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N News

New Local Plan approved by Full Council



After four rounds of public consultation, the Council has adopted its new Local Plan which sets the tone for development in Kensington and Chelsea for the next two decades.

Earlier this year, councillors approved the Plan which considers all the borough's communities and balances housing needs carefully against heritage and design. Some of the key policies include defining "tall" buildings for the first time, designing in green measures and introducing stringent fire safety measures.

More than 1,500 people had their say on the Local Plan from 2021 to 2023. The review was not due until this year, after a Local Plan was adopted in 2019, but the Council committed to completing the process early, as part of its ongoing response to the Grenfell tragedy which happened in North Kensington in 2017.

London faces a major housing shortage and Kensington and Chelsea will play

its part in building new homes. The Local Plan sets out a stepped trajectory for house building to exceed the borough's 10-year housing target of 4,480 homes set by the London Plan. In the first five years until 2029, there will be a target to deliver 1,250 homes. This goes up to 2,230 in years six to 10 and to 4,480 in years 11 to 20 as the major opportunity areas in Kensal Canalside and Earl's Court are built.

The plan includes a policy to ensure all development proposals demonstrate the highest standards of fire safety. All planning applications will need to have a planning fire safety strategy or fire statement submitted alongside the application. Tall buildings of 30 metres or more must have a Qualitative Design Review panel report submitted with the planning application. The Council as planning authority will establish a review panel, consisting of fire safety experts, who will assess the means of escape proposals in the application.

Thousands of residents in Kensington and Chelsea receive over £1.3m cost-of-living support

Kensington and Chelsea Council has helped more than 13,000 residents with a £100 low-income support payment to help with the cost-of-living.

Launched earlier this year in February, the £100 low-income support payments were aimed at providing financial support to those who need it the most.

Since May this year, over £1.3 million low-income support payments have been made to residents who are in receipt of Housing Benefit, Council Tax Reduction and/or Universal Credit Housing Allowance to help towards household bills, food, clothing or travel costs.

Residents can find out their eligibility and access the £100 support payment by visiting the Low-income support webpage on the Council's website.

"The Council is committed to helping residents with the cost-of-living and this £100 payment is a step towards supporting those who need it the most," said Cllr Elizabeth Campbell, Leader of Kensington and Chelsea Council said. "We recognise longer-term support is needed and we want to help residents access the wider financial support available from the Council. I would encourage those residents who haven't applied for the £100 payment yet to check their eligibility on the Council's website."

The £100 Low-income support payment is funded through the Council's Cost of Living Reserve fund. This offer is in addition to the Council's wider support including the Council Tax Reduction Scheme helping those on low income to help pay their Council Tax.

To find out what support is available, visit the council website: <https://www.rbkc.gov.uk/>

Cost-of-living support



Youth Services to get £4.7m boost led by partners and providers



A £4.7m pot of funding has been announced by the Council to provide improved services to Kensington and Chelsea's young residents over the next five years, with potential providers bidding for funds later this year.

This new way of allocating funding to providers is borne out of the council's recent Youth Review, in which the Council listened to over 368 young people, 237 adults and professionals, and held 49 engagement events.

A minimum of £750,000 additional match funding will be generated for the sector across the five years by Young K&C, the Council's strategic children and youth partner. Young K&C will play a vital role in promoting and allocating the funds.

"We're delighted to be working in partnership with RBKC on this exciting investment in local youth clubs and community adventure play," Nicola Butler, CEO of Young K&C, said. "We are looking forward to working with local young people to put their ideas into practice."

Providers bid for grant funding in September 2024, with grants being delivered from January 2025. A carefully selected panel will help decide which organisations receive funding in the three grant categories.

For more detail on the youth offer, visit the Council's Family Information Service website: <https://www.rbkc.gov.uk/kb5/rbkc/fis/home.page>

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EyeOnLondon founded in 2022 on the following principles.

- Committed to providing thought-provoking news & features.
- Delivering quality content
- Being a platform for nurturing trust and transparency within the media
- Cultivating the written and investigative talents of young journalist and interns.

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Cover image of Nelson's Column, Trafalgar Square, taken by Beata May.

N News

Learn lifesaving skills at New Cross Fire Station

New Cross Fire Station is hosting a 'Restart A Heart' (RSAH) training day on Saturday, 5th October, and is calling on people from the local area to book a life-saving session. The initiative is taking place to teach Londoners across Lewisham, New Cross, and Southwark areas how to access and use a defibrillator.

Defibrillators are a life-saving device used in medical emergencies when someone goes into a cardiac arrest and the heart suddenly stops beating. Early defibrillation within three to five minutes of collapse can increase survival rates by up to 50-70%.

Recent data reveals that 61% of people aren't confident enough to use a defibrillator, and research shows that access to one is lacking in the most deprived areas, which are tragically among the communities at greatest risk of a cardiac arrest.

"With 80% of cardiac arrests happening in the home, it is vital that as many people as possible learn this life saving skill," Sub Officer Michael Edwards, who is organising the event, said. "It may be a loved one who suffers a cardiac arrest - and it's crucial to begin CPR and defibrillation as soon as possible to help their chances of survival."

"Publicly available defibrillators are straightforward to use, it will provide clear instructions and talk you through what you need to do."

"Defibrillators are disproportionately placed in affluent areas; we need to ensure they're located in more locations. Anyone looking after a defibrillator (defib) - such as those in charge of pubs, sports clubs, community centres, churches, village halls - should make it accessible to the public 24/7."



House Building boost 'urgently needed'

London boroughs have reiterated their strong support for housing growth. The capital faces the most severe housing pressures in the country. London Councils estimates one in 50 Londoners is currently homeless and living in temporary accommodation, including at least one homeless child in every London classroom. More than 320,000 households are on waiting lists for social housing in the capital.

Boroughs have long sought to turbocharge housebuilding to encourage economic growth and address the homelessness crisis. London Councils points to

the pipeline of 286,000 homes that have already been granted planning permission in London but are waiting to be built, while reiterating concerns about serious challenges to housing delivery.

The cross-party group welcomed the Deputy Prime Minister's declaration that councils will have more freedom over how they use the money raised from Right to Buy council house sales. Boroughs have called for fewer restrictions on the use of these sales receipts, arguing that they undermine boroughs' ability to invest locally in replacement homes and that too much funding is redirected to the Treasury.

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Classifieds promoting small businesses • Business directory for local services and amenities

N

News

Consultation over tourist tax plan for Highlands

Highland Council is planning a consultation over how a new tourist tax plan should work in the region. The Scottish Highlands see over six million visitors annually. These include day trippers, overseas tourists, and cruise ship passengers.

MSPs approved a plan earlier this year to introduce a visitor levy across Scotland. It would allow local councils to charge overnight accommodation including hotels, beds and breakfasts, and holiday lets. The revenue raised by the levy would be out towards improving infrastructure including roads.

Highland Council plans to begin the consultation, which will last three-months, later this year. It had previously sought

views in 2019 when 6,600 respondents, including residents, businesses, and visitors all responded.

Tourism was one of the region's most important sectors, according to economy and infrastructure committee chairman Ken Gowans.

"The upcoming consultation will give everyone the opportunity to put forward their views on how a levy scheme should operate and what the proceeds should be spent on," he said. "We recognise that this consultation will only be one stage in the process and we will be building up on ongoing opportunities for representatives from across the region to feed in and shape how the levy can be delivered."



Puffin population "stable" on the Farne Islands



Puffin numbers on the remote Farne Islands off the Northumberland coast have seen a 15% increase as the population of the birds is declared stable following the first full count in five years. The islands are a National Nature Reserve and an internationally important home to around 200,000 seabirds. These include puffins, Arctic terns, and kittiwakes.

Hampered by performing the count, first by restrictions during the pandemic when rangers were unable to work on the islands, the team had to deal with the devastating impact that another pandemic, bird flu, had on the islands in 2022 and 2023. This has led to 2024 being the first time in half a decade that the eleven-strong team of rangers at National Trust could conduct a full and proper survey of puffin populations,

performing their counts on eight of the islands that make up the Farnes.

The summer numbers of puffins breeding on the islands was found to be around 50,000 pairs, a 15% increase from the nearly 44,000 in 2019. Bird flu was thankfully absent, suggesting that they have built a natural resilience to the disease. This allowed the rangers to come back daily and continue their range of duties which included bird counts, conservation work, and welcoming visitors to the islands.

Puffins are unique among seabirds in laying their eggs in burrows on the vegetated areas of the islands. They typically return to the same burrows to breed. During the breeding season, they regularly clean out their nests, a natural behaviour that rangers believed has helped their numbers remain stable.

In responding to a query about potential increases in the fleet of the Royal Navy, Minister for State Defence, Maria Eagle, indicated that the future size and composition of the fleet would be decided by an upcoming Strategic Defence Review. The review will likely outline the roles and capabilities as well as necessary reforms for UK Defence to meet the challenges of the future.

Eagle confirmed that the review will take into account the resources available as the government aims for a defence spending trajectory of 2.5% of GDP. The review, she added, is "deliverable and affordable within the resources available to Defence."

"The Strategic Defence Review will determine the roles, capabilities and

reforms required by UK Defence," she said, "including the Royal Navy, to meet the challenges, threats and opportunities of the twenty-first century, deliverable and affordable within the resources available to Defence within the trajectory to 2.5%. The review will report in the first half of 2025."

The Royal Navy has so far managed to enhance the availability of its frigates and destroyers. This is despite concerns over crew and the drop in overall numbers. Around 47% of its current escort vessels, including Type 45 Destroyers and Type 23 Frigates, are active or immediately deployable. This reflects the demands of maintaining a modern and technologically advanced fleet.



