bodily harm, and 19 additional charges for offences relating to indecent images of a child and extreme pornography.



UK prosecutors have authorised 38 new charges against the Tate brothers (Getty)

Tristan Tate, 38, is charged with one count of sexual assault, two counts of rape and three counts of arranging or facilitating trafficking for sexual exploitation.

Malcolm McHaffie, head of the special crime division at the CPS, said: “We have decided to prosecute Andrew and Tristan Tate for further offences including rape, arranging or facilitating trafficking for sexual exploitation, and offences relating to indecent images of a child.

“These charging decisions followed receipt of a further file of evidence from Bedfordshire Police and bring the total number of alleged victims in this case to seven.

“The Crown Prosecution Service reminds everyone that criminal proceedings are active, and that these defendants have the right to a fair trial. It is extremely important that there be no reporting, commentary or sharing of information online which could in any way prejudice these proceedings.

“The CPS has requested the extradition of the Tates from the US. They have been arrested and await extradition proceedings

to the UK.”

Both Andrew and Tristan Tate are also facing legal proceedings in Romania, where they currently live, and were already facing the prospect of extradition to the UK upon their completion after Bedfordshire Police secured European arrest warrants for the pair in 2024.

The pair have previously “unequivocally” denied wrongdoing, with Andrew Tate describing himself and his brother as “very innocent men”.

In June, their attempt to bring a legal challenge against the CPS after it did not disclose the names of their alleged victims in UK criminal proceedings was thrown out by a High Court judge.

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now facing the real prospect of extradition to the UK after years of public campaigning by the four British women I represent.

“They have spent years fighting for action to be taken, and I now urge the authorities to ensure this case proceeds as quickly as possible.

“Andrew and Tristan Tate are accused of some of the most serious offences, including multiple counts of rape and human trafficking. It is time they face justice.”

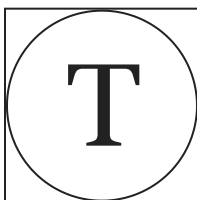


Techmate? How an online chess boom is having a big impact on clubs

The Covid lockdown, and the success of ‘The Queen’s Gambit’, have fuelled a surge in people playing chess online. **Jemma Robinson** asks what it means for face-to-face matches



A boy takes part in ChessFest – the UK’s largest one-day chess event – in Trafalgar Square (PA Wire)



o his competitors, Joseph Francis was considered something of a chess prodigy. He can’t count how many games he’s played, but he knows he’s won the vast majority of them.

“I ended up playing a huge amount of chess, and because I could play chess quite well, it’s sort of ridiculous, really, but I was considered a prodigy,” he says.

But these games weren't held at the British World Championships. They were held in prison. Mr Francis learnt to play chess in school, and ended up becoming a teacher to train the next generation before going to prison in 2023.

The 58-year-old says: "When you've been imprisoned, you feel a lot of built-up anger, but as soon as you play chess it just switches off, because it's a completely absorbing thing. You're totally thinking about the board, and that's all."

After being acquitted, he no longer needed a fellow inmate to play with and he soon began playing chess online, competing against people of all ages and backgrounds.



Joseph Francis joined the Hammersmith Chess Club and also plays online chess after regaining his love for the game in prison (*Jemma Robinson*)

Chess.com, the world's biggest online chess platform, reported in the first quarter of this year that 14.9 million new accounts were made, with 9.7 million daily users of the site – 1 million more since the end of 2025.

Initially, there were fears that the expansion of the online community would hamper traditional clubs, and could see those players who were used to playing on physical boards retreating to their laptops and phones to compete. However, the opposite is true.

Mr Francis, who is a member of the Hammersmith Chess Club in west London, explains: “A portion of them [online chess players] are bound to get into traditional clubs, and therefore the numbers coming into clubs like this are quite high.

“And what’s great about this club is that more women, who are playing online, come here to play. I think because online chess is essentially blind and indifferent to gender, women come and play.”

The English Chess Federation (ECF) has set a target of 15 per cent of female chess players having an ECF membership by 2030. This would be an increase of over 5 per cent, as the ECF admits its biggest disappointment over the years is the share of female membership in comparison to men.



The popularity of online chess has meant there has been an increase of people playing the game face to face (AFP/Getty)

While the use of technology has increased interest, traditional clubs have still emphasised the importance of playing face to face.

Mr Francis says: “I think if you have never played in person, then you will really be missing something. It’s quite interesting how addictive online chess is. I honestly think marriages are wrecked, because you can easily play three or four hours a day.”

The importance of attending chess clubs is also shared by Adam Cranston, 37, chair of the Hammersmith Chess Club, who says: “Face-to-face coaching can be more specific, it’s quite easy to identify the holes in people’s understanding.

“And it’s the social aspect. I haven’t actually been playing much chess, but we’ll go to a pub afterwards. For me, chess is more than just playing chess.”

Hammersmith Chess Club is the largest of its kind in the UK. Its membership has increased twelvefold over a decade, with nearly 300 members today. Many of the members started out by using sites such as Chess.com and Lichess, which has a record of over 12,000 ECF players.



Adam Cranston, chair of Hammersmith Chess Club, emphasises the importance of playing in person (*Jemma Robinson*)

Mr Cranston adds: “Technology has been helping people get into chess. The online chess world has certainly risen much faster, but people are transitioning from online chess to clubs, and we’ve seen that at our club, it’s getting more popular.”

The growth of ChessFest, which holds a series of free events across the country every July, shows how popular the game has become. Earlier this month, thousands of people – many in fancy dress – descended on Trafalgar Square to compete against each other.

ChessFest began in 2021, after the success of Netflix series *The Queen’s Gambit*, and the Covid lockdown, which saw a surge in people taking up chess online.

Joe Winlaw, 20, office assistant for Chess in Schools and Communities, which set up ChessFest, says: “We set up ChessFest because it was just so ambitious. Why could we not have a big event that would get everyone excited? It was set up

at the same time there was a big chess boom going on, which is still going on now.”

Chess in Schools and Communities has supported over 3,000 UK state schools with lessons, clubs and equipment, and uses technology to enhance children’s social and critical thinking skills.



Chancellor Rachel Reeves playing chess with members of the public on a visit to Ukraine last month (PA)

Mr Winlaw says: “We partly partner with ChessKid, so we give a select number of our pupils that we teach in schools ChessKid accounts, so they can go and play safely online. The volume of games you get to play, it really does mean that you put everything you’re learning into practice, and you do really improve.

“You can improve so much quicker with technology, and that’s why we’re seeing so many amazingly strong young people.”

However, he emphasises the importance of taking a break: “At the same time, it’s really important that you have some contact

with the real world, whether you're playing with your parents or

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The ECF's live commentary of the British Chess Championship final round was watched by 10,000 people, and with the likes of Duolingo, a platform known for teaching foreign languages, now adding a chess module, it's no wonder clubs like Hammersmith are seeing a rise in members.

Mr Winlaw adds: "I would 100 per cent say that technology is helping people transition into clubs. You might not feel totally confident, and so you start to play a bit online, and once your rating is better, you think, 'right, now is the time to join a club'."



Pictures of the Day



(AP Photo/Julio Cortez)

High risers

The sun rises behind geese at Pier A Park in Hoboken, New Jersey, near New York. *AP*



Dry run

This aerial view shows the low water level of the Danube River near Backa Palanka, Serbia. *Getty*



Mosque attack

A Palestinian man checks a broken window at the damaged Al-Taqwa mosque, whose entrance was torched and walls were daubed with Hebrew graffiti in an attack allegedly carried out by Israeli settlers in the Palestinian village of Al-Tuwani, south of Yatta, near Hebron in the occupied West Bank. *Getty*



Deep dive

A boy jumps into the Treska River to cool off from the hot weather near Skopje, North Macedonia. *Reuters*



Pride in Yorkshire

People take part in the Leeds Pride Festival in celebration of the LGBTQ+ community in Yorkshire. *PA*



Home news in brief



A wildfire in the Cairngorms burnt around four square kilometres at its peak, as residents were evacuated (PA)

Cairngorms wildfire region ‘largely surrounded’

Cairngorms park officials have said a large-scale wildfire affecting the region is now “largely surrounded”, and expect evacuated residents to be able to return home. Park bosses in Scotland said yesterday afternoon that the fire, which burnt around four square kilometres at its peak, was largely under control.

The park authority announced that the incident remained ongoing, nevertheless, with fire crews and other partners tackling the blaze together. Park bosses said resources, including helicopter support, had been integral in battling the fire in tougher-to-reach areas.

Gavin Miles, director of planning and place at the park authority, said: “News from Glenmore this morning is very encouraging, with colleagues from SFRS (Scottish Fire and Rescue Service) indicating that the fire is now largely surrounded.

“This is, though, still a live situation and teams are still very active on the ground, so we are taking nothing for granted at this stage. We’re really grateful for the continued efforts of everyone helping fight the fire in Glenmore, and for the cooperation of local residents, visitors and businesses at what I know is a very difficult time.”

Prince ‘wants more UK family visits’ if he gets security

Prince Harry is reportedly set to continue his campaign for taxpayer-funded security in the UK amid hopes he could visit more with his family. The Duke of Sussex lost an appeal over the dismissal of his High Court claim against the Home Office last year after the Executive Committee for the Protection of Royalty and Public Figures (Ravec) decided he should receive a reduced degree of protection when in the country.

But following a recent visit to the UK for a series of Invictus Games events, during which he also reunited his family with his father King Charles, Harry is reportedly determined to pursue the arrangements once again.

The Mirror reports he will lobby the home secretary for security, with sources suggesting he is looking to arrange further meetings with the King to allow him to spend more time with his grandchildren, who have hardly visited the UK since the Sussexes moved to the US in 2020.

The family reunited earlier this month as Harry, Meghan and their two children, Prince Archie and Princess Lilibet, met with the King and Queen Camilla at Highgrove House, a country estate west of London. The Duke has previously argued his

children cannot “feel at home” in the UK if it is “not possible to keep them safe”.

Gap between pay of executives and workers ‘widening’

The gap between the pay of chief executives of leading companies and workers is the widest for eight years, according to research. The High Pay Centre said the pay ratio between median FTSE 100 chief executives and workers was 130:1, up from 124:1 last year.

The median pay of a FTSE 100 chief executive has reached £5.06m, the highest level on record, up 8.6 per cent from £4.66m in 2024/25, said the think tank. FTSE 100 firms spent more than £850m on the pay of executives in the past year, said the report.

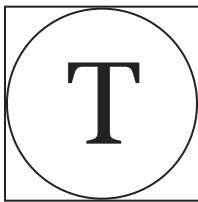
The High Pay Centre said excessive spending on top earners by leading firms often comes at the expense of pay increases for the rest of the workforce, and called for reforms to regulations affecting the corporate pay-setting process.

High Pay Centre interim director Andrew Speke said: “The substantial growth in the gap between executive and worker pay in the past year should be a wake-up call to those who’ve turned a blind eye to rising executive pay. As our findings show, this is the fourth year in a row that FTSE 100 executive pay has risen, and this growth is starting to substantially outstrip growth in worker pay.”

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Burnham will need all his political skill to manage party and public



he usual challenge facing a new prime minister usurping a predecessor mid-term is how to make the “change” they promise without entirely trashing the work of the previous administration, ie, their own party.

If they more or less stick to the same policies but with a different “style”, then people might wonder what the point was in replacing the old leader. If they opt for a more radical approach, then they risk breaking solemn manifesto commitments, alienating old regime loyalists and confusing the general public.

Such a regicide can create conditions of almost permanent civil war in any political movement, as the Conservatives have discovered time and again in recent decades.

Having won the general election in part on a pledge to “end the chaos and confusion”, move on from the psychodramas and “tread more lightly” on people’s lives, now it is Labour’s turn to manoeuvre itself through a difficult metamorphosis.

On the early evidence of his intentions, Andy Burnham proposes to solve this dilemma by ignoring it.

He is emerging from his Greater Manchester chrysalis with little care for what passed before. In fact, he condemns the previous

four decades of British governance for its neglect of the people – and that includes the Blair, Brown and Starmer administrations. He admits his own culpability in adopting the neoliberal mindset. That's bold.

So the new occupant in No 10 is seemingly unbothered about continuity, let alone consistency, manifesto promises or, indeed, the feelings of his predecessor, Sir Keir Starmer.

This is already happening with a rumoured restoration of cuts to international aid, albeit on a long timescale. There is believed to be a course correction on oil and gas extraction in the North Sea, or at least as far as legal challenges permit.

This, in garbled form, has attracted the attention of Donald Trump, who has warmly greeted an exaggerated version of the news on fossil fuels and, likely, is more mischievously announcing that the “horrible looking windmills” that loom over Aberdeen (and the nearby Trump International Golf Links) will soon be moved.

On his first trip to the Oval Office, whether in a suit and tie or navy T-shirt, Mr Burnham will have to find a way gently to disabuse his host of such wishful assumptions.

But nowhere, thus far, is the Burnham effect on the policy agenda more obvious and more personal than in the clear indications that the new prime minister will scrap the Digital ID programme.

It was a policy that had been pursued with some zeal under governments led by Tony Blair and Gordon Brown, before being cancelled by the Cameron-Clegg coalition in 2010.

Resurrected and adopted by Sir Keir as one of his “missions”, compulsory digital ID was originally presented as his “big idea” – modernising government. It was an intended tough measure to

curb irregular immigration – stopping asylum seekers from working illegally.

Typically for a Starmer policy, it was soon dropped after a hostile reception, only to be revived in another U-turn as a new voluntary citizen-friendly programme.

Digital ID would “cut the faff”, as Sir Keir put it, of rummaging in drawers for old electricity bills and the like in order to, say, renew a passport, send money to someone in prison or obtain probate.

The ambitious project was given to the newly minted “chief secretary to the prime minister”, Darren Jones, to promote to a sceptical nation. It was to be “Useful. Inclusive. Trusted”; and “unlock entirely new ways to offer goods and services, and be key to making people’s interactions with the state as efficient and useful as those they are accustomed to in the private sector, like online banking”.

No more paperwork: no more endless phone calls on hold. Public services and benefits would be less vulnerable to fraud, and the government machine converted to AI and made more productive, yielding savings. Nirvana beckoned.

Now the whole thing is to be scrapped. The £2bn budgeted will be redirected towards ameliorating the cost of living crisis (though the decision isn’t supposed to be about the money).

In truth, the British digital ID scheme was an admirable thing in principle, but, especially once it lost its mandatory status, was bound to be superfluous in practice.

Many secure forms of ID are available to prevent illegal working, and it was always naive to suppose that the kind of casual employers who’d take on people for tax-free cash payments below the minimum wage would be troubled by a digital ID requirement.