Royal Navy fleet size under review

London Home Football Traffic Watch

Compiled & edited by Fahad Redha

| | |
|--|---|
| Women's | |
| Sept 15, Tottenham v Man United, TBA | Oct 6, Arsenal v Everton, 14:00 |
| Sept 20, Chelsea v Aston Villa, 19:00 | Oct 6, Chelsea v Man United, 12:00 |
| Sept 22, Arsenal v Man City, 12:30 | Oct 6, Fulham v Dartford, 14:30 |
| Sept 22, Tottenham v Crystal Palace, 14:00 | Oct 6, Tottenham v Liverpool, 14:15 |
| Men's | |
| Sept 14, Fulham v West Ham, 15:00 | Sept 26, Tottenham v FK Qarabag, 20:00 |
| Sept 15, Tottenham v Arsenal, 14:00 | Sept 28, Arsenal v Leicester, 15:00 |
| Sept 21, Fulham v Newcastle, 15:00 | Sept 28, Chelsea v Brighton, 15:00 |
| Sept 21, Tottenham v Brentford, 15:00 | Oct 1, Arsenal v PSG, 20:00 |
| Sept 24, Chelsea v Barrow, 19:45 | Oct 3, Chelsea v KAA Gent, 20:00 |
| Sept 25, Arsenal v Bolton, 19:45 | Oct 5, Arsenal v Southampton, 15:00 |
| | Oct 6, Chelsea v Nottingham Forest, 14:00 |



Image: Jorge Jaramillo

Tyrannosaurs could be *much bigger,* study finds



A new study published in the scientific journal *Ecology and Evolution* has explored the maximum possible size of dinosaurs, using the famous carnivore *Tyrannosaurus rex* as an example. Through computer modelling, Dr. Jordan Mallon of the Canadian Museum of Nature, along with Dr. David Hone from Queen Mary University, created estimates suggesting that the 65-million-year-old animal, made famous by *Jurassic Park*, could have been 70% heavier than fossil evidence suggests.

The researchers highlighted that the immense size reached by many dinosaurs has contributed to the ongoing fascination people have with these prehistoric creatures. It's natural to wonder just how massive they could get and how they evolved to be so large. There are ongoing debates about which dinosaur was the largest in its group or even the largest ever.

Most dinosaur species are known from only a few specimens, making it unlikely that the current fossil record includes the biggest individuals of any species. This raises the question: how likely are we to ever find the largest of a species, and how big could it have been?

To address this, Mallon and Hone used computer models to analyse *T. rex* populations, factoring in variables such as population size, growth rates, and the incomplete nature of the fossil record, among other factors. *T. rex* was chosen for the model because it is a well-known dinosaur with many factors already well estimated. However, body-size variation at adulthood remains poorly understood. The researchers modelled this variation with and without size differences between males and females, using data from living alligators, which were chosen due to their large size and close relation to dinosaurs.

The study found that the largest known

T. rex fossils may represent individuals in the 99th percentile of body size, the top 1%. However, finding a *T. rex* in the top 99.99%—a one-in-ten-thousand individual—would require fossil excavation at the current rate for another millennium. The models suggested that the largest *T. rex* that could ever exist—a one in 25 billion animal—could have been 70% more massive than the largest specimen currently known. The biggest *T. rex* discovered so far is estimated to weigh 8.8 tonnes and measure 12 metres long. The hypothetical largest *T. rex* could have been 15 metres long and weighed an enormous 15 tonnes.

Patterns of discovery of other giant species suggest that larger individuals are still waiting to be found. "Some isolated bones and pieces certainly hint at even larger individuals than those for which we currently have skeletons," says Dr. Hone.

This study adds to the debate about the largest fossil animals. Many of the biggest

specimens in various groups are based on a single skeleton, making it hard to know whether these were unusually large or small for their species. A species might be considered large due to a single giant specimen, while another might seem small based on an individual that was unusually small. Neither scenario accurately reflects the species' average size.

The likelihood of finding the biggest ever individual is slim. Despite the giant skeletons on display in museums worldwide, the very largest of these creatures may have been even bigger.

"Our study suggests that, for big fossil animals like *T. rex*, we really have no idea from the fossil record about the absolute sizes they might have reached," said Dr. Jordan Mallon. "It's fun to think about a 15-tonne *T. rex*, but the implications are also fascinating from a biomechanical or ecological perspective."

Could Soil be the Solution to Climate Change?

The internationally agreed goal of limiting global warming to 1.5 degrees above pre-industrial levels is now almost certainly out of reach. Christoph Bertram at the Potsdam Institute for Climate Research in Germany explained, “1.5 degrees without overshoot is not attainable. You definitely therefore need to prepare for one tenth, or multiple tenths, of a degree beyond that target.”

The current best case scenario is now 1.6 degrees and we must try and halt it there. The hope would be to bring this back down to 1.5 degrees later in this century using technology to remove carbon dioxide from the atmosphere. Until then we must look to the major contributors of greenhouse gases (GHG) and try our best to reduce these.

Approximately a third of all GHG emissions are linked to food production. The largest proportion of these come from agriculture and land use, in particular from beef production and from clearing land for new pastures, which releases carbon previously stored in vegetation and soils. This adds up to around 3 billion tonnes of carbon dioxide, with land use and GHG emissions 7 times higher than chicken and 20 times higher than beans per gram of protein.

Reducing meat consumption is the obvious answer. According to the USDA, the average American eats around 26 kg of beef per year. This equates to 500g per week, roughly 2 large steaks. Even cutting this in half would generate a huge positive impact on the environment. Combine this with reduction in other animal foods, such as poultry and seafood and we will make huge inroads in preventing warming above 1.6 degrees.

Focusing on improving beef production will play a key significant role in reaching our climate goals. Key considerations are soil health, water and biodiversity. At the current rate of soil erosion we only have around 60 harvests left before our soil is too depleted to grow food. 75% of the world's fresh water, that is used by humans, is used for intensive methods of crop and livestock production, depleting it faster than it is being replenished. Pollinators contribute to 75% of successful agriculture and they

are being wiped out by pesticides.

The solution to resolve these effects lie in healing the health of the soil. Soil is a living complex and efficient ecosystem operating at a tiny scale. Worms, insects, bacteria, fungi and microorganisms, along with organic matter from plants and animals work in harmony. This fertile soil can absorb and retain carbon from the atmosphere. These organisms, along with the minerals in the soil, enable plants to put down deeper roots and take in even more carbon. The resulting crop is significantly more nutritious for the people that eat them, which in turn translates to better human health outcomes. Healthy soil will hold on to more water, limiting the effects of drought and reducing floods. Without this biodiversity soil is just dead dirt that requires extra nutrients, water, fertilisers, pesticides and herbicides to grow anything. The production of fertilisers contributes to climate change. Once in the soil, the nitrogen in the fertilisers is turned into nitrous oxide by the bacteria. This is released into the air and has 300 times the heat trapping potential of carbon dioxide. A vicious cycle ensues as the fertilisers depletes the soil of organic matter, requiring yet more fertilisers.

We have lost one third of the world's available farmland to soil erosion! In some areas of the midwest of the USA 60-80 feet of topsoil has been lost and it is predicted that the USA will run out of soil by the end of this century. In Europe, it is estimated that there are about 75 billion tonnes of carbon in the topsoil layer alone – equivalent to 275 billion tonnes of CO₂, making it a huge reservoir of carbon. Given that the EU's annual emissions of CO₂ are just over 4 billion tonnes, releasing even a tiny fraction of the carbon in the soil into the atmosphere would have a significant effect on efforts to fight climate change. For example, a release of just 0.1% of the carbon now contained in Europe's soils would be equal to the annual emissions from 100 million cars!

Soil degradation is caused by livestock overgrazing, poor livestock management, deforestation, urbanisation, industrialised

agriculture, over fertilising, monocrop agriculture, tilling, bad crop rotation, leaving bare ground and not using cover crops.

Nature's solution to this problem is photosynthesis and animals. Plants take carbon dioxide and water and convert them into carbohydrates that we can eat. The bacteria in the soil also feed on them and produce nitrogen, phosphorus and other minerals to feed the plants. This is the foundation of regenerative agriculture. Methods use cover crops to protect the ground, no tilling so that soil structure is maintained, crop rotations that keep pests and weeds under control. Livestock can be used tactically to stimulate plant growth with their manure, urine and saliva and with their hooves that break up the surface, allowing their bodily fluids to penetrate deeper into the soil. These techniques, known as mob grazing, mimic the movement of roaming cattle in pre agricultural times. This short duration, high density grazing with a longer than usual grass recovery period, allows plants to photosynthesise efficiently and perpetuate the natural carbon cycle and maintain the ecosystem. This has the potential to absorb a huge percentage, if not all, of the carbon released into the atmosphere since the industrial revolution. The result is hugely improved soil, healthier cattle and lower costs. Mob grazing is an efficient system that creates huge savings on food, fuel and labour. Regenerative farms produce meat that is nutritious and delicious, while supporting the soil, biodiversity and animal welfare. Buying their meat can finance their growth and further their efforts against climate change. That way you can have your steak and eat it!

According to UN climate scientists, it would cost just 300 billion dollars to restore 2.2 billion acres of degraded soil with regenerative agriculture. This would delay the rise of climate change by around 20 years, giving us more time to devise other solutions. This is just one solution to a huge multifactorial issue that must be looked at holistically. A systemic approach needs to be taken, encompassing all aspects for long term success.

DIGITAL ASSETS

THE RISE OF CRYPTOCURRENCY IN LATIN AMERICA

Cryptocurrency has rapidly gained traction across Latin America, emerging as a popular financial tool for millions in the region. From bustling metropolises like Buenos Aires and São Paulo to smaller towns and rural areas, digital currencies such as Bitcoin and Ethereum have found enthusiastic users. The rise of cryptocurrency in Latin America is driven by a unique confluence of economic, political, and social factors that have made digital currencies not just an alternative investment, but in many cases, a financial necessity.

One of the primary drivers of cryptocurrency's popularity in Latin America is the region's economic instability. Countries like Venezuela and Argentina have experienced hyperinflation, leading to skyrocketing prices and a loss of purchasing power for ordinary citizens. In Venezuela, for instance, inflation reached record highs in 2018, wiping out the savings of millions of people.

In El Salvador, president Nayib Bukele hailed bitcoin as a "net positive" despite not gaining widespread adoption as he had hoped. "I feel that it could have worked better, and there is still time to make some improvements, but it hasn't resulted in anything negative," he told TIME in an interview. In 2021, it adopted bitcoin as legal tender, becoming the first country in the world to do so.

With its decentralised nature and independence from government control, crypto has offered a lifeline. Bitcoin, in particular, is seen as a store of value, similar to gold, allowing people to preserve their wealth in the face of hyperinflation. By converting their local currency into Bitcoin or stablecoins (cryptocurrencies pegged to stable assets like the US dollar), Latin Americans

can shield themselves from the devastating effects of inflation and economic mismanagement.

In Latin America, a significant portion of the population is unbanked or underbanked, meaning they lack access to traditional financial services like savings accounts, credit, and loans. According to the World Bank, around 122 million adults in the region do not have a bank account. Access to digital currency has been proposed as a way to help many people.

With just a smartphone and internet access, anyone can participate in the global economy through digital currencies. It can offer an accessible, low-cost alternative to traditional banking, enabling people to transfer money, make payments, and even access loans without the need for a formal bank account. This has been particularly beneficial for small businesses and entrepreneurs who struggle to obtain credit from traditional financial institutions.

Cryptocurrency is also revolutionising the remittance industry by offering a faster, cheaper, and more efficient alternative. Digital currencies can be transferred across borders in a matter of minutes, with significantly lower fees than traditional remittance services. This has made cryptocurrency an attractive option for families relying on remittances to make ends meet, particularly in countries with unstable economies.

Political instability and corruption are pervasive issues in many Latin American countries. Governments have been known to impose capital controls, seize private assets, and engage in corrupt practices that erode public trust in financial institutions. In such an environment, cryptocurrency's decentralised and transparent nature is particularly appealing.

Unlike traditional currencies, cryptocurrencies operate on blockchain technology, which is inherently resistant to censorship and corruption. Transactions are recorded on a public ledger that is immutable and transparent, reducing the risk of government interference or fraudulent activity. For many Latin Americans, cryptocurrency represents financial autonomy and a means to protect their assets from corrupt governments and unstable political climates.

Latin America's younger generations are driving the adoption of cryptocurrency. With an ever increasing level of internet access and a young, tech-savvy population, the region is fertile ground for digital innovation. Younger people, who are more open to new technologies and less trusting of traditional institutions, have embraced cryptocurrency as a tool for financial empowerment.

Additionally, the rise of mobile technology has made cryptocurrency more accessible than ever before. Mobile wallets and apps allow users to easily buy, sell, and store digital currencies, making it easier for everyday people to participate in the crypto economy. This technological adoption is further fueled by a vibrant startup ecosystem in cities like Medellín and Mexico City, where fintech companies are developing innovative solutions to local economic challenges.

For many in the region, crypto can be both a useful tool for financial preservation and an attractive alternative to traditional financial systems. Crypto knowledge is high and governments have also worked to embrace it. Challenges will remain but there is still room for the sector to continue its trajectory.



Nearly two in three first time buyers since 2019 were given financial support from their family. For homeowners under 30 years old, 76%, according to Zoopla, accepted help. Parents helping their children with a deposit to buy a first home contribute an average of £58,000. But sons are given £65,000 while daughters are only given £52,000.

Of financially supported first time buyers, three quarters were getting the help from their parents with the average deposit being £60,100. But a stark inequality has been revealed by the estate agent. Daughters are given £13,000 less than sons towards their first property.

On average, those getting financial support from their parents would buy a home six years earlier compared to those who didn't, 33 years compared with 39.

Meanwhile, those aided by their grandparents, usually in the form of inheritance, were able to buy their first home at just the age of 30, nine years younger than those who received no help at all and three years younger than those aided by parents. Just over a quarter continued to receive help towards their mortgage payments.

The most common things first time buyers receive parental help, according to Zoopla, are, "the all-important deposit" (66%), legal fees (24%), and renovation costs (20%).

While parents were the primary financial contributor, in terms of buying a first home, other members of the family also helped out. A fifth of first timer buyers were helped by grandparents, 14% by siblings, and 10% by aunts and uncles. This may or may not be alongside support from parents.

And again, men were found to be given higher amounts than women, an average across the board of £4,800.

Two thirds say that they expected to get help while a quarter said that it was the "responsibility" of parents to help children get on the property ladder. What's interesting is that just over a fifth had asked their parents for help. Once they began to look or express interest in buying their first property, 60% said that their parents offered

Parents give £13K more to sons to buy home

help while 17% had been offered before they even considered it.

Parents may be relieved to know however that seven in ten who had parental help said that they plan to pay back some or all of the money while three in ten say they don't intend to. For some parents, the help can come with strings attached.

Half of those who were helped said that parents began to "interfere" with aspects of the purchase and a fifth said that parents felt as though they had a say in the home they bought while another fifth said that parents began to interfere with how much was spent in total. What's most surprising of all is that one in five went as far as to say that they regretted accepting help.

The survey also revealed that parents are helping with more than just the purchase, including helping to pay for furnishings, decorations, and white goods. Nearly half had also helped in choosing a home while a third gave mortgage advice and three in ten helped with moving.

Fortunately, those who were not helped did not appear to bear any ill will as the majority had not expected to receive any. Only 6% were disappointed and half that amount were feeling "angry" or "frustrated" as a result.

There are multiple schemes to help those without support get on the property ladder and most of those who received no help said that they were aware of at least one scheme including Lifetime ISAs and Shared Ownership.

"The research clearly shows that getting help from parents and family is very much the default when it comes to buying a first home - the vast majority of those who bought their first home in the past five years had help," Zoopla Consumer Expert Daniel Copley said. "This shines a light on how hard it can be to go it alone and buy a home without financial backing. But even if it takes a little longer, there are many ways for people to get on the housing ladder themselves.



August House Price Dip: Market Shows Resilience Amid Seasonal Slowdown

House prices experienced a slight 0.2% decline in August, bringing the average price to £265,375, as per Nationwide's latest index. Although prices are still 3% below their peak in summer 2022, they remain 2.4% higher year-on-year. Analysts attribute the dip to the traditional summer lull, where buyers often prioritise holidays over home purchases.

Sarah Coles of Hargreaves Lansdown highlighted the seasonality, noting that buyers often retreat during August but typically return with renewed interest in September. Slight improvements in affordability could also attract more activity as the market heads into autumn.

Rob Morgan of Charles Stanley pointed out the rise in property inventory and increased competition among sellers, suggesting that while demand remains, buyers face tighter financial constraints due to rising costs and persistent inflation. The expectation is for a gradual recovery as affordability catches up, though a significant shift depends on controlling inflation.

Positive sentiment has been bolstered by the recent 0.25% interest rate cut to 5.0% by the Bank of England. Amy Reynolds

from Antony Roberts noted that this move, though small, led to an immediate uptick in market activity, defying the usual August lull. Estate agents saw a surge in sales across various price ranges, particularly as sellers took advantage of the rate reduction.

Tomer Aboody of MT Finance echoed this optimism, stating that with high borrowing costs slowly easing, the market could see increased momentum in the coming months. However, the property sector is keeping an eye on the upcoming Budget, hoping for measures like stamp duty reforms that could further encourage transactions.

Despite ongoing economic challenges and political uncertainties, experts agree that the market is showing signs of resilience. As we move into autumn, the focus will be on maintaining this momentum and navigating potential hurdles, including fiscal policy changes that may impact buyer sentiment.

While affordability constraints persist, the general outlook remains positive, with industry voices emphasising a steady, albeit gradual, path forward for the UK housing market.

THE BOTTOM LINE *by Doug Shanks*

NAVIGATING NEW WATERS: POST-ELECTION TAX LANDSCAPE

With the Labour Party's recent electoral victory, businesses and individuals across the UK are keenly anticipating the impact on their financial planning. Here's what you need to know about the potential changes to the tax regime under the new government and how these could affect you.

EMERGENCY BUDGET EXPECTATIONS

The newly elected government is poised to present its initial financial strategies through an 'emergency' budget. Such budgets are traditionally introduced following a government change to swiftly enact fiscal policies. However, detailed announcements are expected to be delayed until September or October, as the Office for Budget Responsibility (OBR) typically requires around ten weeks to prepare independent economic forecasts.

Cabinet ministers have been instructed to seek cost-saving reforms and prepare for tough fiscal decisions, marking the beginning of Chancellor Rachel Reeves and her team's efforts to conduct a crucial review of public spending.

Chancellor Reeves has explicitly announced plans to raise taxes and impose strict controls on welfare and spending. These measures form a crucial part of the autumn agenda for the new Labour government. She is scheduled to present her first budget alongside a spending review, which will set the departmental budgets for this year and the next.

IMPLICATIONS FOR INCOME TAX

Labour has committed to maintaining the current income tax rates, with no immediate increases expected. Pension reforms are on the agenda, which may lead to significant changes in retirement planning. However, the specifics of these reforms remain under wraps, and no changes to the tax-free allowance have been announced.

NATIONAL INSURANCE CONTRIBUTIONS

A key promise from Labour includes maintaining the current rate of National Insurance Contributions for employees, which should alleviate any immediate concerns about increases in payroll taxes.

BUSINESS TAX CHANGES

The Labour government plans to publish a roadmap for business taxation in the coming weeks. It has been confirmed that full expensing and the Annual Investment Allowance will remain in place, with further details expected to clarify the qualification criteria.