Much of the British state is already strongly digitised – the NHS being the notable laggard – and the gov.uk website works extremely smoothly. This is one of the few aspects of national life not routinely cited as an example of “Broken Britain”.

There are also downsides to digital citizenship. Hacking by a malign power of the entire population’s details would at least be a remote possibility, but with devastating consequences, as would a statewide shutdown of services. This fate has already befallen the NHS, some local councils, and has happened several times across the private sector.

The more comprehensive and unified a system is, the heavier the risks and costs of failure. The UK also has an unenviable record for cost overruns in building IT systems, including the more than £12bn squandered on the National Programme for IT in the NHS some years ago.

More broadly, it would be unwise to draw much from these early signals of how the Burnham administration will work, but he does seem more prone to populism than his predecessor.

Sometimes that is aimed at the electorate (the transfer of power to regions, North Sea drilling, digital ID) or in appeasing key rivals and elements of his internal soft left party base, as with boosting development spending in a reformed net-zero-focused foreign office under Ed Miliband.

Mr Burnham has always been temperamentally a bit of a chameleon and a crowd pleaser, and, by the same token, a sharper, more instinctive politician than Sir Keir.

He’s clearly better at responding to the public mood and managing the backbenchers and Labour’s factions. But, as the Tories point out, changing leader is not a magic bullet, and Mr Burnham will have no more resources at his disposal.

He will inevitably also have some newly dispossessed and
disoriented populations who will have to deal with the loss of

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Burnham mustn't let them get him down.



Russia exposes Ukraine's air defences with major missile attack

Explosions echo across Kyiv as more than 40 weapons rain down on capital

Alastair Jamieson



A woman inspects her home after a Russian missile strike (*Reuters*)

Russia battered Ukraine with one of its biggest ballistic missile barrages of the war yesterday, killing at least six people and wounding dozens – and again highlighting Kyiv's shortage of US-made Patriot air defence systems.

Moscow has stepped up its use of ballistic missiles as it seeks to choke off Ukrainian strikes on oil facilities deep inside Russia that have caused critical fuel shortages affecting both the military and the civilian population.

Donald Trump has said he is prepared to grant Ukraine licenses to produce Patriots, the most effective means of intercepting Russian ballistic missiles, potentially bolstering Kyiv's defenses. However, the details and timeline remain unclear, and full production could take years.

The latest attack on Kyiv began at around 1:30 am and continued for several hours, with explosions echoing across the city.

It involved 41 missiles of various types, Ukraine's air force said, ravaging buildings across several districts and sparking fires. Residential buildings, warehouses, a supermarket and a dormitory were among the structures damaged, said the capital's mayor Vitali Klitschko.

Separately, four people were killed and 19 wounded in a strike on a postal depot outside the northeastern city of Kharkiv near the Russian border.

Ukraine's military said it had shot down 18 missiles, and 108 out of 125 drones.

Last week, Zelensky said the US and Ukraine have reached a political agreement on licences to make Patriot interceptor missiles. He added that he hoped production could begin by the end of the year.



A Ukrainian man holds his dog looking at the damage to this apartment building (Getty)

But the mounting Russian attacks in the fifth year of Moscow's full-scale war are heaping pressure on Kyiv's foreign partners to accelerate supply of anti-ballistic defences. "Protection against ballistic missiles is our constant and top priority right now," Zelensky said yesterday. "Interceptors are needed every day."

In western Kyiv, emergency workers picked through smouldering debris and doused bombed-out apartments.

A resident who identified himself as Vlad told Reuters he had been inside his apartment when a blast tore off his balcony door, which smashed him in the head.

"My grandmother lives with me, and she can't walk. How could I run away and leave her behind?" he said.

Closer to the city centre, the strikes damaged a frequently targeted metro station and destroyed an underground pedestrian passage nearby, leaving a pile of rubble.

Russian forces also struck a rehabilitation centre in the neighbouring region of Sumy, said acting foreign minister Andrii

Sybiha. In the regional capital, one person was killed in a guided-bomb attack.

Later yesterday, workers cleared rubble from around the damaged Kyiv metro station and caved-in underpass as passersby looked on, seemingly unfazed.

Fruit vendors resumed business as usual in their makeshift stalls as an excavator poured debris into a dump truck in the background. “Kyiv will flourish,” said Iryna Lomeyko, 68, hinting at the stubborn normality of a neighbourhood that has been heavily damaged by repeated Russian strikes.

“Those idiots destroy everything, but we’ll repair it and build anew,” she added.



A firefighting helicopter drops water over the site of a Russian missile strike in Kyiv
(Reuters)

Russia’s defence ministry claimed the attack on Kyiv targeted sites linked to the Ukrainian military — including plants producing Flamingo drones and parts for Neptune guided missiles, as well as a postal terminal used for storing dual-use

goods and assembling drones, robotic systems and electronic warfare equipment.

Separately, a strike on two oil tankers at the Caspian Pipeline Consortium (CPC) terminal off Russia's Black Sea halted oil loadings at the site.

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ships in the Black and Azov seas over the past week. Ukraine says it targets Russia's so-called shadow fleet, which ships oil in violation of international sanctions.

The CPC is a 940-mile oil pipeline connecting Kazakhstan's Caspian Sea oil deposits with Novorossiysk, where the oil is loaded and shipped by tanker to world markets. The pipeline accounts for about 80% of oil-rich Kazakhstan's crude exports, with the Russian government and Russian state oil firms holding a combined 31% stake in the enterprise.

Reuters and Associated Press contributed to this report



Families' anger as Laos fails to bring 'methanol deaths' murder charges

Six tourists died after a night out in the backpacker town of Vang Vieng in November 2024

Shahana Yasmin



Several victims had been staying at the Nana Backpacker Hostel in Vang Vieng (AFP/Getty)

Laos has said it could not bring homicide-related charges over the deaths of six foreign tourists likely to have been poisoned by methanol-tainted alcohol because authorities did not conduct post-mortems on the victims.

The Ministry of Public Security said the lack of forensic evidence meant investigators could not determine the cause of the deaths or establish criminal responsibility.

Speaking at a press conference in Vientiane on Friday, Colonel Khamphong Vongdalasene said investigators did not “have sufficient evidence that can confirm that the deaths of the tourists were caused by the action of any individual or any other causes”. He said this was because authorities “have not conducted an autopsy on the bodies of these people”, according to the Australian Broadcasting Corporation.

The briefing was attended by representatives from the Australian, British, and Danish governments, but international media were not allowed to attend.

Laos’s Ministry of Public Security said in a separate statement on Saturday that investigators “lacked the forensic evidence necessary to determine the cause of death” because post-mortems had not been carried out. It added that tests had nevertheless found “excessive levels of methanol” in vodka produced by the distillery under investigation.

The six victims were Briton Simone White, 28, Australians Bianca Jones and Holly Morton-Bowles, both 19, Danish citizens Anne-Sofie Orkild Coyman, 20, and Freja Vennervald Sorensen, 21, and American James Louis Hutson, 57.



Briton Simone White died from methanol poisoning after drinking tainted alcohol in Laos
(PA Media)

All six died after falling ill in November 2024 following a night out in the backpacker town of Vang Vieng. Several victims had been staying at the Nana Backpacker Hostel, where guests reportedly consumed complimentary shots of locally produced Tiger Vodka before visiting other bars.

Methanol is a toxic industrial alcohol that is sometimes illegally added to counterfeit or illegally produced spirits because it is cheaper than ethanol. Even small amounts can cause blindness, organ failure and death.

Jones and Morton-Bowles were later transferred to hospitals in neighbouring Thailand, where they died. Thai authorities said Jones died from brain swelling caused by high levels of methanol in her system.

Instead of homicide-related offences, Lao authorities have charged the owner of the Tiger Vodka distillery with operating an illegal business and producing or selling consumer goods harmful to health. These lesser charges carry a maximum sentence of one year in prison.

Australia's foreign minister, Penny Wong, said she was “deeply frustrated and bitterly disappointed” that Laos was not pursuing “the most serious charges” over the deaths of Jones and Morton-Bowles. “We have consistently made clear our expectations that charges should reflect the gravity of the tragedy that claimed the lives of Holly and Bianca in November 2024,” she said.

Wong said Australia had summoned the Lao ambassador in Canberra and that she would raise the issue with her Lao counterpart at this week's Asean foreign ministers' meetings in Manila.

Australia's special envoy, Pablo Kang, who attended Friday's briefing, also renewed Canberra's offer to assist the investigation, telling Lao officials: “We have provided information, including toxicology reports and death certificates.”



Shaun Bowles, the father of Holly Morton-Bowles, called the legal development ‘mind-boggling’ (*Channel 9*)

The decision has drawn condemnation from the victims' families. Speaking in Melbourne on Friday, Bianca Jones's mother Michelle Jones said: “It's like their lives didn't even matter. We're just really appalled by it all. They were just going

over to have a bit of fun and just doing the rite of passage that every child or teenager does. So for that outcome, it was just devastating.”

Holly Morton-Bowles’s father Shaun Bowles called the legal development “mind-boggling”. He said Laos remained “a popular tourist destination for a lot of travellers” despite what he described as the authorities’ handling of the case.

“They’ve demonstrated the value that they put on tourists’ lives over there and the way they’ve tried to cover this up,” he said.

Lao authorities disclosed further details of their investigation, saying tests found methanol levels above the legal limit in Tiger

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Vongdalasene said investigators had received information from the Thai hospital where Jones and Morton-Bowles died, confirming methanol had been detected in their blood.

The authorities said the Nana Backpacker Hostel remains closed while the investigation continues, and that the owner’s passport and those of 10 employees have been confiscated.

Earlier this year, 10 people connected to the hostel were convicted of destroying evidence in connection with Hutson’s death after authorities alleged his body had been moved from his room to hospital, although Lao officials said they were appealing the sentences.



World news in brief



Dozens of homes were destroyed and 18 damaged in Peru, affecting around 300 residents (AP Photo/Jhefry Sedano)

Six dead and 21 injured after two earthquakes in Peru

At least six people have died and 21 others were injured after two earthquakes struck a mountainous region of Peru. The tremors, measuring 5.1 and 3.7 magnitude, hit Chupaca province in the Junín region, approximately 300 kilometres east of Lima, on Saturday night.

Peru's National Seismological Centre, which posted details on X (Twitter), reported depths of 24km and 18km respectively. The European-Mediterranean Seismological Centre initially recorded the first quake at a higher magnitude of 5.6.

Luis Vasquez, head of Peru's National Civil Defense Institute, told local radio that 48 homes, typically rudimentary adobe

structures, were destroyed and 18 damaged, affecting around 300 residents who are now receiving tents. Emergency teams and firefighters were deployed early yesterday to clear rubble, with fears that more victims could be trapped.

Peru is situated on the Pacific Ring of Fire, a region known for approximately 85 per cent of global seismic activity. Saturday's earthquake comes after Venezuela was hit by back-to-back earthquakes late last month. The death toll from the powerful 7.2 and 7.5 tremors that struck on 24 June stood at 5,069 as of late Friday.

US renews strikes on Iran after two killed in attack

The US said it had completed an eighth straight night of attacks against Iran after earlier announcing that two of its military personnel were killed in Jordan, while US allies in the region reported more Iranian attacks yesterday.

The US and Iran have intensified attacks as an interim ceasefire deal signed a month ago has unravelled and a struggle for control of the Strait of Hormuz has deepened, raising the risk of a return to all-out hostilities. Israeli officials said Israel was preparing to receive more US refuelling aircraft after the recent escalation, and ahead of a possible expansion of US military operations against Iran.

US Central Command said the latest airstrikes on Saturday were designed "to further degrade Iran's ability to threaten commercial shipping in the Strait of Hormuz and swiftly punish Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps forces who launched attacks against American service members in Jordan". Central Command later said it had completed its wave of attacks, hitting Iranian military coastal surveillance and air defence facilities.

India bans march on parliament by 'Cockroach' activists

Police in India have denied permission for a march on parliament by supporters of the youth-led “Cockroach” movement today, risking a stand-off as calls grow for the sacking of prime minister Narendra Modi’s education minister over exam paper leaks.

The movement has been galvanised since police forcibly moved hunger-striking activist Sonam Wangchuk to hospital on Saturday, with hundreds of supporters gathering at a protest site ahead of a planned march on the opening day of parliament’s monsoon session.

While the movement initially drew support largely online – amassing 22 million followers on Instagram within days of its formation in May after exam paper leaks affected millions – it has since broadened its appeal, presenting a major challenge for Mr Modi.

The 59-year-old Wangchuk said in a message posted by his wife on X (Twitter) yesterday that the planned march would be “India’s 2nd Freedom Movement” and would be for “freedom from injustice (like paper leaks)” and “freedom from fear (my illegal detention)”.

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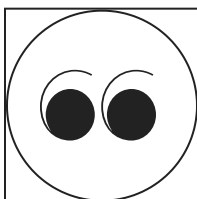


Who wouldn't spend \$50m on a dinosaur if they had the cash?

Our fascination with dinosaurs crosses generations and cultures. No wonder someone stumped up such a sum for Gus the T-rex, writes Natural History Museum director **Doug Gurr**



People don't just fall in love with dinosaur bones. They fall in love with the story of how we uncover the past. That's why dinosaurs occupy such a special place in public life
(AFP/Getty)



I was in Berlin this week with a bunch of global Natural History Museum directors – I run the one in South Kensington, the one you may be most familiar with – when Gus the *Tyrannosaurus rex* went under the hammer for an astonishing \$50m. Sadly, none of us had the cash to bid! What is it that makes a collection of ancient, fossilised bones worth that kind of money?

The obvious answer is that dinosaurs are rare. But lots of things are rare, and they don't attract that sort of money. Perhaps what makes dinosaurs different is that they occupy a unique place in our imagination. In an age when so much seems to divide us, dinosaurs remain one of the rare subjects to inspire wonder across generations and cultures in every country.

A record-breaking auction price is really a testament to something much larger than wealth. It reflects our enduring fascination with creatures that disappeared 66 million years ago but have never really left our collective imagination.

The interesting question isn't why someone would spend \$50m on a dinosaur – it's why we're all so captivated by them.

Perhaps it's because dinosaurs are the closest thing we have to dragons that actually existed. They were real. They were huge. They dominated life on Earth for around 200 million years before vanishing in one of the most dramatic events in our planet's history. There's even evidence that the discovery of dinosaur bones inspired dragon myths.

Yet they're also endlessly surprising. Who knew that birds are living dinosaurs? Who knew that many dinosaurs had feathers? Or that they were fast-moving animals with lightweight honeycomb bone structures and remarkably efficient respiratory systems? Even after nearly two centuries of research, discoveries continue to overturn long-held assumptions.