CORPORATION TAX

For corporations, the tax rate will be capped at the current main rate of 25% for the entire next parliament. This suggests stability for businesses with profits over £250,000, though there may be implications for smaller businesses and those on the margins.

VAT ADJUSTMENTS

No increase in the VAT rate has been announced. However, new measures will include applying VAT to private school fees, aligning with Labour's educational funding reforms.

CAPITAL GAINS TAX AND INHERITANCE TAX

While there has been no specific mention of changes to Capital Gains Tax rates or reliefs, the 'carried interest tax loophole' will be closed, affecting private equity executives. For Inheritance Tax, the use of offshore trusts to avoid these duties will be addressed, though no rate changes are expected.

STAMP DUTY LAND TAX

An increase from 2% to 3% is set for the existing surcharge on residential property purchases by non-UK residents. This may hint at potential future increases for UK residents as well.

WHAT THIS MEANS FOR YOU

The anticipated changes highlighted by the new government underline the critical need for proactive financial planning. For individual taxpayers, small business owners, and corporate finance managers alike, a deep understanding of these shifts is essential to effectively adapt and refine your tax strategies.

In the wake of a new administration, it's natural for clients and their financial advisers to speculate about policy changes. While it's important to anticipate and respond to these adjustments, it's also crucial to remember that tax management is just one aspect of broader business operations. Prime Minister Keir Starmer has made it clear that while some changes are on the horizon, his administration will prioritise economic growth, indicating that not all policies will be drastically altered.

This approach suggests that while immediate adaptations may be necessary, strategic long-term planning should not be overshadowed. Engaging with your accountant or financial adviser to review sensible planning steps is advisable. Such reviews should include assessing the potential impacts of tax increases, exploring opportunities for tax relief, and re-evaluating retirement and investment plans in light of the forthcoming fiscal policies.

Moreover, this is an opportune time to ensure that your financial planning is not only reactive but also visionary. Consider how upcoming changes can be leveraged for long-term benefits, such as restructuring investments or revising business models to align with the government's growth-oriented agenda. In essence, while navigating through these new policies, maintaining a focus on long-term financial goals is paramount to turning potential challenges into opportunities for growth and stability.

Ultimately, these developments should prompt a comprehensive review of your financial health, encouraging a balanced approach that incorporates both the immediate responses to tax changes and a steadfast commitment to your long-term financial aspirations.

INDUSTRY-SPECIFIC EFFECTS

Different sectors may experience varying impacts from the new tax policies. For instance, the tech industry might benefit from specific incentives, while the manufacturing sector could face challenges with changes in trade tariffs and taxes. Tailoring the response to industry-specific needs and potential policy shifts can help businesses navigate these changes effectively.

CONCLUSION

Navigating the new tax landscape requires vigilance, adaptability, and strategic foresight. By staying informed and prepared, businesses and individuals can not only comply with the new regulations but also capitalise on potential opportunities for financial optimisation and growth. As we adapt to these changes, continuous learning and engagement with fiscal developments will be key to maintaining a robust financial standing in an economic environment that is rapidly evolving.





What, When, Where?

September - October 2024

FAIRS & FESTIVALS



The FRIENDS Experience

Excel
Step into the heart of everyone's favourite TV show, at the UK flagship of The FRIENDS Experience. The FRIENDS Experience: The One in London promises a taste of New York City, and never-before-seen activities including "London, baby!" and FRIENDS Station. Immerse yourself in recreated

sets; dance in front of the fountain, peep through the iconic purple door at Rachel and Monica's apartment, play foosball at Joey and Chandler's, and take a selfie on the orange couch in Central Perk. Victoria Dock, 1 Western Gateway
E16 1XL
excel.london
Until November 3

careers as artists and taking part in public exhibitions. Including over 150 works, the show dismantles stereotypes surrounding women artists in history, who were often thought of as amateurs. Determined to succeed and refusing to be boxed in, they daringly painted what were usually thought to be subjects for male artists: history pieces, battle scenes and the nude.

Millbank SW1P 4RG

tate.org.uk

Until October 13

DANCE & OPERA

English National Ballet: Akram Khan's Giselle

Sadler's Wells

Following acclaimed performances around the world, and sold-out shows in Manchester and Bristol in 2023, Akram Khan's Giselle returns to Sadler's Wells Theatre in London for the first time in five years. As the curtain rises, dancers in shadow push against a forbidding wall. From that moment on, this ground-breaking production stuns with powerful images. Mesmerising choreography, atmospheric lighting by Mark Henderson and a towering set by Academy Award-winner Tim Yip conjure up a condemned factory and the vengeful ghosts that appear in its shadows. The ominous score by Vincenzo Lamagna – adapted from the original by Adolphe Adam and performed live by English National Ballet Philharmonic – intensifies the story's emotional impact.

Rosebery Avenue EC1R 4TN

sadlerswells.com

September 18-28

La bohème

London Coliseum

Returning to the ENO by popular demand, Jonathan Miller's iconic production of La bohème, set in 1930's Paris, carries you away with its intensity. Whether this is your first visit or your fifth, you'll be swept up in an evening of hope and heartbreak, lit up by some of Puccini's most exquisite music. At the heart of the opera is a beautifully simple love story that rings as true now as when it was written 130 years ago. A young Parisian couple, Mimì and Rodolfo, fall in love. They lead a simple, bohemian life. They're poor – but want for nothing. Their love will sustain them, or so they

believe. But as Mimì grows unwell, illness and poverty test their passion to the limit – and Rodolfo must make a terrible choice.

London Coliseum, St Martin's Lane

WC2N 4ES

londoncoliseum.org

September 26 – October 19

Inspire Community Concert

Opera Holland Park

A series of community concerts at various venues across the borough. These hour-long concerts are relaxed performances and dementia-friendly, providing an hour of joy through music to promote the benefits of musical and social engagement. High quality music should be accessible to all and so these concerts are free of charge. Donations towards future concerts are welcome from those who can donate, but not expected. Booking is encouraged.

Opera Holland Park Theatre,

Ilchester Place W8 6LU

operahollandpark.com

October 16

EXHIBITIONS

Wildlife Photographer of the Year

Nagihan Seymour: Discover Iznik

Ceramic Art

Leighton House

Discover Iznik ceramic art with artist Nagihan Seymour and create your own hand-painted tile and plate using traditional Iznik patterns such as roses, tulips and carnations. In this 5-week course, students will first be introduced to the fundamentals of Iznik Ceramic Art, materials used in this art form and their function. After which they will be shown biomorphic patterns such as floral and rumi motifs, and painting techniques in the Iznik style. A ceramic tile (14x14cm) and a

ceramic plate will be painted by attendees using traditional underglaze paints. Our instructor will glaze and fire them after the class. Students will collect their work once they are ready.

12 Holland Park Road W14 8LZ

rbkc.gov.uk/museums/whats-on

New Life; Rembrandt and children

British Museum

Discover an intimate drawing of a sleeping child, the first work by Rembrandt to be added to the British Museum collection for decades. The drawing by the renowned 17th-century Dutch artist Rembrandt had been in private collections for over 200 years but has now been donated to the nation and allocated to the British Museum through the Arts Council's Acceptance in Lieu scheme. This adds to the Museum's extensive collection of over 1,000 prints and 72 drawings by Rembrandt (1606–69) and more than 300 drawings by his pupils. The collection was largely assembled in the 18th century, and this is the first Rembrandt drawing to enter the British Museum collection in over 35 years.

Great Russell Street WC1B 3DG

britishmuseum.org

Until October 6

Now You See Us: Women Artists

in Britain 1520–1920

Tate Britain

Spanning 400 years, this exhibition follows women on their journeys to becoming professional artists. From Tudor times to the First World War, artists such as Mary Beale, Angelica Kauffman, Elizabeth Butler and Laura Knight paved a new artistic path for generations of women. They challenged what it meant to be a working woman of the time by going against society's expectations – having commercial

FAIRS & FESTIVALS

Ally Pally Supernovas – Autumn Term

Alexandra Palace

Every Saturday morning term time, Performing Arts School provides world-class performing arts training for 14–18 year-olds at Ally Pally as part of the Young Stars programme. Under the guidance and support of industry professionals, students will learn to act, sing and dance in a safe and inclusive environment, empowering them to grow in confidence, build new relationships, and let their talent shine. At the end of the year, they'll have the chance to perform on stage.

Alexandra Palace Way N22 7AY

alexandrapalace.com

September 21 – December 7

FAMILY & CHILDREN

Macbeth

Polka Theatre

With some help from the audience, the cast bring the story to life, unpacking an old tale with new meaning. What happens when Macbeth is tempted by power and riches? Should he go after what he truly desires? A combination of Shakespearean verse and contemporary language (and the occasional recap!) makes the original story clear and easy to follow. Punctuated effortlessly by an original soundtrack, live music and sound effects, the cast will create comedy, tragedy, fast action, and terrifying power. With a minimal set (but plenty of atmosphere!) The show can introduce Shakespeare to first timers and reveal contemporary themes in a play that many know well.

240 The Broadway SW19 1SB

polkathatre.com

October 3-6

Education supplement

With climate change pressing harder than ever, UK universities are stepping up to tackle the challenge head-on. It's no longer just about lectures and research papers as these universities are putting their words into action. They are cutting carbon emissions, retrofitting campuses, and making sustainability a core part of university life. The 2024 Impact Rankings by Times Higher Education have recognised the UK's top universities for climate action, and the results are a testament to the innovative, bold steps these institutions are taking.

University of Exeter

1st in the UK for Climate Action
Global Ranking 12
Net Zero Target 2040

Leading the charge is the University of Exeter, proving that climate action is more than just a buzzword. With a target to go carbon neutral by 2040, Exeter's Climate Emergency Action Plan is packed with ambitious goals: from slashing emissions to ramping

stands out is their community spirit. Their Green Skills Academy doesn't just educate students—it's open to the whole Bristol community, providing the tools and knowledge needed to thrive in the green economy. On top of that, UWE's research is tackling some of the most pressing environmental issues, from air quality to sustainable construction. This isn't just a university—it's a hub of sustainability buzzing with innovation and collaboration.

University of East Anglia

4th in the UK for Climate Action
Global Ranking 27
Net Zero Target 2030

UEA is all about action, not just talk. Home to the world-renowned Tyndall Centre for Climate Change Research, UEA is influencing climate policy at the highest levels. But they're not stopping there; the university is on a mission to be carbon neutral by 2030 and has transformed its campus with green initiatives, like eco-friendly buildings and a commitment to renewable energy. UEA's reach goes beyond the

ronment—it's about the bigger picture of human health and well-being too.

University of York

7th in the UK for Climate Action
Global Ranking 40
Net Zero Target 2030

York's commitment to a greener future is evident everywhere you look. Aiming for carbon neutrality by 2030, the university is investing in everything from renewable energy to sustainable transport, and its award-winning Green Chemistry Centre is redefining how we think about waste and resources. But what really sets York apart is its focus on collaboration—working with businesses, communities, and students to ensure sustainability is at the forefront of everything they do.

University of Glasgow

8th in the UK for Climate Action
Global Ranking 34
Net Zero Target 2030

Glasgow is a shining example of how to integrate sustainability into university life. From its Green Campus initiative

UK Universities

Leading the Way in Climate Action: The 2024 Impact Rankings

up renewable energy and even turning the campus into a testbed for green tech. It's not just about what goes on behind the scenes. Exeter's Green Futures programme is designed to give students the real-world skills they need to make a meaningful impact. Plus, they're getting hands-on with local projects, like tackling plastic waste and boosting biodiversity in Devon, making sure that climate action is felt well beyond the lecture halls.

University of Reading

2nd in the UK for Climate Action
Global Ranking 19
Net Zero Target 2030

Next up is the University of Reading, a true heavyweight in climate science. Their influence stretches far and wide, with contributions to the IPCC that have helped shape international climate policy. Reading's ambition to hit net zero by 2030 and they're investing heavily in renewable energy, installing solar panels, and transforming the campus into a living lab of sustainability. From energy-efficient buildings to electric vehicle charging stations, the university is making sure that every corner of its grounds reflects its green ambitions.

University of the West of England [UWE Bristol]

3rd in the UK for Climate Action
Global Ranking 24
Net Zero Target 2030

UWE Bristol has taken the idea of a sustainable campus and run with it. With a commitment to net zero by 2030, UWE's got everything from solar panels to green roofs, but what really

campus, engaging the public through projects like the Green Film Festival, which sparks conversations on environmental issues, making climate action a community affair.

University of Sussex

5th in the UK for Climate Action
Global Ranking 29
Net Zero Target 2035

Sussex has long been a hotbed of environmental activism, and they're not slowing down. With a pledge to hit net zero by 2035, Sussex is cutting back on plastics, generating solar power on campus, and working on wildlife conservation efforts that bring nature right into the heart of the university. Their Science Policy Research Unit is a leader in exploring sustainable futures, while student-led projects get full backing, turning the campus into a hive of climate action. Sussex is all about empowering the next generation to take charge of the planet's future.

King's College London

6th in the UK for Climate Action
Global Ranking 39
Net Zero Target 2025

King's College London is sprinting towards one of the most ambitious targets in the sector—net zero by 2025. King's isn't just about cutting emissions; it's creating a culture of sustainability across the campus. From green spaces to sustainable commuting, the university's approach is holistic, engaging students and staff alike in its Climate Action Network. Research at King's is world-class, influencing global strategies and showing that being green isn't just about the envi-

to its ambitious net zero target for 2030, the university has taken a proactive approach that includes renewable energy investments, green buildings, and plenty of student involvement. Glasgow's Centre for Sustainable Solutions is at the heart of this transformation, driving research and real-world applications that make the city and beyond a better place to live.

University of Liverpool

9th in the UK for Climate Action
Global Ranking 35
Net Zero Target 2035

At Liverpool, the push towards sustainability is as bold as the city itself. With a target to be net zero by 2035, Liverpool's efforts include cutting-edge research in climate adaptation and low-carbon technologies. Their campus reflects their values, with eco-friendly buildings, biodiversity projects, and a commitment to waste reduction that makes every corner of the university a testament to its green credentials.

University of Manchester

10th in the UK for Climate Action
Global Ranking 47
Net Zero Target 2038

Manchester is setting a new standard in climate action, aiming to be carbon neutral by 2038. From the Tyndall Manchester Centre for Climate Change Research to the Sustainable Campus Action Plan, the university is at the cutting edge of environmental research and application. Their Sustainability Challenge puts students at the centre of real-world problem-solving, ensuring the university's impact extends far beyond academia.



E Education

Enquiring Minds

Adult Education Courses

Compiled & edited by Fah



Arts

Drawing Laboratory

Drawing Lab is for experienced artists and complete beginners alike; indeed the best classes are often ones with massive variation in terms of participants, across all measures of diversity. The studio becomes a laboratory, an artificial place where we investigate aspects of the world through drawing, away from their context. Different experimental challenges are set by the tutor each session, with group discussion and reflection throughout the day. Students may find themselves asked to struggle to see their reflection in water, contemplating the process whilst creating a self-portrait, or observe a complex mathematical pattern repeated over time and work towards drawing it from memory. Often these will lead to refining a challenge and repeating it with subtle variations. In this way a group of people can get to know themselves and the world via drawing in intense and exciting ways.

royaldrawingschool.org
October 1 – November 26

Lino Printing Art-Class-London

This workshop is an introduction to basic and advanced lino printing principles and methods. You will be given practical demonstrations of techniques and instructions on the use of equipment. Starting with developing fine cutting techniques and exploring line, tone and texture to produce monochromatic prints. Then you will learn how to design, carve and print linocuts in colour and how to register different layers. Through a series of exercises, you will learn how to mix and control colour and how to work with transparent layers to create more colours.

art-class-london.co.uk
See website for dates

Business & Law

Regulation

London School of Economics

Understanding the theory, the stages of the regulatory process and how regulation operates on the ground can be complex. This intensive programme effectively demystifies regulation; from law and rule-making to institutional frameworks and enforcement. You will explore regulation across a range of sectors and geographies, and from the perspectives of professionals including lawyers, economists, sociologists and political scientists building the understanding and insights to make the case for efficient regulatory systems and responses. The programme empowers you to accelerate your performance, and your competitive advantage in the commercial sphere.

lse.ac.uk
November 1

Introduction to Branding

Whether you're launching a business, writing for an existing brand or running an in-house marketing campaign - this intensive course run by experts is your Branding A to Z. This online branding course covers everything you need to know about Branding - from audience, brand marketing, brand strategy, creative routes, tone of voice, marketing and PR campaigns to conversion and evaluation. You'll learn from industry experts why strong, clear branding is at the heart of every successful business or campaign. This Introduction to Branding course is aimed at start-up owners, entrepreneurs, small business owners, communications and marketing professionals and anyone interested in learning how to communicate their brand more effectively, and learn what makes up 'a brand'.

city.ac.uk
November 16

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Culinary

Sharing Plates with Wine
Le Cordon Bleu

What is more delightful than a selection of small plates accompanied by a glass of good wine? The only way to improve this scenario is the pleasure of making the dishes yourself. Learn how to make a variety of enticing small dishes with a vibrant selection of flavours. In this course you will create a series of delicious dishes and enjoy them with a perfectly matched glass of wine. Your day will be a mixture of in-kitchen demonstrations performed by the chef who is running the session and hands-on practical cookery, where you are guided by the expert teaching chef. The exact format will vary from class to class depending on the style of cuisine and length of the course.

cordonbleu.edu
October 2

Nordic Baking Workshop
Nordic Kitchen Stories

In this class, you'll discover the art of crafting unforgettable Fika moments with your family and friends. We'll delve into the mastery of creating Semlor (Swedish Lent Buns), as well as the techniques involved in mixing, shaping, and baking delightful Cardamom buns and Sweet Almond Swirls. Join Louise as we explore these delicious treats and elevate your Fika experience! This workshop is suitable for all levels of experience. The Workshop includes: 4.5 hours of practical tuition and baking, take home recipe sheets, ingredients, where possible organic and locally sourced, all equipment, your bakes, and plenty of refreshments

nordickitchenstories.co.uk
See website for dates

Science, Technology,
Engineering, & Maths

Free Maths Courses for Adults
West Thames College

West Thames College now offers Multiply courses which are free and fully-funded programmes to help adults improve their confidence with numbers and brush up their maths skills. If you're aged 19+, live in London* and do not already have a GCSE at grade C (or equivalent) in maths, Multiply is available to you at no charge. This course promises to help you to "develop numeracy skills and build mathematical resilience." You will learn two modules- Number and Algebra which cover key mathematical concepts and techniques providing a direct pathway towards a GCSE Maths course.

west-thames.ac.uk

Welding for Artists
Craft Courses

On this 3-day course, no matter what your background – whether you are thinking about a sculpture or have a design idea – you will learn the basics of MIG welding, grinding, rolling, bending, cutting and good workshop practice whilst realising your ideas/project. If you don't already have a project in mind – don't worry! Once you get going plenty of ideas will arise & the small group size allows for 1:1 time with the tutor during the 3 days of the course. Advanced students will continue personal projects and research new techniques and processes.

craftcourses.com
September 27

Sport & Fitness

Skid Pan Training
RED Driving School

Whether you're driving for business or pleasure, Britain's inclement weather means that most drivers will at some stage find themselves in a situation where the car is likely to break traction and skid. This uniquely enjoyable skid pan experience teaches valuable driving skills in a risk-free environment and we're confident you'll leave Donington Park a better, safer, road user. Following a short safety briefing, you will venture to a skid pan area for a skid pan experience based on a hydraulic skid frame built specially for the purpose. You'll understand about what actually makes a car skid and experience the feeling of loss of car control on ice and water and then, most importantly, you'll learn how to react quickly to put you back in control!

reddrivingschool.com
See website for dates

Personal Trainer and
Fitness Instructor Courses
YMCA

Whether you are looking to start your career with one of our entry-level courses such as Level 2 Gym Instructor and Level 3 Personal Trainer courses, or to expand your skills with a range of CPD courses and STOTT PILATES workshops, you will find what you are looking for. Discover courses at Central YMCA Club, the largest gym facility in Central London. During your course, you will have access to exceptional facilities including a 75-station cardio zone, a dedicated free weights room, a new cycling studio and a vast array of resistance machines. Take a dip and relax in a 25m heating pool, sauna and steam room, or push yourself in the state-of-the-art functional training area.

ymcafit.org.uk
See website for dates

Education supplement

Record number of Welsh pupils taught outside mainstream school

The amount of pupils in Wales receiving an education outside of mainstream schools has reached record levels. Young people who received their main education somewhere other than school have now reached 2,279, the highest figure ever according to the Welsh government. That accounts for 4.9 per 1,000 pupils in Wales, making it also the highest rate ever.