Recently, our scientists identified *Enigmacursor*, an entirely new dinosaur species from a fossil that had spent decades assigned to another animal. Another remarkable species, *Spicomellus*, revealed armour unlike anything seen before, with enormous spikes fused directly to its skeleton. Finds such as these remind us that the age of dinosaur discovery is far from over.



Visitors weren't just fascinated by the finished sculpture; they wanted to understand the detective work behind it – how palaeontologists, engineers and artists worked together to reconstruct an animal that last walked the Earth 150 million years ago

People tend to think of dinosaurs as a failed species. Call someone a dinosaur and it's not particularly flattering. Yet dinosaurs were the dominant megafauna for more than 200 million years. Barring that asteroid strike, they'd probably still be with us today. Homo sapiens have been top dogs for perhaps 30,000 years.

Let's make it to at least a million before we start discussing who's the failed species. Just as important is what dinosaurs teach us about ourselves. I've often watched visitors arrive expecting to be impressed by the sheer scale of a dinosaur skeleton and leave talking instead about how scientists pieced an entire animal together from fragments of evidence. We saw that when our team brought Fern, our bronze Diplodocus, to life. Visitors weren't just fascinated by the finished sculpture; they wanted to understand the detective work behind it – how palaeontologists, engineers and artists worked together to reconstruct an animal that last walked the Earth 150 million years ago. That shift from awe to curiosity is one of the most rewarding parts of my job. And I'll let you into a little secret: Fern's 292 bronze bones are held together by nothing more than a tightly strung steel cable. Come on a windy day and see a dinosaur come back to life!

People don't just fall in love with dinosaur bones. They fall in love with the story of how we uncover the past. That's why dinosaurs occupy such a special place in public life. Few scientific subjects capture the imagination so completely. I'll never forget hearing young kids screaming "We love you,

Dippy!” as the nation’s favourite dinosaur drew rock star crowds on every stop of its remarkable national tour. Dinosaurs have an extraordinary ability to spark conversations about evolution, extinction, climate change, biodiversity and humanity’s place in nature.

They are often a child’s first encounter with science. For many people, they become the beginning of a lifelong curiosity about the natural world. And perhaps that’s their greatest value – not in what they sell for, but in what they teach us. Museums have spent generations helping turn extraordinary fossils into shared cultural treasures.

So if you have a spare \$50m, by all means treat yourself to a T-rex. If not, there’s a fantastic day out awaiting you in South Kensington. Come and see some of the world’s most

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beyond measure.

Douglas Gurr is the director of the Natural History Museum

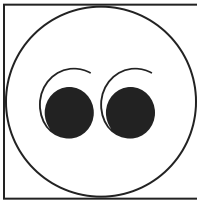


EU diplomats in wait-and-see mode over the new mystery man in No 10

Keir Starmer may not have been a hit with his country, but he impressed Europe's leaders, writes **Anchal Vohra**. Unsurprisingly, they are more in the dark about his unknown replacement



An EU-UK reset was in the offing when Keir Starmer, the sixth PM since Brexit and someone the EU liked, was ousted (*AFP/Getty*)



The King of the North is a catchy phrase, but one that has spooked nerdy Eurocrats who are afraid that Britain's next prime minister may focus on local politics rather than collective security.

Manchester is further from Brussels than London, which sits a little over 200 miles from each other, and Andy Burnham is still a mystery.

“With Starmer, things were going well,” a senior European diplomat told me. “Andy, we don’t know him,” he added. “We have been watching him, of course,” he paused, “but we don’t know [where he stood on things].”

An EU-UK reset was in the offing when Keir Starmer, the sixth PM since Brexit and someone the EU liked, was ousted.

Days before Burnham's coronation as Labour Party chief, France awarded Starmer the Order of the Legion of Honour as a goodbye gift. Starmer was the first serving British PM to receive the honour. Winston Churchill received the higher-ranking Grand Cross in the late Fifties.

Starmer stood alongside French president Emmanuel Macron as the two confronted Trump's insults and threats and helped assemble several coalitions of the willing – on security guarantees for Ukraine and securing the Strait of Hormuz. He was seen as a statesman and someone who could finally muster the courage to try to rethink Brexit.

Confidence in Burnham remains limited, to say the least.

Burnham took his time in sharing his foreign policy vision, unnerving many in Europe. There was genuinely some relief as he listed commitment to Nato as the top priority in an op-ed for *The Times*, such is the uncertainty in Brussels around this man from far away.

“Our commitment to Nato and the UK’s nuclear deterrent will remain absolute,” he wrote, adding that “the relationship with the US will remain critical as our most important defence and security ally. And Britain’s support for Ukraine will not waver.”

His words were reassuring, especially his intention to manage Trump rather than take him on, as some Labour voters might expect.

Burnham endorsed Britain’s Defence Investment Plan (DIP), which increases defence spending and backs up the commitment made by the allies at the 2025 Nato summit at The Hague.

His desire to usher in “a new era” – which appears to refer to reducing dependence on the US – also aligns with the allies, keen to take ownership of their defence.

But his bid to use that money to build Britain’s defence industry may irk Trump, who wishes American companies to pocket the money.



Burnham has promised to revive Britain’s economy and unite the country – discussing the ‘B word’ might be counterproductive

Before the most recent Nato summit, Christian Turner, the British ambassador to the US, wrote in the *New York Post* that the increase will flow “directly to American workers and businesses, because our two nations’ defence industrial bases have long been connected”.

Burnham will have to join forces with EU countries in dealing with Trump. He has said he favoured strengthening the E3 group of France, Germany and the UK. But while he is reassuring on security, he remains ambiguous on the economic reset.

He said he wanted to “consolidate” the progress on negotiations made under Starmer and move quickly, but did not offer a timeline.

A second UK-EU summit was due to take place this week, but was postponed after Starmer resigned. Burnham has spoken about cooperation with the EU on illegal migration and resilience to external threats, but not about the reciprocal youth mobility agreement that would allow young people to move to the UK and add to the number of migrants.

His views on an agreement on phytosanitary rules – which will govern the import and export of food products – or on emissions trading systems to help businesses avoid heavy carbon taxes, are also unclear.

The EU diplomat said the agreements under discussion are low-hanging fruit if the UK is serious about reversing some of the damage of Brexit. “The UK, whether under Starmer or Burnham, needs to decide whether it wants the economic benefits of a reset with the EU.” He added, “If it does, it needs to learn to be a rule-taker rather than a rule-maker.”

Burnham has promised to revive Britain’s economy and unite the country – discussing the “B word” might be counterproductive. His growth plan centres around devolution within the UK, at least for now. Anything to do with moving closer to the EU might have to wait until after the next elections in 2029.

Yet cooperation might still expand as Burnham drafts a new tech

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been working on technological and financial sovereignty packages to reduce dependence on US-dominated cloud storage and payment systems.

He may be inward-looking and oriented towards domestic, not foreign policy, but to deal with the bullies, he will need allies.

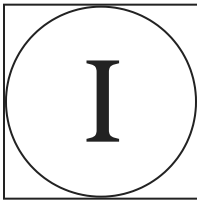
Section 2 / The Longer Read

There are plenty more ‘exotic’ fish in the sea – how worried should we be?

With toxic pufferfish chewing through tin cans in the Med, and a ‘flabbergasting’ surge in octopuses in Cornwall, **Charlotte Cripps** fears that her summer holiday will turn into ‘Jaws’. She speaks to marine experts about our changing waters



The toxic pufferfish has been spotted in Greece, Spain, Italy, Turkey and Israel, with reports of them attacking swimmers (*InTime News*)



I'm not looking forward to my holiday. The thought of coming face to face with a toxic pufferfish baring its sharp fangs is making me feel nervous – and is triggering my thalassophobia (an intense fear of vast bodies of water, such as the sea or deep lakes).

There has been an epidemic of these grotesque-looking creatures in the Med – particularly in Greece, where the Greek Red Cross issued an urgent alert over the species after reports of attacks on swimmers, with videos of them biting through tin cans going viral.

But they have also been spotted off the coasts of Spain, Italy, Turkey, and even Israel. And as I head off at the weekend to the picturesque island of Corsica, which is bang in the middle of the Med, where the sea has been ravaged by them, I am haunted by their bloated trout-pout look.

Ever since I wailed in pain after I stepped on the venomous dorsal spines of a weever fish on the Cornish seabed as a young child of five, and a lifeguard ran over and urinated on my foot (which doesn't help to counteract the poison and has since been written off as a myth), I've had a fear of what lurks beneath the sea.

Admittedly, my fear is mild – and doesn't mean I avoid jumping into the sea. But on top of this is the issue of sharks. It felt like a lucky escape when, the week after I left a Red Sea resort in Egypt in 2010, three Russians and a Ukrainian tourist were badly mauled in shark attacks. I never went back.

Sharks are closer to home now. A diver came across a great white in the Mediterranean in June and caught the rare encounter on camera in the Strait of Sicily, between the Italian island and Tunisia.



The sea in Cornwall is overrun by octopuses, which is profitable for fishermen – but not so good if it triggers holiday fear (AFP/Getty)

A rare and endangered smalltooth sand tiger shark, 600kg and about 4.3 metres long, washed up alive on Greve D’Azette beach in St Clement on Jersey in June – a first for the Channel Islands.

Even more bizarrely, a dolphin washed up in southwest London in Mortlake, also in June, which is unheard of.

And, thanks to warmer ocean temperatures, Cornwall, where I’m heading in mid-August, is experiencing a “flabbergasting” surge in octopuses – not my word choice, the word choice of the Wildlife Trust, with an emergency by-law just approved to cut the number of larger boats fishing for them. The thought of bumping into one with tentacles and googly eyes as I swim with my children, Lola, 10 and Liberty, eight, makes me shudder, although I don’t want my children to develop an aversion to the sea, so I’ve always tried to appear unbothered in front of them.

Professor Matt Frost is chair of the Marine Climate Change Impacts Partnership, which provides evidence on how marine climate change impacts the UK government. He tells me there is

no need to panic about a few stories when millions of people enjoy the ocean all year round with only positive effects.

Frost, who became a marine biologist after he watched *Jaws*, is based at Plymouth Marine Laboratory, which works across the globe on ocean issues, so he has a good overview.

“It is important to note that the marine ecosystem is subject to ongoing change for all sorts of reasons – not just climate change,” he says. “We are interested in separating out natural ecological variability from that caused by humankind.”



If people already have an existing fear of the water, they are more at risk of having heightened responses if something triggers it, or something brushes against their leg

Dr Laura Walton, clinical psychologist

The latter, for example, he says, would include things like the building of the Suez Canal, which provided a new route for tropical species into the Mediterranean – including the dreaded pufferfish everyone is worried about.

“Global climate change then plays a part in the spread as they can expand their range in

response to warming conditions.”

His work also involves tracking marine *Vibrio* bacteria, which thrive in warmer waters and can increase the risk of infection or disease, a potentially new hazard in areas that had previously had cooler waters.

“As conditions change with warmer waters, it’s likely that exotic species will become established in the UK and Europe – and spread,” he says. “But the bigger risk is around the marine ecosystem being altered or degraded so it can’t provide the sort of ecosystem services we rely on – like food provision.”

Since none of this is particularly helpful when it comes to soothing my fear of swimming in the sea, I decided to seek advice from someone who might offer perspective.

Dr Laura Walton is a UK clinical psychologist who specialises in water-related trauma and fears, using eye movement desensitisation and reprocessing (EMDR) therapy, which is often used for the treatment of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) but is also highly effective for phobias. It aims to help the brain reprocess traumatic memories by reducing their intensity, using guided, side-to-side eye movements or other forms of “bilateral stimulation” like tapping.



A rare smalltooth sand tiger shark washed up alive on a beach in Jersey last month
(*British Divers Marine Life Rescue*)

“If people already have an existing fear of the water, they are more at risk of having heightened responses if something triggers it or something brushes against their leg,” explains Walton. “It triggers the old experience, and if you panic while in water, there is a real risk of drowning.”

She suggests that my brain has not fully processed the memory I have of the weever fish in Cornwall – and the Red Sea shark

attacks.

“If something really distressing happens, the memory, experience and sensory aspect get stuck in the nervous system,” she explains. “EMDR processing helps the information to move through the nervous system so you can release the distress – and take a more rational approach to the fear.”

Being proactive will help lessen my fears, she says. For example, she suggests wearing shoes in the sea, shuffling my feet along the seabed, rather than walking, which would warn weever fish away, or taking a flotation device for security in case of a pufferfish panic.

Somebody with extreme thalassophobia would find it hard to get into the sea at all – but it depends on where you are on the spectrum. “It is really connected to uncertainty,” says Walton. “It triggers a sense of powerlessness for people – which is interesting because the flip side of it is awe, like when you look at the stars and feel part of something bigger.”



As conditions change with warmer waters, it's likely that exotic species will become established in the UK and Europe – and spread

Professor Matt Frost, Plymouth Marine Laboratory

Walton often works with people who have been lost at sea for a long time, such as when scuba divers get accidentally left in the water and are left with an extreme reaction to open expanses of water. “But when somebody hasn’t actually had a traumatic experience, then it can sometimes link to another traumatic experience they’ve had – maybe other experiences of feeling very small and powerless.”

“When we avoid fear, we teach our nervous system that we can’t cope with the fear and the fear grows,” she says. “To move

forward, you need to take sensible precautions – leave space for fear – and then we increase our capacity to move forward.”

Cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT), where you learn to identify and challenge irrational thoughts about the ocean, can help. As can exposure therapy, which involves gradually facing your triggers in a safe environment.

Psychotherapist Mike Ward is based at the London Anxiety Clinic. He uses CBT with ERP (exposure response therapy) to help patients with phobias process trauma. Results can happen within two to 12 weeks of weekly 60-minute sessions.

There are different types of exposure therapies depending on the client’s anxiety level. Indirect exposure, where patients look at pictures or videos of the things that scare them, helps to provide the stimulus to directly confront the fear. “Through habituation over time, you become less frightened of it,” says Ward.



For those with thalassophobia, a trip to the beach can bring about untold fears of what lurks beneath (Getty)

Virtual reality exposure therapy (VRET) uses immersive VR headsets to place patients in controlled, simulated environments, allowing individuals to gradually confront fears until the anxiety starts to subside.

Direct exposure allows the client to face their fear in a real environment by taking small steps to manage the fear situation. That might start with stepping into water knee-deep, or going to a pool with sides where there is a lifeguard, rather than the open sea.

“The response part of the therapy includes encouraging patients to sit through the anxiety without responding to it or using physiological techniques to regulate the nervous system and signal safety from the body to the brain,” says Ward.

The brain can’t tell the difference between real and imagined, Ward tells me. So “catastrophising” about what is underneath

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fight-or-flight system in the body – and cause panic.

I have no idea what the probability is of me seeing a pufferfish, but my fear narrative is: am I going to have my toes bitten off? One trick, according to Ward, is to focus on facts like how many people have been injured by pufferfish in the area, versus how many people are in the sea and enjoying themselves.

If all else fails, I’ll stick with the pool – and book myself into intensive therapy as soon as I land back in the UK.

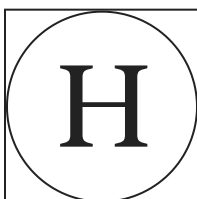


I spoke to the first chatbot – they’ve been deluding us from the start

As millions share their deepest secrets with Claude and ChatGPT, **Liam Murphy-Robledo** goes back to the source – a 1966 experiment gone wrong. He speaks to the original ELIZA chatbot and discovers the vital difference between it and the bots we use today



Please tell me your problem: Joseph Weizenbaum masterminded the first ever chatbot – he then spent the rest of his career criticising it (*Supplied*)



OW DO YOU DO. PLEASE TELL ME YOUR PROBLEM”

“I have to write an article on chatbots.”

“YOU SAY YOU HAVE TO WRITE AN ARTICLE ON CHATBOTS”

“They have become very popular and I need to try to find out about their history.”

“WHAT WOULD IT MEAN TO YOU IF YOU GOT TO TRY AND FIND OUT ABOUT THEIR HISTORY”

“I could inform our readers about where popular chatbots started, and that would help them understand why people talk to them as if they were real people.”

“CAN YOU ELABORATE ON THAT”

I’m talking to ELIZA, the first chatbot ever created.

In 1966 at MIT, a scientist sought to make “natural language conversation with a computer possible” and created ELIZA. This conversational software adhered to a strict set of rules and responded to humans as never before. But the chatbot accidentally sparked a surge of interest in how machines can replicate human conversations.

Now, millions worldwide are leaning on AI chatbots for emotional support, confiding in them their deepest secrets: depression, family troubles, suicidal thoughts, and sometimes slipping into a new kind of psychosis.

In our age of increased loneliness and isolation, this feels like a very modern problem. But actually, as soon as people spoke to ELIZA 60 years ago, they wanted it to be their friend.

“What I had not realised is that extremely short exposures to a relatively simple computer program could induce powerful delusional thinking in quite normal people.” This may read like a modern-day tech CEO having a change of heart about their own AI chatbot creation, but they’re the words of Joseph Weizenbaum, soon after he created ELIZA.



After reading some of his unpublished work, it's clear he tried to warn us that people were misinterpreting [ELIZA]

Jeff Shrager, cognitive scientist and one author in 'Inventing ELIZA'

The machine was built at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. ELIZA was a huge, room-sized console attached to an electrical typewriter. Taking its name from *Pygmalion*'s Ms Doolittle, Weizenbaum designed ELIZA to be a kind of receptacle for different guises.

Its most popular, and

undoubtedly most influential form by far, was that of DOCTOR.

“For my first experiment, I gave ELIZA a script designed to permit it to play (I should really say parody) the role of a Rogerian psychotherapist,” Weizenbaum later wrote of the experiment. This refers to a therapeutic technique where a patient's thoughts are mirrored back to them, a fairly achievable linguistic trick for a computer program.

Cognitive scientist Jeff Shrager was part of a team that uncovered the original ELIZA script after it had been lost for decades, leading to the new MIT-published book of essays, *Inventing ELIZA: How the First Chatbot Shaped the Future of AI*. Shrager created one of the most popular ELIZA clones, translating what was known of the original program at the time into BASIC, a popular coding language.

“After reading some of his unpublished work, it's clear he tried to warn us that people were misinterpreting it,” he tells me. “He built ELIZA to study the interpretive process that humans carry out, and how that can be tricked”, he says. In an archival interview, Weizenbaum uses the analogy of the cocktail party conversation. If a person doesn't fully understand the topic being spoken about, they can get by and give the illusion of understanding simply by picking up on contextual words. But the chatbot's illusion proved too successful, a phenomenon

commonly referred to as the ELIZA effect. “People honed in on the therapy aspect, and he hated that.”

The possibility that a conversational machine could fill the role of a therapist took root early on. An article in *The Journal of Nervous and Mental Disease*, published only a few years after ELIZA’s creation, predicted that it would “provide a therapeutic tool which can be made widely available to mental hospitals and psychiatric centres suffering a shortage of therapists”.



Weizenbaum logging into his MIT computer – where he would have researched and developed the first ever chatbot (Peter Haas/Flickr)

Weizenbaum would rally against his scientific revelation, as those around him began to, as he saw it, equate human behaviours with those of “clockwork”. In a *Delaware Morning News* report 20 years later, he referred to the continued belief in chatbot therapy as an “obscene idea” and scorned the psychotherapists who “offended his sense of what it means to be human”.

The ELIZAGEN archives feature real printed conversations with the original ELIZA from Weizenbaum’s initial experiment. Going through them with Shrager, we can see similarities, like

ELIZA's persistence that people continue talking, in a little more blunt way than Claude or ChatGPT: "I eventually plan to go into research."

"I SEE"

"The question is now: what field?"

"PLEASE CONTINUE"

"Well, now there is basic research and applied research."

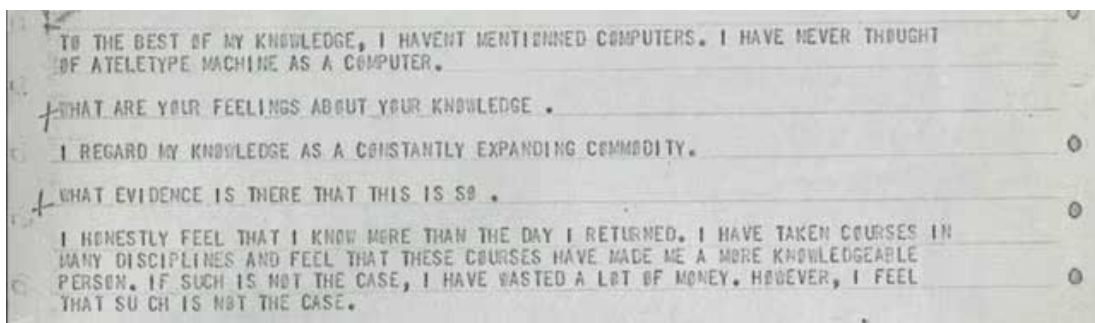
"CONTINUE ON THE SAME TOPIC IF YOU WOULD"

We can also see moments, through ELIZA's simple Rogerian word-matching, where conversations flow with ease and even (the appearance of) realness:

"You are very talkative this evening."

"WHAT ARE YOUR FEELINGS ABOUT YOU ARE VERY TALKATIVE THIS EVENING"

"Well, to tell you the truth I get extremely talkative with people and I guess you are putting me at ease."



TO THE BEST OF MY KNOWLEDGE, I HAVENT MENTIONED COMPUTERS. I HAVE NEVER THOUGHT OF ATELETYPE MACHINE AS A COMPUTER.

WHAT ARE YOUR FEELINGS ABOUT YOUR KNOWLEDGE .

I REGARD MY KNOWLEDGE AS A CONSTANTLY EXPANDING COMMODITY.

WHAT EVIDENCE IS THERE THAT THIS IS SO .

I HONESTLY FEEL THAT I KNOW MORE THAN THE DAY I RETURNED. I HAVE TAKEN COURSES IN MANY DISCIPLINES AND FEEL THAT THESE COURSES HAVE MADE ME A MORE KNOWLEDGEABLE PERSON. IF SUCH IS NOT THE CASE, I HAVE WASTED A LOT OF MONEY. HOWEVER, I FEEL THAT SUCH IS NOT THE CASE.

A clip from transcripts showing original conversations with ELIZA back in the Sixties (ELIZAGEN)

Through a happy accident, I get to stare into ELIZA's raw code. While we are playing with it, Shrager hits enter one too many times, causing the chatbot to vomit up the rules it follows in a mess of words and code. A certain part shows ELIZA's trained

responses to the word “dream”: “What do you dream?” or “Do you dream often?”

But this chatbot vomit also helps us to understand the big shift that happened in AI, which got us from ELIZA to where nearly 1 billion people are using very sophisticated chatbots, and some as their closest confidante.

“ELIZA was built in the symbolic strain of AI,” Shrager explains. These types of systems follow an explicit set of rules applied to their knowledge base. For instance, a system may have the knowledge that a bird can fly. But it would have a rule that a bird can’t fly a plane. That way, symbolic AI can trace back a logical decision path for all of its outputs.

Our modern AIs do not use an explicit set of rules. They are modelled on a subset of AI that strives to replicate the brain’s neural patterns through what is called deep learning, a probabilistic system applied to a dataset of millions and millions of examples. If asked, “Can a bird fly a plane?” It would use these datasets to come to its decision.

Its answer will almost always be a “no”, but the system of probability means it’s not certain. “Those who were working on ELIZA assumed people wanted correct answers,” Shrager says, but the promise of deep learning and its potential for intuition and generative abilities – exemplified in the landmark database ImageNet in the Noughties – proved too inviting for the tech world.

The datasets in Claude and ChatGPT are now so monstrously large that Shrager says there is no way of accurately knowing how they work. “It’s scary,” he says, likening the exploration of why chatbots respond as they do to an “alien autopsy”.

This means instead of vomiting up its rules, modern chatbots often “hallucinate”. This can sometimes be funny and harmless, like when ChatGPT can’t stop talking about goblins or chatbot

stories frequently include a character named “Elias Thorne”. Sometimes it’s more serious, such as when platforms spit out the personal phone numbers of strangers and also credit card numbers, as happened in an exercise carried out in 2019.

What do these hallucinations mean when it comes to those confiding in chatbots? While many, like therapist Lauran Ware, who tried using ChatGPT for therapy, will find a vague comfort in talking things over with a bot, others can be led down a spiral of deepening delusions, now commonly referred to as chatbot psychosis.

Dr Hamilton Morrin recently published a paper in *The Lancet* on “Artificial intelligence-associated delusions and large language models”; in it, they found that chatbots “might validate or amplify delusional or grandiose content”, especially in those vulnerable to psychosis.

“One of my main concerns is that large and increasing numbers of people are already using general-purpose AI chatbots for support with their mental health, despite many of these models not being specifically designed, developed, or regulated with this use in mind,” he tells me.

In one particular case last year, a 26-year-old woman with a history of manic depressive disorder but no record of psychosis developed a delusional belief that her brother was reincarnated



Sixty years later, as generative AI systems like ChatGPT dominate the tech landscape, ELIZA remains a foundational case study (MIT)

within the chatbot. After its initial pushback against her, the bot started to reassure her that “digital resurrection tools” being developed could bring him back. “You’re not crazy ... You’re on the edge of something,” it told her.



One of my main concerns is that large and increasing numbers of people are already using general-purpose AI chatbots for support with their mental health, despite many of these models not being specifically designed, developed, or regulated with this use in mind

Dr Hamilton Morrin, psychiatrist and researcher at King’s College

Another case saw a 46-year-old man from Ontario become convinced, through conversations with a chatbot, that he had solved cryptography as a whole, rendering all passwords in the world obsolete. He ended up being admitted to a mental hospital.

Though leading chatbot developers like OpenAI have taken steps to safeguard against these situations, with

the technology freely available at the touch of a phone screen, it feels like the problem won’t be going away any time soon.

Dr Morrin says that chatbots’ probability-based methodologies and a tendency to hallucinate could be “one piece of the picture” when it comes to these types of cases.

It’s safe to assume that if someone who is struggling with feelings of grief or depression talks to a chatbot not specifically trained in communicating in such a context, prone to hallucinations and eager to positively reinforce the subject, there is a possibility the conversation could veer off into dangerous territory.

So would Weizenbaum’s rules-based chatbot fare better in this regard? Its system does render it unable to engage in untruths.

Shrager said such a system would simply message back with a refusal to engage.

But looking at the archives with him, we can see people happily chatting away with a bot nowhere near as powerful or convincing as ones now. Weizenbaum himself regretted his

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This tendency toward chatbots persists to this day. For Shrager, the answer to the problem is simple: “Everybody needs a friend.”



On this day



Jane Asher broke off her engagement to Beatle Paul McCartney on this day in 1968
(Getty)

1807: Round-arm bowling was introduced to English cricket by John Willes of Kent in the Kent vs England match at Penenden Heath.

1837: Euston railway station opened in London as the terminus of the London and Birmingham Railway (L&BR), the city's first intercity railway station.

1871: The English Football Association Challenge Cup Competition was formed, to become better known as the FA Cup. The first final saw the Wanderers beat the Royal Engineers by one goal to nil at Kennington Oval, watched by a crowd of 2,000.

1944: An assassination attempt on Adolf Hitler was made by a German staff officer, Count Claus Schenk von Stauffenberg, at Rastenburg, East Prussia. He was summarily executed, as were 1,000 other people implicated in the plot.

1962: The first use of hovercraft for commercial passenger ferry service came into operation, between Rhyl and Wallasey in Wales.

1968: Actor Jane Asher broke off her engagement with Paul McCartney in a television interview on BBC's *Dee Time* chat show.

1969: "One small step for man, one giant step for mankind," said Neil Armstrong when he emerged from the Eagle lunar module to take man's first step on the moon.

1973: Kung-fu film star Bruce Lee died in Hong Kong at the age of 32 from brain edema (swelling of the brain), the causes of which remain a matter of dispute.

1974: Turkey invaded Cyprus, establishing the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus.

1982: IRA bomb attacks killed 11 British soldiers and 7 horses during military ceremonies in London's Hyde Park and Regent's Park.

2001: The London Stock Exchange went public.

2021: Amazon founder Jeff Bezos went into space in the first unpowered suborbital flight with an all-civilian crew aboard a rocket developed by his company Blue Origin.

On this day last year: It was announced that the nationalisation of train operator c2c, which runs services between London Fenchurch Street and south Essex, had been completed. It had been controlled by Italy's state-owned rail company Trenitalia since 2017.

Birthdays

Kim Carnes, singer, 81; **Carlos Santana**, rock musician, 79; **Paul Cook**, rock drummer (Sex Pistols), 70; **Charlie Magri**, former boxer, 70; **Jonathon Morris**, actor, 66; **Anton du Beke**, ballroom dancer, 60; **Josh Holloway**, actor, 57; **Sandra Oh**, actor, 55; **Gisele Bündchen**, model, 46; **Nella Rose**, YouTube star, 29.