This is over double the rate between 2009-10 and 28% more than it had been before the pandemic. The Welsh government said that in such circumstances, local authorities will work with families to make sure that children are still able to get the education and the support that they need.

Over the last 14 years, there appeared to have been an upward trend overall. But the covid pandemic is believed to have led to more referrals around anxiety and emotional as well as mental health needs.

Merthyr Tydfil reported the highest rate where it had risen to 10.4 per 1,000 pupils. Pembrokeshire and Wrexham were also higher. In total, 15 out of 22 local authority areas reported a rise over the last year.

There also appeared to be a widening wealth gap between those from deprived areas compared with wealthier backgrounds. The rate of education outside of a mainstream school was 11 per 1,000 among those eligible for free school meals. For those not eligible, that number was just over three per 1,000.

Age was also a factor with the 13-15 year old age group seeing the biggest rise. The number of pupils being offered places in pupil referral units had surpassed 1,000 for

the first time. That accounts for 46% of all pupils that were being educated outside of mainstream schools and a little lower than the number the previous year. There was also reportedly a rise in the number of pupils receiving an education from an individual tutor.

The majority of those being educated outside of schools were classed as either having additional learning or special educational needs. The Welsh government stated that since the pandemic, there was an increase in the demand for the provision of education other than at school.

"This could be for a number of reasons, including physical and mental health issues and anxiety, which we know is an increasing concern for children and young people," said a spokesperson. "When education other than at a school is put in place, the local authority works with the family and education provider to ensure the child gets the support needed."

The figures showed a "clear trend and societal shift following the pandemic," says Wales' children's commissioner, Rocio Cifuentes. More work, she added, would be needed directly with children to better understand their perspective.

The figures do not account for pupils educated outside of school due to parental choices, being separate from those figures. There has also been a rise in homeschooling. It stood at 13 for every 1,000 in 2023/24, 5,330 pupils who are being taught at home in Wales.

Ceredigion has the highest rate at 26 per 1,000 while Blaenau Gwent has seen the largest rise over the past 14 years, now



sitting at 19 per 1,000.

"Since 2010, there has been a 56 per cent increase in home education in Wales, with the county of Ceredigion having the highest number of home educated pupils," according to The SchoolRun, a website run for primary-school parents who want help with their children's education. "As a parent, it's your right to decide to home educate your child: the law says that 'parents of every child of compulsory school age [must] cause him or her to receive efficient full-time education suitable to their age, ability and aptitude, and to any special educational needs that

they may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise."

The national government has a website offering information to any parent in the UK looking to homeschool. It also links to resources that can help support any parents including for children with Special Educational Needs (SEN). It also includes information about the law and responsibilities that parents have to ensure the education that their child receives is sufficient.

For more information visit gov.uk/home-education

Study visa applications reach lowest post-pandemic level



The number of students planning to come to the UK on a study visa has dropped to the lowest number since the pandemic, statistics from the government have revealed. The data from the beginning of 2024 show that applications for students hoping to study in Britain have fallen to 34,000 in the first three months of the year. In 2022, around 46,900 students applied for main applicant visas.

Following new government rules that ban masters taught students from bringing dependents, which came into effect on 1st January, total dependent study visa applications have dropped from 23,800 in January, February, and March 2022, down to 6,700 for the first three months of this year.

The Home Office said that it was necessary to wait for the peak in student applications for the next academic year. This would make it possible to see "the full effect of recent policy changes and any other impacts." But not everyone agrees.

It comes after the sector has warned that recent policy changes from the government will make it less appealing to study in the UK for potential international students.

The drop in applications for the first quarter of 2024 shows "the real effect that changes to the dependent visa, the recent

increase to application fees and health surcharges, and the graduate visa review are having on the confidence international students have in the UK," Diana Beech, CEO of London Higher said. "It is now clear that the US has overtaken us as the top preferred study destination. Unfortunately, we don't know how many of the 'brightest and best' have been deterred from applying to the UK as a result, but it is now clear that the US has overtaken us as the top preferred study destination."

A survey by IDP Connect has shown that America is the top among a survey of over 11,500 students from 117 countries, ahead of Australia, Canada, and the UK for the first time. Other surveys came to similar conclusions, showing that Germany, New Zealand, and the United States were gaining in popularity. One survey from Oxford International Education Services found that, among Indian students, the US was their favourite destination.

London Higher will soon launch its Study London campaign. It says that it sees no reason for any additional changes to be imposed on the graduate route. "We know the government had concerns about the amount of dependents entering the country and this move has reduced them," Beech said. "We now see no reason why there should be any additional changes imposed to the graduate route, so we hope to see a positive recommendation from the MAC on this in a few weeks' time. We also hope this will be considered fairly by the government without pandering to popular politics."



What, When, Where?

September - October 2024

FILM & PHOTOGRAPHY

The Poetic Lens of Margaret Tait (12A) + Introduction

Barbican Centre

A special programme presenting a selection of Margaret Tait's evocative films, all screened in their original 16mm format. The collection showcases her distinctive blend of visual poetry and documentary realism, inviting viewers to experience the delicate interplay of light, colour, and rhythm that defines her work. From the tranquil beauty of "Garden Pieces" to the lyrical interpretation of Gerard Manley Hopkins' poem in "The Leaden Echo and the Golden Echo," each film captures Tait's unique vision and her ability to find the extraordinary in the everyday. This retrospective offers a rare opportunity to immerse oneself in the cinematic world of one of Scotland's most visionary filmmakers.

Silk Street, Barbican EC2Y 8DS
barbican.org.uk
September 23

Atlas AT30

Atlas Gallery

This year marks the 30th anniversary of the Atlas Gallery and to commemorate that is a special two part exhibition that will go on until January 2025. Join in the celebrations for a stunning array of works from contemporary artists. This exhibition will highlight the creativity and dedication that has defined the gallery over the past three decades., as well as the remarkable talents and diverse perspectives of the artists. The 21st of November will see the unveiling of the second half of the exhibition, showcasing classic and vintage masterpieces.

49 Dorset St W1U 7NF
atlasgallery.com
Opens September 19

MUSIC

Hana Stretton + band

Royal Albert Hall

British-born, Melbourne-based composer/songwriter Hana Stretton brings her unique brand of pastoral folk to the Elgar Room. Hana made her debut record Soon outside, in still moments after bushfires and wild storms had raged through her home in the Australian bush. Completely isolated with just her beloved cows and a few instruments, recording Soon became a way to digest grief alongside nature's chorus. Likened to artists such as Grouper, Vasti Bunyan, The Microphones and Alex G, Hana's music has been played on radio by Chicago's KRANKY label, Cillian Murphy's BBC Radio 6 Music show and Maria Somerville's NTS show to name a few.

Kensington Gore, South Kensington SW7 2AP
royalalberthall.com
September 24

Dungeons & Daddies: The Areas Tour

O2 Arena

This October, join Freddie Wong, Beth May, Matt Arnold, Will Campos and Anthony

FILM & PHOTOGRAPHY



Image: Carolien Coenen

Ernest Cole: House of Bondage The Photographers' Gallery

South African photographer Ernest Cole (1940–1990) is considered one of the most important chroniclers of Apartheid politics. This substantial exhibition revisits Cole's ground-breaking project House of Bondage. In 1966 Cole fled South Africa and smuggled out his photographs, settling in New York. House of Bondage was published in 1967 and revealed the brutality and injustice of Apartheid to the world, vividly documenting the

everyday life of the Black population in South Africa. It became one of the most significant photobooks of the twentieth century. In more than 100 photographs, the exhibition covers all 15 thematic chapters into which Cole has divided House of Bondage and also includes works from the chapter Black Ingenuity, which was not published in the original edition of the book.
16-18 Ramillies Street W1F 7LW
thephotographersgallery.org.uk
Until September 22

Burch on their second national tour of Dungeons and Daddies: The Areas Tour featuring all of their original characters AND Taylor Swift (Daddy's Version) *Not actually Taylor Swift. Dungeons and Daddies is an award-winning role-playing podcast that uses the classic tabletop game Dungeons & Dragons to tell the story of four families from our world forced to fight through a world of fantasy and magic in order to save their loved ones. Season 1 is about four dads on a quest to rescue their lost sons and Season 2 is about their teenage grandkids tasked with a mission to fix the world their grandparents kinda jacked up.

Peninsula Square SE10 ODX
theo2.co.uk
October 3

TALKS, TOURS, & WALKS

Second World War Galleries:

A Guided Tour

Imperial War Museum

Join the expert guides for a tour of IWM London's Second World War Galleries. Through a diverse range of moving and unusual objects, learn about the story of the most catastrophic war in modern history. How did it begin? How was it fought? And what was the Second World War's cost to humanity? IWM guides draw on its unparalleled Second World War collections to give you an in-depth look at the human stories behind this devastating conflict.