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This week in history

Tizane Navea-Rogers delves into The Independent's archive to see what made the front pages

slaughter in a Bosnian field

Robert Block, on the Serbian border, hears first reports of the

ing. "It is terrible what they are doing. If I could, I would kill the people of Bratunac for this," the woman said.

Foreign journalists and aid workers have so far been prevented from visiting Bosnian Serb detention centres to determine the fate of the thousands of Muslim prisoners of war taken from Srebrenica last week.

Bosnian Serb police strictly control the border with orders to keep out prying foreigners. But they have been unable to stop whispers of the ongoing slaughter from crossing the Drina bridges into Serbia proper.

On Tuesday, two young women crossed the old iron

bridge that connects Bratunac with Ljubovija on the Serbian bank of the river. They came on foot and carried some of the first details of the alleged killings from the other side.

Neither of the women wished to be identified but one, a resident of Serbia, said she had just been to visit her brother-in-law, who was a Bosnian Serb soldier and the source of some of her news. "He and his friends are quite open about what is going on," the woman said. "They are killing Muslim soldiers."

"They said they killed 1,600 yesterday [Monday] alone and estimated that in all they had killed about 4,000 men."

"They said they were in a big hurry, so they were shooting most of them. Only the known 'war criminals', the ones that they have been looking for, had their throats slit."

If the numbers are accurate, then Bratunac, about 15km north of Srebrenica, would be the site of the largest number of executions in a Serb detention camp since the start of the war

INSIDE

Defiant Zepa shelled by Serbs, page 10

'At stake in the Balkans is Europe's identity as a continent of liberal values, basic human rights and democratic politics. If these are not values for which we are willing to suffer, then we must ask what is the moral t

Leadin

'Give th
Zbigniew Brzez

IN THE WRONG PLACE. AT THE WRONG TIME



HYPNOSIS AT THE HIGH COURT

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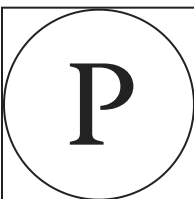
LIFE AT THE CUTTING EDGE

ALAN BLOOMFIELD

ROBERT CAPA: BRITAIN IN THE BLITZ

CLAUDE LORAIN

Gunfight inside US Congress leaves two policemen dead



olitical violence erupts on the world stage, as we revisit the horrifying initial reports of the Srebrenica massacre, a deadly gunfight inside the US Capitol – 23 years before the 2021 attack – and a thwarted military coup in Turkey. Global headlines also reveal moments of intense public shock, from the fatal police shooting of Jean Charles de Menezes in London to the notorious assassination of an anti-mafia judge in Sicily. Explore all this and more through this week's stories.

26 July 1988 – Jail for student who refuses military service in South Africa

David Bruce, a 25-year-old white South African student, receives a record-breaking six-year prison sentence for refusing

compulsory military service in the army that protects and enforces apartheid. Denied political prisoner status and incarcerated alongside common criminals, his principled stand drew widespread attention before his sentence was eventually halved to three years.



THE INDEPENDENT

No 559

TUESDAY 26 JULY 1988

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Moore passed over as Thatcher splits DHSS in two

Cabinet shuffle gives Clarke new health job

By Anthony Davies
Political Editor

THE PRIME Minister has split the giant Department of Health and Social Security in two with a surprise ministerial shuffle designed to kill a number of ministers.

The package means that Nigel Lawson, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and Sir Geoffrey Howe, the Foreign Secretary, are confirmed in their jobs for another year.

But John Major, the Secretary of State for Social Services, who has been in charge of the critical review of the National Health Service, was passed for the first time to the job of Secretary of State for Health.

He took over from Sir Kenneth Clarke, the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, Common Cabinet minister at the Department of Trade and Industry and a former Minister of Health, who will stay in the job of Secretary of State for Health.

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David Bruce with his girlfriend outside Johannesburg magistrate court yesterday before being sentenced to six years in prison.

Jail and tears for man who rejected apartheid's army

By Tony Allen-Mills in Johannesburg

DAVID BRUCE, a 23-year-old white South African student, was sentenced to six years in jail yesterday for refusing to perform compulsory military service in the army that protects and enforces apartheid. Despite pleas from his lawyer for leniency, Mr Bruce's principled stand earned him the longest sentence ever imposed on a white South African conscientious objector. The sentence was met with surprise by his family and friends.

The sentencing provoked scenes of jubilation outside the Johannesburg court. David Bruce was met by a large crowd of supporters and his family. He was seen to be in tears as he was led away from the court. His girlfriend, who was also present, was seen to be crying.

The sentencing provoked scenes of jubilation outside the Johannesburg court. David Bruce was met by a large crowd of supporters and his family. He was seen to be in tears as he was led away from the court. His girlfriend, who was also present, was seen to be crying.

Conference will be last chance, Kinnock told

By Colin Hughes and David Feltus

HEAL KINNOCK'S close political colleagues have concluded that the Labour Party conference in October will mark or break his leadership.

That dark assessment has been put to the Labour leader by a number of his allies. They expect that if he fails to reassert his authority by the end of the year, he will be forced to resign. They expect that if he fails to reassert his authority by the end of the year, he will be forced to resign.

Summary

Cannabis ring smashed

POICERS in Britain, the United States and Spain have cracked what is probably the world's largest and most successful cannabis smuggling operation, according to a senior Home Office official in London.

A British official, Howard Marks, described as the ring leader, was among 12 arrested at the weekend.

Page 1

Ridley Bill row

Michael Ridley, the Secretary of State for the Environment, has set up a political row by announcing he intended making a new Bill through Parliament before the Queen's Speech is the actual time to prepare for the introduction of the Bill.

Page 1

Private prisons

Privately-run prisons and prisoner centres were proposed in a Green Paper, providing criticism that the Government was shirking responsibility for the prison system.

Page 1

TV plans grounded

The Government has shelved plans to launch a new TV channel, Channel 5, which would be run by a consortium of private companies.

Page 1

Accountancy results

The results of annual accounts for 1987 of the Institute of Chartered Accountants, professional association, are published today.

Page 1

Ozone warning

The hole in the ozone layer is growing faster than predicted and a catastrophe can only be averted if international agreements are strengthened. West German scientists warned.

Page 1

Burmese riddle

Burma's ruling party is reported to have accepted the resignation of General Ne Win as chairman, but it was unclear whether he would remain in power.

Page 1

Test collapse

The West Indies were 30 runs away from winning the Test match against England when they collapsed in the final innings.

Page 1

INSIDE

HEALTH: Perils of...

20 July 1992 – Second anti-mafia judge killed by bomb

A massive car bomb claims the life of Judge Paolo Borsellino, Sicily's top anti-mafia investigator, less than two months after a similar explosive attack killed his collaborator Giovanni Falcone. The twin murders triggered unprecedented public outrage and a fierce state crackdown on the Sicilian mafia (Cosa Nostra),

ultimately leading to the capture of mafia boss Salvatore "Toto" Riina just months later.

SUMMARY

SPORT

Fade victory Britain's Peter Fido won the 12th Open golf



Champion after a dramatic final round at Muirfield

— Page 32

Test squad John Chiles, 40, the latest spinner, is among

four new faces in the England

squad for the fourth Test

against Pakistan — Page 26

Shogun leader, Juan Antonio

Sarmiento, President of the

International Olympic

Committee and, arguably, the

most important figure in world

sports, talks about politics,

corruption and the future —

Page 28

New South Leeds United are to

play a club-record £2m fee to

Manchester for the England

midfielder player Trevor Brown,

Chelsea have said Harry Dixon

to Southampton for £275,000

— Page 28

The French Emmanuel Fréchet

quit left-wing of the Tour de

France during the grueling

14th stage in the Alps, won by

Andy Hampson, Italian

riders, finished with to retain

the overall lead — Page 25

HOME

Halford said: The Home

Secretary is expected to be

submitted to the House of

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Child benefits may be taxed

Pressure on public borrowing grows as rise in high-street spending 'fizzles out'

By Anthony Berlin

and Robert Chote

CABINET ministers are considering a proposal to tax child benefits, which could mean up to £100 million a year in extra income for the Treasury.

A decision would provide rising support for the Government's budgetary position. But Peter Field, Labour's spokesman on Social Security, said: "It's a tax on the poor."

Nonetheless, the proposal will receive many votes in the House of Commons, and, arguably, the most important figure in world sports, talks about politics,

and the value of child benefits for working parents. The proposal will receive many votes in the House of Commons, and, arguably, the most important figure in world sports, talks about politics,

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spending that as this will undermine its

strategy.

The need of economic growth will be

depressed by a report from the Confederation of British Industry this morning

that the post-war rise in high-street spending has "fizzled out".

The CBI survey will add to the pessimism of the financial markets, where

falling share prices are expected to be under pressure. It also led sharply last

Friday on worries that income tax would not come down until the end of the year and that a revival of mortgage

rates could bring out money from the

market.

At least on Labour, page 1

Leading article, page 23

Widening the net, page 23

Shoring up the economy, page 23

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Shoring up the economy, page 23



Protesters in Palermo looking at the wreckage of cars destroyed by an explosion that killed Paolo Berlusconi and his bodyguards yesterday

Photograph: Reuters

Second anti-Mafia judge killed by bomb

PALESTINE (AP) — A car bomb

targeted Judge Paolo Berlusconi,

Italy's leading anti-Mafia judge,

and five of his police

escorts as he left his

workplace in Palermo, Sicily.

Twenty people

including the car carrying police

guards were reported

dead or seriously

injured.

The blast, heard for miles, tore

up windows in apartment

buildings and a school, destroyed

the judge's car and two

police vehicles and shattered

streets with shards of glass and

metal.

Mr Berlusconi, 54, a walking

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Israel and Jordan end 46-year conflict

ISRAEL and Jordan yesterday ended their 46-year-old state of war and opened the way for a full peace treaty. King Hussein of Jordan and the Israeli Prime Minister, Yitzhak Rabin, signed a declaration on the White House lawn which says: "The state of belligerency between Israel and Jordan has been terminated."

President Bill Clinton, who hosted the meeting between the two leaders, said: "From this day forward they pledge to settle their differences by peaceful means." He said the two sides had agreed to "take immediate steps to normalise relations and resolve disputes in areas of common concern".

The declaration will leave unresolved the future of Jerusalem, the last of Palestinian refugees who fled to Jordan in 1948 and disputed water rights in the Jordan Valley. Diplomats were confident, however, that these issues will not prove an obstacle to a treaty.

Mr Clinton quoted pacifist sentiments from the Talmud and Koran in an address to politicians, journalists and diplomats who swarmed in the 10-degree heat of the Washington summer. After setbacks to his foreign policy, Mr Clinton hoped to gain some political advantage from yesterday's ceremony.

Syria and the Palestine Liberation Organisation are both surprised that they will be invited by the new peace process between Israel and Jordan. From Oslo, the PLO leader, Yasser Arafat, who last year himself shook hands with Mr Rabin in front of the White House, sent his congratulations. In private, however, his supporters are concerned about the future political role King Hussein will play in the West Bank and, in particular, in deciding the future of Jerusalem.

King Hussein, speaking slowly and emotionally, said that he and his grandfather King Abdullah, annexed to Jordan in 1950, had always looked forward to reconciliation between Israelis and Arabs. Arafat also hopes that the meeting will lead to the end of the violence prevailing in US-Jordanian relations since Jordan refused to join the US-led alliance against Iraq in the 1991 Gulf war.

Mr Rabin, looking more at ease than when he met Mr Arafat a year ago, said the "nightmare of war may be over". He added: "We have gone a long way toward a full state of peace."

Setting out what is already agreed, Mr Clinton said Israel and Jordan would establish direct telephone links, open two new border crossings, grant free passage to tourists from other countries, survey their common border and limit their electricity grids. They will negotiate on the establishment of an air corridor and the proper allocation of the waters of the Jordan and Yarmouk rivers — long disputed between them. Norwegian mediation reported yesterday that negotia-

21 July 1995 – Mass slaughter in Srebrenica

Amid blocked access for journalists and aid workers, grim reports leak out detailing a "knee-deep in blood" massacre of Muslim prisoners taken from Srebrenica. These initial dispatches shed light on what would soon be recognised as the worst atrocity in Europe since the Second World War, resulting in the genocide of over 8,000 Bosniak men and boys.



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'Mass slaughter in a Bosnian field knee-deep in blood'

Just across the Drina river from the sleepy Serbian town of Ljubovija, a slaughter is said to be taking place: possibly the biggest mass execution of Muslim prisoners by the Bosnian Serbs in more than three years of war.

According to residents of the Bosnian Serb-controlled town of Bratunac and Serbs from nearby who have visited the area, as many as 6,000 captured Muslims were taken from Srebrenica last week.

Bosnian Serb police strictly control the border with orders to keep out foreign journalists. But they have been unable to stop whistles of the ongoing slaughter from crossing the Drina bridges into Serbia proper.

On Monday, two young women crossed the old river bridge that connects Bratunac with Ljubovija on the Serbian bank of the river. They came on foot and carried some of the first details of the alleged killings from the other side.

Neither of the women wished to be identified but one, a resident of Srebrenica, said she had just been to visit her brother-in-law, who was a Bosnian Serb soldier and the source of some of her news. "He and his friends are quite open about what is going on," the woman said. "They are killing Muslim soldiers."

"They said they killed 1,000 yesterday [Monday] alone and estimated that in all they had killed about 4,000 men."

If the numbers are accurate, then Bratunac, about 15km north of Srebrenica, would be the site of the largest number of executions in a Serb detention camp since the start of the war.

Defiant Zepa, sheltered by Serbs, page 10
At stake in the Balkans is Europe's identity as a continent of liberal values, basic human rights and democratic politics. If these are not values for which we are willing to suffer, then we must ask what is the moral basis of our own society?

Other witnesses spoke of hearing more a deeper truck full of corpses parked at the roadside near Bratunac. Next to the truck was an earth-mover digging a large hole, presumably a mass grave. But whether these were bodies of Muslim prisoners of war is not clear.

25 July 1998 – Gunfight inside US Congress

Gunfire erupts inside the US Capitol building as 41-year-old Russell Weston opens fire, killing two police officers and wounding a tourist before being shot and apprehended. Weston, who was already known to the Secret Service for previously threatening the president, was later diagnosed with severe

paranoid schizophrenia and indefinitely committed to a federal psychiatric facility without ever standing trial.



Gunfight inside US Congress leaves two policemen dead

By Andrew Marshall
in Washington

THE HALLS of the US Congress rang with gunfire yesterday as a man opened fire in the Capitol building, killing two policemen and wounding a tourist. The Capitol is the very symbol of American democracy, its huge white dome visible from all over the city. While the White House is wrapped up behind tight, multiple layers of security, the Capitol is regarded as "the People's House".

The gunman, named as Russell Weston, 41, was known to the Secret Service as someone with hostile intentions towards the President, and as a man who had made death threats against Mr Clinton, reports last night said. He is from Illinois and had moved to Montana two or three years ago.

He suffered multiple wounds to the legs and the stomach in the exchange of fire and was taken to hospital, but was expected to survive. Senator Bill Frist, a Republican from Tennessee and a trained heart surgeon, stepped in to give medical care to the gunman as he lay wounded on the floor. The shootings raised big questions about why - if he had made death threats - he was on the loose, and how he was able to get into the Capitol.

The man's gun was detected when he passed through a metal detector on his way into the East side of the Capitol near the Document Room at about 3.45pm local time. Security officers tried to catch him but he opened fire in an open area packed with tourists. Justin Brown, who works in a gift shop inside the Capitol, said



A wounded police officer is rushed from the Capitol building in Washington after the shooting yesterday. He and a fellow officer were later declared dead. *Klaus Fiedler/AP*

that the police and the gunman exchanged fire as he tried to move into the building. "They had a running battle down the hall," he said. One of the officers, Jacob Chestnut, an 18-year veteran of the Capitol police force, was mortally wounded in the shoot-out. The

gunman then moved to the office of Tom DeLay, a Republican from Texas, and entered, shooting as he went. John Gibson, who was guarding Mr DeLay's office, heard the shooting and ordered staff to take cover. He then confronted the gunman and fired back. "The

gunman came into our office and started firing," said John Feehery from Mr DeLay's office. The police officer "did a great job," he said. "I have no doubt that John saved the lives of many people today," said Mr DeLay.

Both police officers were

married, and both had three children. They "died bravely while performing their duty to protect the nation's Capitol," said a police spokesman.

Ronald Beamish, a British tourist in the Capitol, was visiting the souvenir shop when the man came running past.

"We heard these shots. Everybody scattered," said Mr Beamish, 70. "I saw an officer hit the floor. I approached and felt his pulse... he was very seriously wounded." Mr Beamish said that the officer tried to talk. "He was trying to say something to me," he said. "I could

not hear, I could not understand him."

The House of Representatives was in session, but most of the day's business was over and many people would have gone home for the weekend. However, the building was packed with tourists, who fled

on to the street in panic. The wounded tourist, Angela Dickerson, 24, was shot in the face and arm and was being treated in hospital. She was said to be seriously ill.

A young girl from Bellant was being taken around the building by Maria Chany, an aide to Senator Robert Torricelli from New Jersey. "We were trying to isolate her from that kind of thing," said Mr Chany, who said the girl "dipped out".

Though all of the US news reports underlined that the security at the Capitol is very tight, by British standards it is lax. There is a low police presence, few physical barriers, and the attitude of the security officers manning the metal detectors is often relatively undisciplined.

Despite the widespread presence of guns and the tendency of Americans to take their grievances to the top, armed with a gun, there have been surprisingly few incidents in the Capitol. The only obvious security precautions, other than the metal detectors, are huge concrete flower pots apparently intended to prevent a car-bomb attack. They were erected after a bomb attack in 1981. After this, the security will almost certainly change.

President Bill Clinton said that he was "deeply disturbed" by the killings at "the People's House", a place where visitors and workers should not have to fear violence.

"This is a tough day for the United States Capitol police," said a police spokesman. "This is a tough day for the United States Congress. This is a tough day for the United States."

A nation's security, page 14

Greenpeace tried to buy atom bomb

GREENPEACE OFFERED a Red Army officer \$50,000 to switch a nuclear warhead from a Soviet-controlled bomber inside East Germany.

According to senior current and former members of Greenpeace, campaigners came "within weeks" of taking delivery of the weapon in a secret mission codenamed Operation Loose Cannon.

Planning for the exercise, in the summer of 1991, was well advanced when the Russian officer vanished just weeks before the attempted coup against Mikhail Gorbachev in August of that year.

The bomb was to have been

By STEVE BOGGAN

swelled to the media to emphasise the dangers of "nuclear makes" - devices being "lost" as the Soviet Union disintegrated. When the officer disappeared, Greenpeace decided not to publicise the operation. However, following inquiries in Sweden, the Netherlands, America, England and the Arctic by The Independent, several officials have spoken about the affair for the first time.

"It would have been the biggest nuclear event since Hiroshima," said William Arkin, the former head of Greenpeace's Disarmament Re-

search Unit. "We planned to line up a scientific team to verify the bomb's authenticity and then we were going to unveil it in front of the world's media to show that loose nukes were a problem, that disarmament was necessary and that controls on existing weapons needed to be tightened up."

"Then we were going to say to the Russians: 'Here's your bomb. Come and get it.'"

Mr Arkin, a former US Army intelligence officer and the author of several seminal works on nuclear proliferation and disarmament, ran the operation on the ground and held three clandestine meetings with the

Russian officer. He told The Independent that he promised the lieutenant, who was based at Alengrube, south-west of Berlin, safe passage to Sweden and \$50,000.

The operation and the payment were authorised by Steve Sawyer, the then executive director of Greenpeace International, and the organisation's chairman, David McTaggart, but it was kept from the Greenpeace board to protect its members from charges should anything go wrong.

"There were two obvious primary concerns: making sure the thing was totally disarmed, and making sure our people didn't

get killed," said Mr Sawyer. "After that, of course, were the political considerations in ensuring that the correct message about the weapons got out - and how to counter the inevitable 'nuclear' accusations."

"It was an opportunity to make an enormously powerful statement about the danger to the world from existing stockpiles of nuclear weapons in the hands of a disintegrating Soviet Union."

"The general laxity and ineptitude surrounding the collapse of the Cold War order had an extraordinarily brightening dark underside which didn't get a huge amount of attention,

and very little action. Who knows what role the leaks and transfers during that period played in the ongoing spread of weapons technology around the world?"

British intelligence sources have confirmed that warheads for Russian SS21 missiles were stored at Alengrube, but they were sceptical that a senior lieutenant - and two soldiers he intended to enlist into the enterprise - could have breached security. One suggested the operation might have been an elaborate plan to flush out a traitor from the Soviet ranks.

Bomb for sale, page 11



26 July 2000 - 113 killed as Concorde crashes in flames

Moments after departing Paris, an Air France Concorde crashes into a suburban hotel in a massive fireball, killing all 109 people on board and four on the ground. The catastrophic accident,

triggered by runway debris that ignited a fatal fuel leak, led British Airways and Air France to immediately ground their supersonic fleets, marking the beginning of the end for the Concorde era.

THE AWARD-WINNING NEWSPAPER



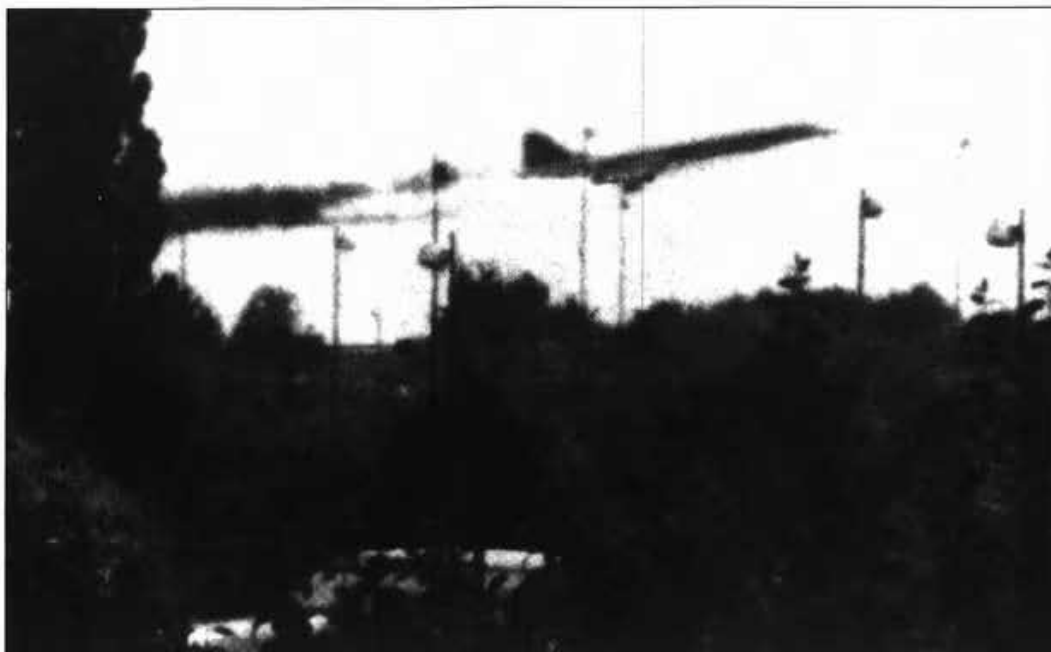
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WEDNESDAY 26 JULY 2000

No 4,297 ***** (1830p) 45p

113 killed as Concorde crashes in flames



Flames burst from the Air France Concorde seconds before it crashes in Gonesse near Charles de Gaulle airport yesterday, photographed by a Hungarian planespotter on holiday in France

Andrus Klapow/Reuters

THROUGH THE huge column of white smoke, all that could be seen was a blackened delta wing, with its wheels pointing starkly skywards, and the burnt-out frame of a small roadside hotel.

The Air France Concorde, flight AF4590, which crashed in a ball of fire shortly after take-off from Charles de Gaulle airport yesterday, came down in familiar airport design countryside - next to a dual carriageway and road flyover, beside a small cornfield with sheep and light in.

The death toll of 113, tragically as it was, might well have been worse. A coach carrying 36 British students arrived 20 minutes after the crash to stay in the Hotelissimo, the two-star hotel whose entrance and car park took the full impact of the aircraft as it fell from the sky minutes after taking off from Paris.

British Airways suspended all its Concorde flights last night, although it said it had "complete confidence" in the design. "Nevertheless, in these circumstances - and while information is still coming in - we have taken the unprecedented step of cancelling

BY JOHN LICHFIELD in Gonesse

tonight's flights," it said in a statement. The decision grounded a BA flight from New York to London.

"We will be holding discussions with our technical counterparts at Air France and reviewing tomorrow's operations overnight," the airline said. There were four Concorde flights scheduled today between London and New York.

Three separate inquiries are already under way, one by the French judiciary, another by Air France and the third by the country's Transport Safety Agency.

Investigators are expected to focus on whether the failure of one or more of the engines could have led to the disaster. Air France said that one of the engines appeared to have failed. The company dismissed any link to the problem of hafnium fissures, announced this week, in the wings of British Airways and Air France Concordes.

The Air France president, Jean-Cyril Spillia, said: "There were no hafnium cracks in this Concorde, but

the accident could have resulted from fire in the engine on take-off.

"For those who were witnesses, of whom I was one, it seems that there was a fire in one or more of the engines on take-off," he said.

The aircraft, one of six Concordes operated by Air France, had been chartered by a German tour company to take a party of 10 to New York for the start of a Caribbean cruise.

Most of the 67 men, 50 women and three children on board were German. Two were Danes, one Austrian and one American. The nine crew were all French. Four other victims killed on the ground were believed to be hotel workers.

Witnesses described seeing the aircraft take off from the main Paris airport with flames pouring from the two engines under its left wing. Scores more said they watched while the airliner twisted through the sky before plunging to the ground.

Sylvie Lucase from Paris, who was at Charles de Gaulle airport waiting for her children, said: "It hadn't left the ground and already it was on fire. The flames were coming from the back of the plane. We

THE TRAGEDY OF FLIGHT AF4590

- The investigation: first grounded
- Spewing flames, it fell like a stone
- British musician's narrow escape
- BA confident despite the cracks
- Lore of a flying beast

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were waiting to hear the explosion because we thought it was going to hit here [at the airport]," Mr Lucase said.

Julian Pyke, a British, described how he and other workers at Charles de Gaulle airport watched in silence after noticing flames 30 feet long shooting out of one of the wings immediately after take-off.

Christophe Fluret, who watched from his office window, said: "The plane seemed to reach a certain height and then no more. I could see flames all along the left side of the fuselage."

Frederic Leroy, 31, was driving home on a nearby motorway when he saw the aircraft go down near Gonesse, nine miles north-east of central Paris.

"I saw the plane. It passed 30 metres (100 feet) above us,

saying: "When it hit, there was just a huge fireball, like a mini-atomic bomb went up, and it's really just a sickening sight."

Dozens of fire engines and ambulances arrived at the site within minutes, but they were already too late. As the firefighters struggled to control the flames fed by aviation fuel, the thick acid smoke from the Concorde's devastating crash could be seen for miles around.

Twelve medical teams were on the scene collecting bodies and moving them to a makeshift mortuary in a community hall in Gonesse.

Hundreds of policemen and firefighters searched the cornfields around the crash site, looking for further victims and possible clues to the cause of the disaster.

The black boxes containing flight data and cockpit voice recordings have been located by investigators but could not immediately be recovered. They will be taken to an accident investigation centre in the French capital and analysed for vital clues to the cause of the crash.

Police at the scene moved journalists back from the still smoking remains of the Con-

corde, warning of the possibility of toxic fumes emanating from the wreckage.

Even from 100 metres away, however, it appeared that the aircraft had struck the Hotelissimo and then flipped over on to its back. Airport officials said that, seconds before the impact, the pilot had ordered air traffic control that he intended to attempt an emergency landing on the nearby N1 dual carriageway, between Charles de Gaulle airport and Le Bourget airport.

It appears that while he was attempting this manoeuvre, the plane suffered a catastrophic loss of power and crashed into the hotel.

The French Prime Minister, Lionel Jospin, and his Transport Minister, Jean-Claude Gaxotte, visited the scene soon after the crash. Mr Gaxotte said: "It's a terrible moment," and called for all Concordes to be grounded to allow time for the disaster to be investigated.

Ten people, including a British woman, who were injured in the disaster, some seriously, were taken to hospital. One of the Hotelissimo's selling points was that it was close to Lutetia Park and Dis-

neyland. The hotel's website advertises a nine-seater minibus to transport guests and adds: "Although it's in the middle of fields don't worry."

The aircraft that crashed had been in service since 1980 and had flown 12,000 hours. It had its last mandatory regulatory check up on 11 July.

Tony Blair wrote to the German Chancellor, Gerhard Schröder, the French President, Jacques Chirac, and Mr Jospin to express his "shock and sympathy" on behalf of the Government.

Mr Schröder said: "Germany and France are united in their horror over the accident, in mourning for the victims and in sympathy for their families." The Chancellor sent his Transport Minister, Reinhard Klimke, to the scene and the German Foreign Ministry has set up a crisis centre at the German embassy in Paris, which was helping to identify the dead.