Lambeth Road SE1 6HZ
iwm.org.uk
Ongoing

Alan Hollinghurst in Conversation with Tash Aw

Foyles

The Booker Prize-winning author of The Line of Beauty, Alan Hollinghurst, comes to Foyles for the London launch of his latest beautifully-wrought portrait of modern Britain, Our Evenings, in a discussion with novelist Tash Aw. An acutely-observed story of one man's journey from adolescence through to later life, from boarding school to the theatre world, and a sweeping chronicle of an ever-changing Britain, Our Evenings is a moving and intricate novel from one of the finest writers.

107 Charing Cross Road WC2H 0EB
foyles.co.uk
October 2

THEATRE

Our Country's Good

Lyric Hammersmith

A ship, sailing 15,000 miles to Australia, is crammed with Britain's convicts – a punishment for their crimes. After a life-threatening voyage they arrive in 1788. But keeping the colony disciplined is a brutal job, and cruelty is rife. To keep the convicts in line and attempt to 'civilise' this often desperate, violent, poverty stricken group, a young ambitious lieutenant, Ralph Clark, decides they should perform a play. With a mostly illiterate cast, rising mistrust amongst the ranks, and the leading actor facing the gallows, this is a one of a kind theatre production...

Lyric Square, King Street W6 0QL
lyric.co.uk
Until October 5

Coriolanus

National Theatre

Warrior. Hero. Traitor. Unrivalled in the art of war, undefeated on the field of battle, Coriolanus is Rome's greatest soldier. When a legendary victory brings the opportunity of high office, he is persuaded to stand for election. But while populist politicians tell the people what they want to hear, Coriolanus refuses to play the game. As Rome's most celebrated warrior becomes its most dangerous enemy, the future of the city and its hero hang in the balance.

14 Whitehall SW1A 2DY
nationaltheatre.org.uk
Until November 9

Choir of Man

Arts Theatre

Welcome to THE CHOIR OF MAN- the best night in your local area you've ever had. It's a party, it's a concert, it's a lock in like no other. Featuring breath-taking reinventions of chart topping hits from artists including Guns N' Roses, Fun!, Adele, Avicii, Paul Simon, Sia and many more, THE CHOIR OF MAN has something for everyone! The multi-talented cast of nine guys combine beautiful harmonies and foot-stomping singalongs with world-class tap dance and poetic meditations on the power of community. This is a riotously feel-good homage to that gathering place we've all missed so much over the last year: the pub. With a real working bar on stage, come ready to drink in the action!

6-7 Great Newport Street WC2H 7JB
artstheatrewestend.co.uk
Until December 29

Compiled & edited by Fahad Redha

Cinema Club by Henry Scott-Irvine

Alien: Romulus

"Bring Out Yer Dead!"

It's probably a little-known fact that the UK premiere of the original Alien movie was planned by the then director of the 1979 Edinburgh International Film Festival, Lynda Myles. The film both shocked and delighted the August EIFF audience at Edinburgh's Caley Cinema (now a Weth-

names cited in the credit list. So is the art of compromise, commercial cynicism, and executive interference, all just a whiff away? Yes! The pong begins from the get go. The bad smell of eclecticism starts in earnest and rolls on throughout this two hour film. Street scenes echo Blade Runner. Early soundtrack music almost plagiarises the Moon sequence's score in Kubrick's 2001; while Andy-The-Synthetic - the friendly android - recites poor jokes that even lad-

banter as if heard on a London bus, played out here as Teens In Space. Is this what it takes to get the punters into watching the ninth Alien sequel? Apparently so! Then there's the ethos of 'let's just plagiarise the past Alien movies for the best and most inventive scenes', and then recreate them all over again. Plonk them into a wholly predictable storyline. Done and dusted. Truly shameful. Why? Cites stunning visual effects, cleverly designed

The Bikeriders

The Bikeriders is set in a glowing ever autumnal Midwest USA during the mid 1960's. This genre movie is threaded throughout by the mainstay interviewer Danny Lyon, a 1960's 'American Counter Culture' photographer who famously chronicled a Chicago Biker Chapter, The Outlaws, over three years for his own acclaimed Biker photography book. Lyon hung-out with the Outlaws Motorcycle Club in "An attempt to record and glorify the life of American Bikeriders". All done after taking advice from Hunter S. Thompson who had already spent a year with the Hells Angels for his own book Hell's Angels: The Strange and Terrible Saga of the Outlaw Motorcycle Gangs.

Here writer director Jeff Nichols creates a less 'glorified' narrative, in order to capture the so-called real life 'outsiders' who became actual Biker gang members. Fictionalised here as The Vandals MC, this Biker movie is described at its opening as being 'inspired by true events'. Mike Faist is cast as Danny Lyon the reporter-photographer. The movie begins in earnest with his questioning of Kathy (Jody Comer) who is the Biker Girlfriend to Benny (Austin Butler) a coiffed blonde dude of few words, acting very much in the spirit of his movie role as Elvis. Meanwhile, the ongoing scenario of Kathy talking with interviewer Danny sets-up a 'looking back' narrative, which intercuts neatly throughout the film

A key reference point is seen on a Black & White TV screen, showing a clip from the 1950's Biker movie The Wild One. Marlon Brando is asked, "What are you rebelling against?" He replies, "Whaddya got?"

Cinema Club

erspoons). It was quite simply unlike any other Sci Fi film ever made. A rare phenomenon indeed. A secondary seldom told tale is that Alien almost never came out. Twentieth Century Fox's 'old guard' remained unimpressed. They put the film into 'turnaround', meaning it was deemed to stay in their ownership, but hidden on a shelf somewhere in Hollywood, along with a vault full of scripts that would never ever see the light of day. A more perspicacious Twentieth Century Fox UK CEO, however, spotted it, read it, and 'the rest is history'.

45 years later the Alien franchise remains a hugely bankable brand. A multi-million dollar commodity. London's 16th August release of Alien: Romulus sees this as the ninth film in the current Alien series, including two earlier Ridley Scott prequels - Prometheus (2012), and Alien: Covenant (2017). These came out after the dual hybrid Alien movies Alien vs Predator (2004) and Aliens vs Predator: Requiem (2007). Alien: Romulus was directed by the Uruguayan filmmaker Fede Alvarez who made the 2013 remake of The Evil Dead and the 2022 remake of The Texas Chainsaw Massacre.

This begs the perennial question? Has any sequel ever bettered the original movie? Some people cite 1987's sequel to The Omen (1976) as being better. Others claim 1987's sequel to 1981's, The Evil Dead. Both are 'Horror' genre classics. Perhaps 'Horror' leads the way with sequels? When it comes to Sci Fi, however, I can't think of any. Stanley Kubrick's 2001: A Space Odyssey (1968) had Peter Hyams' sequel 2010 (1984), which was truly awful. Alien, nevertheless, had Terminator director James Cameron's 1986 production of Aliens as the sequel to Ridley Scott's Alien. His cinematic inventions augmented and reinvigorated Scott's original. Was it better than Alien? Some say so. It was certainly a great film. So too was James Cameron's 1991 sequel to his 1984 movie Terminator. "I'll be back!" threatened Schwarzenegger, knowing he'd better the original movie. Both he and Cameron delivered.

Alien: Romulus has a lot to live up to then? Like all movie franchises made in both Japanese and English speaking Cinema, the postmodern age is tied into 'Gaming', 'Gamers', and 'Merchandising'. Added to the irredeemable scenario that all Sci Fi franchises have their nearest contemporary cousins in the shape of DC Comics, Marvel Comics, and Star Wars' franchises. I say this venturing as to whether they've had a laudable or pejorative effect on the future of Hollywood's screenplays, operating within the usual corporate diktat?

This new Alien movie has a lot of big

dish Roadies don't tell to geezer Rock Stars. All uttered here as terms of android endearment. We must all begin to 'like' the Synthetic in case he gets reprogrammed and changes his character. Savez?

The cast are all 'young guns'. Each is set-up with a simple one dimensional character strapline: the girl who has had her previously 'concluded contract' extended by five years; a pregnant girl who gets stuck on the mission's spacecraft with her ex, and his geezer mate. He hates Andy because his own family members were sacrificed by a similar Synthetic, while trying to save an endangered spaceship's crew. So that's the motivation sorted. Meanwhile, their dialogue is utterly dire. Almost as dire as the direst of Danny Dyer movies. We also have teenage

Reviews

spacecraft mechanics, top notch cinematography, and exemplary audio design. These succeed a la the traditional Alien movie formula. Well done team. You're certainly making-up for the worst Alien screenplay ever written. "Were there no surprises?" a friend enquired. Just one. The late Ian Holm, the Synthetic from Alien, who comes back to life. Even though he was originally killed off in 1979, prior to really dying in 2020 aged 88.

Kudos

"Bring Out Yer Dead!"

They did!



Images are used courtesy of, and are the copyright of the recording studio/publishing house

Admired by Biker pretty-boy Benny, a rare use of slow motion (known as ‘overcranking the camera’) sees Kathy’s moment of transition into a Biker Girl. This is captured when sat astride Benny’s motorbike. In the blinking of an eye Kathy nestles into Benny’s back. A directorial touch, which focuses-in on the actual split second that Kathy changes into both a Gang Girl and as the new Girlfriend of Benny. This is neatly done in one single slow motion shot.

Comer, a 31 year old Liverpool born “actress of our generation” (The Independent) seems to assume a New Jersey accent, echoing Lorraine Bracco in both The Sopranos and The Goodfellas. The latter being a film, which, in terms of gang culture, is clearly a point of reference, alongside Carlito’s Way.