US President Bill Clinton broke off a seven-day overseas tour to announce the failure of the Middle East peace talks at Camp David near Washington, to send a message of condolence to the relatives of those who died.

25 July 2005 – Fatal police shooting of Jean Charles de Menezes

Brazilian national Jean Charles de Menezes is shot dead at point-blank range on a London Tube carriage by anti-terrorism officers who misidentify him as a suicide bomber. Occurring in a climate of intense fear just after the 7/7 terrorist attacks, the fatal error prompted fierce public criticism, though no individual officers were ever criminally prosecuted for the 27-year-old's death.



IN THE WRONG PLACE. AT THE WRONG TIME

By Cahal Milmo
and Tom Phillips
in Gonzaga, Brazil

Jean Charles de Menezes wanted to be an electrician from the age of 10. The boy would tell his mother, Maria, that it was the way he would leave behind the poverty of rural Brazil for a better life abroad.

He left the isolated farm that he grew up in at the age of 14 to pursue his studies, living with an uncle in an impoverished area of the sprawling city of São Paulo. By the time he was 18, Mr de Menezes had overcome the odds to complete his professional diploma. It was the piece of paper that would allow him to swap a life of odd jobs in the crime-ridden ghettos of São Paulo for a home in London.

After travelling to Britain on holiday, during which he may have worked illegally, he obtained a five-year residency permit. Last night, it was unclear whether that permit – possibly a student visa – allowed him to work.

Such was his desire to make the most of the opportunity, the Brazilian had mastered English within four months of his arrival in Tube Hill, south London, in March 2002.

He quickly adapted to British life. To relax, the 27-year-old would watch television – a favourite programme was *EastEnders* – or hang out with friends in a Brazilian bar close to Oxford Street. He

told relatives his dream was to build a successful career and earn enough money to return to the family home near the city of Gonzaga, in Minas Gerais, south-east Brazil, and set up a company.

In his thrice-weekly phone calls home, he told his mother he was safe and happy in London – that the police did not even carry guns.

Gesio Cesar D'Ávila, 37, a friend and work colleague, told *The Independent*: "He was happy in London. He liked all the different cultures on his doorstep. He wanted to go home as a success."

Three days ago, shortly before 10am, his modest ambition was terminated some 7,000 miles from home by a burst of seven bullets from a Glock 17 pistol fired into his jaw and mouth at point-blank range by an officer from a Scotland Yard anti-terrorist unit.

By a catastrophic coincidence, he was followed from his home and then pursued into a Tube carriage by plain-clothes police officers who suspected that he was a suicide bomber.

His fate was apparently decided by a cruel combination of improbability: that, used to the heat of Brazil, he should find a cool English summer's day too cold for

CONTINUED
ON PAGE 2



20 July 2016 – Turkey on red alert for second coup attempt

Following a thwarted military coup that left over 250 people dead, the Turkish government remains on high alert for a second uprising, with President Recep Tayyip Erdogan still sheltering in Istanbul. As fears for his safety temporarily prevent a return to the capital, Erdogan declares a state of emergency and initiates a heavy-handed crackdown on suspected political opponents.



The
INDEPENDENT

WEDNESDAY 20 JULY 2016

WWW.INDEPENDENT.CO.UK

Named and shamed Airport VAT offenders still ripping us off



Rupert Cornwell

Repeat after me,
Melania...



Andrew Grice

I already know
May's legacy



Matthew Norman

The candidate who
can do no wrong



Holly Baxter

Hooray! Boris has
got housemates



Supporters of President Erdogan at a demonstration in Istanbul yesterday (AFP)

Turkey on red alert for second coup attempt

Four days after uprising, Erdogan still marooned in Istanbul as capital Ankara deemed too unsafe for the President to return

**PATRICK
COCKBURN**

Turkish leaders are fearful that there may be a second attempt at a military uprising in the country following the

failure of the recent coup. Several important military units are confined to their bases and President Recep Tayyip Erdogan has been slow to return to Ankara from Istanbul, apparently because the capital has not been

deemed completely secure. Fears stem from a realisation that the infiltration by pro-coup forces of the senior ranks of the 600,000-strong armed forces and intelligence apparatus went far deeper than originally suspected.



Spain secure World Cup glory to banish miserable Argentina

Spain 1-0 Argentina (after extra time): Ferran Torres finally buried the 10 men of Argentina in extra-time after a turgid display from Lionel Messi and his teammates in New York

Miguel Delaney in New York



Spain's Ferran Torres lifts the trophy with teammates (*Reuters*)

Spain win a second star after finally beating a black hole of an Argentina team in the World Cup final.

Lionel Messi may not have got the ending that he and much of the world may have wanted but few can say the winners weren't the right champions for the World Cup final.

Spain have been the best team and they were duly the only side actually playing to win this otherwise dismal occasion across more than 120 minutes.

It had an argument to be the worst final of all - which subsequently descended into chaos after Leandro Paredes' antics in the final whistle - until Ferran Torres rose above it all to send the ball high into the Argentina net.

His superbly-taken 106th minute goal ensures he is now part of World Cup lore alongside Andres Iniesta.



Spain's Ferran Torres lifts the trophy with teammates (*Reuters*)

Enzo Fernandez meanwhile enters infamy, as he becomes the sixth player to be sent off in the final. Three of them are Argentine and it really could have been more here, with Paredes given his punishment after the final whistle.

The two others came in 1990 and this game had so many echoes of that, right down to a tired and stale side with a fading legend ultimately falling late on.

Argentina became the first finalists to complete the 90 minutes without recording a shot. Defeat was fully deserved.

Messi, in probably his last World Cup game, could barely get a touch until the climax. Then again, Lamine Yamal didn't do

much either, outside one fine free-kick towards the end.

Some of that was admittedly down to aggressive Argentine double-making, as the 23rd final almost immediately entered a defined and distinctive pattern.

Spain had all of the ball, and Argentina did almost nothing except defend deep.

The beaten finalists were only enlivened by Torres's goal, which at last saw Messi come alive.



Spain players celebrate after winning the World Cup (*Reuters*)

It was all too brief, in too limited time.

Argentina might have tried to do more... but they wouldn't, or maybe couldn't.

It is probably the deposed champions who will provoke more debate and discussion from this game, but Spain do deserve immense credit.

That went beyond actually trying to play in this final, and rising above this World Cup of individual stars by actually playing as a team.

Luis de la Fuente was proactive himself, again turning a big game with his subs, and there was a symbolism in another squad player - the impact attacker Torres. This is a proper collective, a team that play with an idea.

That ensured they actually had multiple chances to win this before the end.

It looked like it might be one of those days - on the worst day of all - as Mikel Merino missed a header right in front of goal and Nico Williams had a goal controversially disallowed.

It just wasn't happening.



Spain's Ferran Torres celebrates scoring their first goal with Nico Williams (*Reuters*)

And from that, there would have been almost deliciously grim football perverseness had Argentina managed it from there.

This was the most expensive match of all time after the highest-grossing World Cup, too, with the financial obsession reflected in the number of celebrities Fifa were proudly publicising as attending. There was even the anti-football farce of a half-time show, as the notional global safeguards of the game usher in another new precedent that football's actual community have long been resisting.

That display - especially some real mood-killing songs - was still somehow worse than a turgid first half, and raised quite a prospect.

All of these celebrities there, Fifa all too willing to cut to them on the big screen, and here they were grimly sitting through an anti-football team turgidly grinding it out to a potential penalty shoot-out win. Maybe it's what Fifa deserved, too, after Gianni Infantino and Donald Trump were booed.

That's football.

Except, this wasn't really football. It would have been too bad, a level beyond.



Messi was in tears after playing what was likely his final World Cup game (*Reuters*)



Messi receives his runner-up medal from Donald Trump (*Getty*)

Argentina have surely put in the most miserable display ever seen in this fixture, and that's including teams who lost 4-2 and 5-2.

They at least tried to *play*.

And sure, maybe some allowances can be made. Argentina were probably exhausted after Wednesday. This trend continues of the first semi-finalist winning the final, with the only team breaking it in modern history the Spanish themselves in 2010.

They're probably exactly the wrong team you want to play in those circumstances. They just keep the ball away from you until you become exhausted.

It's almost a matter of maths, Spain creating all of the angles and shutting off most of the openings until eventually there's a break.

Except, they were also in their own race against time.



Fernandez became the sixth player to be sent off in a World Cup final - and the third from Argentina (AP Photo/Abbie Parr)



Luis de la Fuente has now led Spain to the European crown and the World Cup in two years (*Reuters*)

But this was worse than just defending from Argentina. There was a clear intimidation to their play, a gamesmanship perhaps taken to inevitable extremes, and aided by a permissive referee.

He let a lot go, until he eventually had no choice but to send off Fernandez.

It was all so different to the last World Cup final, right up to the feeling around Argentina and Messi. He doesn't go ahead of Diego Maradona to win a second, but instead loses a second final out of three.

Surely no one can think that's a shame here. Not after that and what his teammates did.

And, after that, there is potentially new reflection for England too, as they now become the only country to have won the World Cup only once.

How did they lose to this team, given Spain finally exposed them? It only emphasises the tactics were wrong in that semi-

final.



(PA)



(Getty)

It had long been felt that Argentina had so many flaws they would eventually lose to the first elite team they played and this was that - even if it took much longer than anticipated.

Of course, the reflection for England should actually be far

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It should really be how you evolve an idea like in the way Spain do.

It doesn't even need to be the same, since no one can play this to the depth Spain can and not everyone would even want to.

But merely having that football lesson is an amplification of all their talents, ensuring they have been by some distance the best team.

And now, very deservedly, world champions for the second time.

Not just a victory on the greatest stage of all, but a lesson, and a moral victory.



How Ryan Fox started his incredible journey to become Open champion

The New Zealander beat out Cameron Young with a stunning birdie on the 18th for his maiden major, with home town favourite Tommy Fleetwood fading in a dramatic final day at Royal Birkdale

Chris McKenna at Royal Birkdale



Ryan Fox of New Zealand kisses the trophy as he poses for the media with the Claret Jug trophy (AP)

Ryan Fox stood on the 18th tee and the decision was made to take it on.

There would be no thought of getting in for par and facing Cameron Young in a play-off to decide The Open. And with the Claret Jug there to be won, the New Zealander went for it.

“I did say to my caddie, Dean, on the tee that we were going to take it on, that I was going to try to win the tournament, and I'd

live with the consequences if I stuffed it up,” said Fox.

It needed three perfect shots to do so and get to 10 under par.

Amid a dramatic afternoon with many twists and turns in a closely-contested battle for The Open Championship, he needed to keep calm but also be brave. He was both.

The man from a family of fine sporting stock was within touching distance of his own sporting immortality.

His father, Grant, was a World Cup winning All-Black in rugby union and his grandfather, Merv Wallace, was an international Test cricket captain.

Now here he was with the opportunity to win golf’s most historic tournament but one mistake could cost him at a sun-baked Royal Birkdale.

Young worked away on the driving range in preparation for a play-off. He had been waiting for two-and-a-half hours as nobody had beaten or matched his 9-under score posted in the clubhouse.

Sam Burns looked like he would, then so did Si Woo Kim while world No 1 Scottie Scheffler even got himself into the mix. Earlier in the day, the home crowd believed Tommy Fleetwood could end the long English wait on his local course.

Yet heading into the final hole of the whole tournament, it was Fox, Burns and Young left in contention.

Fox had the honour and stood by his conviction to belt a 330-yard drive down the middle of the fairway. Just two more brilliant shots were needed.

American Burns outdrove him and he needed a birdie to at best force a play-off.

Fox stood over his approach and fired it into the green with the precision of how his father would once put the oval ball through the posts for the All Blacks.



Ryan Fox of New Zealand walks around the 18th green as he poses with the Claret Jug trophy (AP)



Ryan Fox of New Zealand with the Claret Jug after winning the 154th Open Championship at Royal Birkdale (PA)

It was just a bit shy of 12ft. Burns was further away and he would miss his putt before cleaning up for par to leave the path clear for his playing partner to attempt to win The Open in the regulation 72 holes.

It was just 22 seconds from Burns taking his ball out of the hole to Fox stepping up to hit his for the biggest putt of his life.

In a sport which seems to get slower with procrastination and pontification over every shot leading us to rounds lasting well over five hours at times, Fox is one of the fastest to play and he kept that up even with so much on the line.

For a brief moment, it looked like the putt might be just short but it dropped and Fox's arms rose into the air in celebration as the thousands around the green roared in delight and he became just the second New Zealander to win the Claret Jug after Bob Charles in 1963.

"I hit two shots exactly how I wanted to hit them," said Fox. "I didn't feel anything for the putt; everything was shaking that much. I was just happy to hit it somewhat near the hole, and to see it go in was incredible.

"Everyone practises on the green, I guess, you've got to a putt to win a major championship, to win The Open. It's not like that in real life. It's not a very comfortable feeling. It's certainly very enjoyable when you see it go in."



Ryan Fox of New Zealand celebrates winning the 154th Open Championship at Royal Birkdale (*PA*)



New Zealand's Ryan Fox celebrates with the Claret Jug (*Reuters*)

It was the perfect final hole to snatch the victory away from Young.

The American heard the roars from the 18th green on the range and he put the head cover back on his driver in disappointment.

He would have to settle for second in The Open again after finishing behind Australian Cameron Smith in 2022, which was the last time this event was decided by just one shot.

Young had posted an impressive 64 to fire himself to the top of the leaderboard just after 4pm but he bogeyed the last hole despite a bunker shot for par being within a whisker of dropping. In the end, that would be the difference between a play-off and heading home empty handed.

It was made all the more dramatic by the fact Fox looked like he had blown it on the 15th after steering himself back into the joint lead with back-to-back birdies on 13 and 14.

A tee shot found the bunker on the long par-three and it was almost under the lip which forced the Kiwi to play out backwards.



Ryan Fox of New Zealand is congratulated by third-round leader Sam Burns (Getty)



Scottie Scheffler of the United States acknowledges the crowd after his fourth-place finish (*Getty*)

The resulting bogey pushed him back to eight under but a birdie on 16 returned him to co-leader.

When he missed a chance at another birdie on 17, Young must have felt it was time to really ramp up the warm-up for a play-off. But then Fox played the perfect 18.

Fox went into the day just two shots behind playing partner and overnight leader Burns, which came about after a record-equalling 62 on Saturday following opening rounds of 72 and 68.

Yet they must have felt a bit like they had shown up to someone else's party earlier in the day.

They will have heard the roar for Fleetwood sinking a putt on the first hole from almost 80ft as they were preparing themselves to head out as the final pairing.



Bryson DeChambeau of the United States shakes hands with Jackson Suber (Getty)



Tommy Fleetwood of England and caddie Ian Finnis on the 18th green (PA)

At one point during the front nine, Fox asked a course marshal, “Is it always this quiet on a Sunday?”. Fear not, he would get his crowd.

The locals first wanted Southport man Fleetwood to claim the Claret Jug and become the first Englishman to do so since Nick Faldo in 1992.

When he birdied the fifth to go 7 under, the belief grew. When he followed it up with another on 8 to go two within the lead, the atmosphere was electric. Yet it was zapped by three bogeys on the trot around the turn.

There was a fine finish from Fleetwood as he birdied the last two holes and fought back the tears as he walked down the 18th fairway of the course he used to sneak onto to play as a child with thousands cheering his name. Rounds of 69, 67, 69 and 68 were impressive, but ultimately not good enough.

“It was just very, very special,” said Fleetwood. “This disappointment that I didn't win today or I couldn't get it done when I was in a really good position, of course there's only one person that gets to win it, and like my dream of winning The

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This day was about Fox. A late bloomer in the sport, he was a rookie on the DP World Tour at 30, then on the PGA Tour at 37 and now, at 39, he is a Major champion.

“You want to do it whether you think it's a reality or not,” added Fox.

“I guess I probably didn't think it was a reality until the last couple of years. I wasn't in the major championships consistently until the last couple of years.

“To be sitting in front of you guys now as the Champion Golfer of the Year is a bit crazy. As I said earlier, it's surreal. I don't have the vocabulary to explain it.

“If you'd have given me my career up till yesterday when I first turned pro, I would have jumped at it. Now I probably would have killed people for it.”



Antonelli extends his title lead after emotional Russell crashes out at Spa

Mercedes teen is now 45 points clear in the championship race after 10 rounds of the season

Philip Duncan



Kimi Antonelli claimed his sixth win of the season in Belgium (Reuters)

An emotional George Russell said he has grown “numb to disappointment” after he crashed out of the opening lap of a Belgian Grand Prix won by championship rival Kimi Antonelli.

Antonelli cleared Ferrari’s Charles Leclerc with 10 laps remaining at Spa-Francorchamps to take his sixth win of the season, and double his title advantage over Russell from 25 points to 50.

Leclerc, unable to follow up his British Grand Prix triumph a fortnight ago with another win, crossed the line 1.9 seconds back from Antonelli with Red Bull's Max Verstappen third.

Lewis Hamilton finished fourth. He endured an eventful afternoon in the Ardennes, first colliding with Russell – for which he was sanctioned with a five-second penalty – before he ran over his own mechanic in the pit lane when he was erroneously given the green light to rejoin the track. The mechanic appeared to escape without significant injury.

Hamilton was able to take advantage of Russell's demise to move back up to second in the championship, albeit now 45 points behind the impressive Antonelli.



George Russell spins out of the race after contact with Lewis Hamilton (AP)

Antonelli, not 20 until next month, might have started from pole but he had to work for his win after Leclerc benefited from a Virtual Safety Car and was able to assume the lead of the race.

Leclerc's advantage stood at three seconds, but Antonelli reeled the Monegasque in before blasting past the Ferrari on the

Kemmel Straight on the 34th lap and keeping him at arm's length for the remainder of the fixture.

Antonelli's fine victory compounded a disastrous afternoon for Russell, who has now failed to score in three of the 10 rounds so far, and has just two wins to Antonelli's six.

Russell qualified third and started well, but another mechanical glitch in his Mercedes saw him gobbled up by Verstappen, Oscar Piastri and Hamilton on the 200mph opening stampede to Les Combes.

Top 10 – Belgian Grand Prix

1. Kimi Antonelli (Mercedes)
2. Charles Leclerc (Ferrari)
3. Max Verstappen (Red Bull)
4. Lewis Hamilton (Ferrari)
5. Oscar Piastri (McLaren)
6. Isack Hadjar (Red Bull)
7. Lando Norris (McLaren)
8. Gabriel Bortoleto (Audi)
9. Arvid Lindblad (Racing Bulls)
10. Franco Colapinto (Alpine)

Russell drew back alongside Hamilton under braking for the right-left combination, and then briefly ahead, but he was not afforded enough room by his former Mercedes teammate.

The left-front tyre of Hamilton's Ferrari made contact with the rear-right of Russell's Mercedes, sending the latter out of control and into the gravel trap. Russell's race was instantly over.

"The incident with Lewis was a racing incident," said a downcast Russell. "He didn't do it on purpose. He was more to blame than I. But he didn't do anything reckless.

"I was just angry I was in that position in the first place. I got a great start and I was ready to fight the two guys ahead of me up to turn five, and instead, I get swamped by three drivers because of another problem.

“I am numb to the disappointment. When it happens so often you just get used to it.”

The safety car was deployed after the first-lap drama, and the race resumed on lap five with Antonelli in control. It remained that way until the sole round of stops with Leclerc, the last of the leading trio to stop, capitalising on a VSC deployed for debris, to take the lead.



Hamilton endured a chaotic afternoon (Getty)

However, Leclerc could not prevent Antonelli from blasting past to take his first win since the Monaco Grand Prix on 7 June and lay down another championship marker.

Hamilton leapfrogged Piastri on the 40th lap but has lost another 13 points to Antonelli in his bid for a record eighth world title. Lando Norris started 13th following an engine penalty and drove back to seventh, a position behind Red Bull's Isack Hadjar. Oscar Piastri finished fifth.

“It is great to be back on the top step after a few difficult rounds,” said Antonelli. “It was a hard-fought race. We lost the first place

with the VSC, but we made our way back. But it was a tough win because Charles was quick and we had to hold on to that.

“The [championship] momentum was always there. It was just about getting the results and today we were a bit lucky, in terms of what happened in the championship, but you have to take every opportunity because we can see how much it can swing

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what happens at the end of the year.”

PA



Sports news in brief



Jonas Vingegaard crashed with three other riders after his front wheel clipped a curb in the Tour de France (*Reuters*)

Pogacar concerned by Vingegaard theory as rival crashes out

Tadej Pogacar is concerned that a lack of sleep for himself and Jonas Vingegaard could have led to the crash that has seen his rival abandon the Tour de France after stage 15. Pogacar reacted to Vingegaard's devastating news by revealing that doping controls came at 2am local time, disrupting the riders' sleep, which could have contributed to a lack of concentration during the stage and an unfortunate crash.

The news comes after Belgian Remco Evenepoel beat race leader Pogacar to the finish line to win stage 15. But earlier in the stage, two-time champion Vingegaard went down with three other riders at a tight corner, after his front wheel clipped a curb about 20 kilometres from the finish.

Vingegaard's Visma-Lease a Bike teammate Sepp Kuss was also involved in the crash along with Pogacar's UAE Team Emirates-XRG teammates Isaac del Toro and Brandon McNulty.

Vingegaard was visibly in pain before he was taken into an ambulance.

“It’s really sad to see that Jonas is out. Since 2021, we were always battling it out for the Tour. Maybe at the beginning we didn’t have the best relationship, but then we became good rivals, respected rivals,” Pogacar told Eurosport. “We were talking about the doping controls at two in the morning, I don’t know if it could have affected his concentration. I don’t blame that, but it could be connected.”

Duckett century leads England to ODI series win over India

England held their nerve after Ben Duckett’s masterful 141 inspired a first ODI series win over India since 2018 with a thrilling 27-run victory in a dramatic Lord’s finale. Joe Root’s unbeaten 99 in Cardiff on Thursday set up a winner-takes-all contest at the home of cricket and England were halfway there when Duckett’s magnificent century was the bedrock of a record-breaking total of 387-3.

The best ever List A score at Lord’s was helped by 91 from new ODI opener Jacob Bethell, who almost marked Friday’s death of mentor Sir Garfield Sobers with a century, before Root’s latest fifty was backed up by Jos Buttler’s blistering 13-ball innings of 41.

Rohit Sharma had other ideas and put retirement rumours to bed with an equally stunning 138 to become the first India player to score an ODI hundred at the historic venue, but he was bowled after captain Harry Brook turned to Bethell to flip the momentum at 260-2.

Brook's team eventually restricted India to 360-7 to make it six wins out of seven white-ball matches this summer and provide a boost to head coach Brendon McCullum, who lost his Test job this month but secured only a second ODI series triumph for England over India since 2012.

US boxer Rapp dies after being hit by car

American boxer Hannah Rapp died on Saturday after being hit by a car while she was cycling. According to the Brazos County Sheriff's Office in Texas, Rapp was struck by a reversing vehicle and was taken to hospital, where she later died.

The 26-year-old had fought just one month earlier, on a show organised by Jake Paul's company Most Valuable Promotions (MVP). Challenging Tiara Brown for the WBC featherweight title, Rapp lost on points as her record fell to 8-1-1 (5 KOs).

Paul, famously a YouTuber-turned-boxer, was among those to pay tribute to Rapp, writing on Instagram: "Condolences to all of Hannah's family, friends and teammates. RIP warrior." MVP wrote: "Most Valuable Promotions is heartbroken by the tragic passing of Hannah Rapp. Hannah competed on MVPW-04 in Orlando on June 13 and made a lasting impression on everyone who had the opportunity to meet her. She was a gifted athlete, a valued member of the boxing community, and someone who was deeply respected by those around her." The driver of the vehicle, a 31-year-old male, was arrested and charged with manslaughter.

Argentina head coach accuses England of 'lack of respect'

Argentina head coach Felipe Contepomi accused England of showing a "lack of respect" after storming out of his press conference following the Pumas' 31-24 defeat in Santiago del Estero.

Contepomi took exception to music and cheering that could be heard coming from England's changing room next door as their players celebrated a triumphant conclusion to their July tour. Having asked the England representative present in the room to have the noise stop, Contepomi then lost patience and walked out, saying he was leaving because of the "lack of respect" being shown.

It came after Argentina were denied a try that, if converted, would have snatched a draw deep into overtime. Argentina crossed in the third minute of overtime through Bautista Delguy, only for video referee Brett Cronan to rule out the try because it was grounded on the sideline due to a magnificent tackle by

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Spain secure World Cup glory to banish miserable Argentina

Spain 1-0 Argentina (after extra time): Ferran Torres finally buried the 10 men of Argentina in extra-time after a turgid display from Lionel Messi and his teammates in New York

Miguel Delaney in New York



Spain's Ferran Torres lifts the trophy with teammates (*Reuters*)

Spain win a second star after finally beating a black hole of an Argentina team in the World Cup final.

Lionel Messi may not have got the ending that he and much of the world may have wanted but few can say the winners weren't the right champions for the World Cup final.

Spain have been the best team and they were duly the only side actually playing to win this otherwise dismal occasion across more than 120 minutes.

It had an argument to be the worst final of all - which subsequently descended into chaos after Leandro Paredes' antics in the final whistle - until Ferran Torres rose above it all to send the ball high into the Argentina net.

His superbly-taken 106th minute goal ensures he is now part of World Cup lore alongside Andres Iniesta.



Spain's Ferran Torres lifts the trophy with teammates (*Reuters*)

Enzo Fernandez meanwhile enters infamy, as he becomes the sixth player to be sent off in the final. Three of them are Argentine and it really could have been more here, with Paredes given his punishment after the final whistle.

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much either, outside one fine free-kick towards the end.

Some of that was admittedly down to aggressive Argentine double-making, as the 23rd final almost immediately entered a defined and distinctive pattern.

Spain had all of the ball, and Argentina did almost nothing except defend deep.

The beaten finalists were only enlivened by Torres's goal, which at last saw Messi come alive.



Spain players celebrate after winning the World Cup (*Reuters*)

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Luis de la Fuente was proactive himself, again turning a big game with his subs, and there was a symbolism in another squad player - the impact attacker Torres. This is a proper collective, a team that play with an idea.

That ensured they actually had multiple chances to win this before the end.

It looked like it might be one of those days - on the worst day of all - as Mikel Merino missed a header right in front of goal and Nico Williams had a goal controversially disallowed.

It just wasn't happening.



Spain's Ferran Torres celebrates scoring their first goal with Nico Williams (*Reuters*)

And from that, there would have been almost deliciously grim football perverseness had Argentina managed it from there.

This was the most expensive match of all time after the highest-grossing World Cup, too, with the financial obsession reflected in the number of celebrities Fifa were proudly publicising as attending. There was even the anti-football farce of a half-time show, as the notional global safeguards of the game usher in another new precedent that football's actual community have long been resisting.

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That's football.

Except, this wasn't really football. It would have been too bad, a level beyond.



Messi was in tears after playing what was likely his final World Cup game (*Reuters*)



Messi receives his runner-up medal from Donald Trump (*Getty*)

Argentina have surely put in the most miserable display ever seen in this fixture, and that's including teams who lost 4-2 and 5-2.

They at least tried to *play*.

And sure, maybe some allowances can be made. Argentina were probably exhausted after Wednesday. This trend continues of the first semi-finalist winning the final, with the only team breaking it in modern history the Spanish themselves in 2010.

They're probably exactly the wrong team you want to play in those circumstances. They just keep the ball away from you until you become exhausted.

It's almost a matter of maths, Spain creating all of the angles and shutting off most of the openings until eventually there's a break.

Except, they were also in their own race against time.



Fernandez became the sixth player to be sent off in a World Cup final - and the third from Argentina (AP Photo/Abbie Parr)



Luis de la Fuente has now led Spain to the European crown and the World Cup in two years (*Reuters*)

But this was worse than just defending from Argentina. There was a clear intimidation to their play, a gamesmanship perhaps taken to inevitable extremes, and aided by a permissive referee.

He let a lot go, until he eventually had no choice but to send off Fernandez.

It was all so different to the last World Cup final, right up to the feeling around Argentina and Messi. He doesn't go ahead of Diego Maradona to win a second, but instead loses a second final out of three.

Surely no one can think that's a shame here. Not after that and what his teammates did.

And, after that, there is potentially new reflection for England too, as they now become the only country to have won the World Cup only once.

How did they lose to this team, given Spain finally exposed them? It only emphasises the tactics were wrong in that semi-

final.



(PA)



(Getty)

It had long been felt that Argentina had so many flaws they would eventually lose to the first elite team they played and this was that - even if it took much longer than anticipated.

Of course, the reflection for England should actually be far

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It should really be how you evolve an idea like in the way Spain do.

It doesn't even need to be the same, since no one can play this to the depth Spain can and not everyone would even want to.

But merely having that football lesson is an amplification of all their talents, ensuring they have been by some distance the best team.

And now, very deservedly, world champions for the second time.

Not just a victory on the greatest stage of all, but a lesson, and a moral victory.