A great cameo comes from Michael Shannon (Zipco) who wanted to fight in Vietnam, but was turned down. Aggrieved, Zipco complains to The Vandals about, “College kids who didn’t want to fight in Vietnam”, but still got conscripted. Much of the film, however, focuses-in on either gang in-fighting, understated gang rules, and mutual bonhomie. This is evidenced at chapter house meetings and at outdoor campfire gatherings. Some of these scenes appear to be too improvisational and workshop-like, causing the storyline to meander off at tangents. Relevant or not? The film slows down here for too long, and the narrative plods as a result.

The Ever Changing 1960's

The changing face of America, during the rapidly moving 1960’s, is certainly captured, nonetheless, with a strong visual style in the first half of the film. This is driven along by a stunning raft of period records, providing a back-to-back soundtrack as key scenes unfold. Kudos also to cameraman Adam Stone who pays homage to Lyon’s photography, shooting much of this film when the sun is either rising or setting. The golden hour look is truly magnificent. So too are the midWest locations, which echo the spirit of that ‘lost era’ of Rock ‘n’ Roll America seen in Peter Bogdanovich The Last Picture Show and Kathryn Bigelow’s Loveless.

A twelve strong location team was headed by one Deirdre Costa (Location Scout) and doppelganger Jane Streeter (Location Manager) who all deserve to be singled-out for special praise for finding these period buildings and timeslip locations. Surely there should be an Academy Award Category for Location Managers? Sadly, there isn’t one.

The closing scenes, which I’ll not impart here, begin with an out-of-shot TV appearing to comment upon a particular situation. All in anticipation of what is about to unfold. Once again we see some deftly directed scenes, until the conclusion. Stunningly executed and brilliantly performed by co-star, Tom Hardy - The Vandals reluctant leader, Johnny. Here we have a truly hypnotic masterclass in screen acting. The trick he pulls? He plays this role as if the character is someone we might’ve actually known all of our lives. There is a universality in our collective empathy for Johnny. A fictional character that we’ve never personally met. Yet Hardy pulls-off this sense of ‘knowing’ this ‘regular guy’ via his brooding spirit of restraint that’s about to bubble over like a festering volcano.

A 2025 BAFTA for Tom Hardy? It would certainly be well deserved. Meanwhile, The Bikeriders is currently given a Google 83%

online audience approval rating. The movie is available online at Amazon Prime, Apple TV, Sky Store, Google Play, and YouTube - with selected London cinema screenings throughout September.

Five London Cinemas - Gone For Good

Sad blows for London’s historic Cinema scene. The now closed Odeon Covent Garden was the former ‘Art Deco’ Saville Theatre, built in 1931. Home to the Beatles ‘Apple Corps’ events, run by the late Tony Bramwell, from 1966 until 1970, hosting the likes of The Jimi Hendrix Experience, Procol Harum, and The Rolling Stones, among many weekly luminaries of the period. It

was converted into an EMI Cinema known as The ABC Shaftesbury Avenue in 1971 - a two screen conversion. It was later acquired by Canon Cinemas in the mid 1980’s, before they went into voluntary liquidation. The building was sold-off in 2001 when it was converted into a four screen cinema known as The Odeon Covent Garden. This Odeon closed for good on August 11th 2024 amid a proposed new development into ‘a Theatre, Flats, and a Hotel’ that will retain only the building’s Art Deco frontispiece.

The more modern Odeon Surrey Quays also called it ‘a wrap’ on August 18th 2024.

In a public statement online, Odeon management said, “The decision was down to redevelopment plans taking place at both Odeon sites in Covent Garden, and at Surrey Quays”. Conservationists have indicated that The Phoenix Garden, situated

to the rear of the former Odeon Covent Garden is also under threat due to these redevelopments. The Phoenix Garden is ‘a community green space’ set out by St Giles-In-The-Fields near to The Phoenix Theatre. It is nurtured on the grounds of Covent Garden’s final World War 2 bomb site. The Covent Garden Community Association are lobbying Camden Council on the proposed redevelopment of the site, and its impact to the rear of the building, with the loss of light for nearby residents, due to the height of the proposed new structure. This all comes alongside a ‘yet to be approved, but suggested building extension’ into The Phoenix Garden.

Picturehouse Fulham was an Art Deco multi-screen conversion, which closed for good on July 11th this year. There appears to be no discernable campaign to save Fulham Picturehouse. However, British screen star Hugh Grant tweeted the following X message on July 9th 2024 @HackedOffHugh “Fulham Road’s Cinema is closing after 94 years. Strangely unbearable. Let’s all sit at home and watch content on streaming, while scrolling”. (Sarcasm).

This follows on from the closures of the 1997 Picturehouse Stratford East on July 28th 2024. This is coupled with the closure of the 1936 ‘Art Deco’ Picturehouse in Bromley on August 1st. Picturehouse Bromley is a particularly sad loss. Designed by George Coles (1884-1963) it was Bromley’s original ‘Oscar Deutsch Odeon Theatre’. It remains one of Coles architectural gems, emanating from London’s Cinema Palace era, including The Troxy in Stepney (1933), The Gaumont State in Kilburn (1937), and The Odeon Muswell Hill (1936). All of which are Grade II star listed buildings via English Heritage. Bromley was formerly run by The Rank Organisation, Empire Cinemas, Cineworld, and, since 2019, by Picturehouse. The building has been operating exclusively as a cinema for almost 90 years. The ‘Save Bromley Picturehouse Campaign’ held a Town Hall meeting, attracting the support of local councillors via a petition that received 8,000 signatures. There’s also Save Bromley Picturehouse facebook group, working in tandem with Change.org petitioners.

These three Picturehouses all closed due to dwindling attendance, amid much public criticism of poor building maintenance

New London Cinemas

Curzon Cinemas have opened a ‘brand new cinema at Sea Containers House’, situated at 20 Upper Ground, London SE1. Described by Curzon as an “intimate 56 seat screening room (it) is the perfect place to relax with a curated mix of first run releases, recent titles you may have missed, family films, and classics. Curzon Sea Containers will satisfy both the film buff and the design lover. The cinema has 4k digital projection, Dolby 7.1 sound and luxurious seating”.

There will soon be a new Chelsea Cinema in Kings Road, too, rebuilt on the site of the former demolished building. Meanwhile, 2024 is seeing smaller cinemas such as the Everyman chain with newly built Everyman’s with 4k projection facilities, larger screens, comfortable seating, but a smaller capacity. These screens are replacing the old Cinema Palaces, and their compromised conversions into multiplexes, which were undertaken, nationally, some 40 years ago.



Picturehouse Fulham Road



Odeon Covent Garden

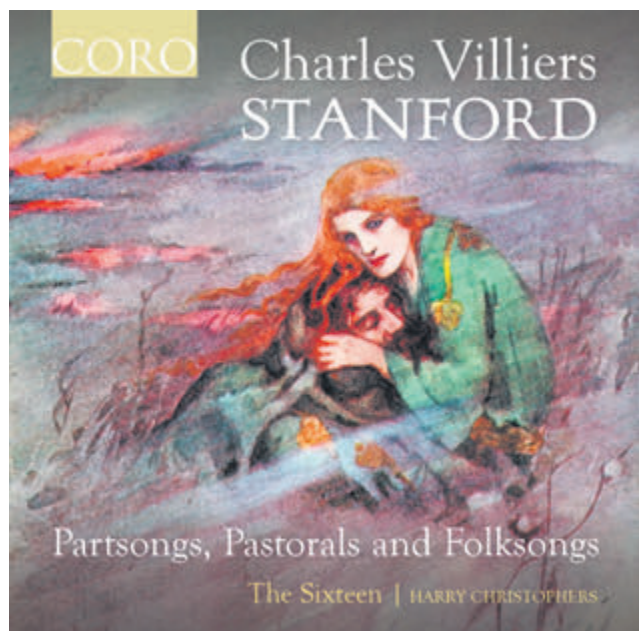


Picturehouse Bromley

Classical Music *by Simon Mundy*

Recommended Recordings

Simon Mundy (who has been reviewing recordings for nearly 50 years) will recommend a small selection of CDs released recently: no bad notices, just an interesting batch for the serious music lover.



Pierre Monteux Live
Pierre Monteux Conductor

Weber: Jubilee Overture
Beethoven: Symphony No. 6, *The Pastoral*
Ravel: *Rhapsodie Espagnole*
& *Daphnis and Chloé Suite No. 2*
Haydn: Symphony No. 104
Stravinsky: *The Rite of Spring*
Dvorak: Rehearsal of Symphony No. 7
Monteux in conversation and recalled by colleagues

BBC Northern (Orchestra)
Royal Philharmonic (Orchestra)
London Symphony (Orchestra)
Pierre Monteux (Conductor)

SOMM Recordings ARIADNE 5028-2 (2 CDs)

This is one of the most fascinating releases this year. Monteux (1875 - 1964) was an enormously important figure in 20th century music from the moment he began working with Diaghilev at the Ballets Russes and conducted the infamous premiere of *The Rite of Spring* in 1913. With them he also conducted the premieres of *Petrushka*, *Jeux* by Debussy and Ravel's *Daphnis and Chloé*; works that defined how music would develop all century. The performance given here is the 1963 one he gave for its 50th anniversary in the Royal Albert Hall with the London Symphony Orchestra, of which Monteux had become Principal Conductor (famously



insisting on a 10 year contract in his late 80s). Jon Tolansky, who has rescued these recordings and interviews, was there. Monteux had lost none of his ability to shape and energise these works. He was not only a great interpreter of the music of his own time. His Beethoven and Haydn has a lightness of touch that would simply not have been heard from his German contemporaries. The *Pastoral Symphony*, with the BBC Northern (now the BBC Philharmonic) in Manchester Town Hall from later in 1963, foreshadows the readings of period instrument advocates like Norrington and Harnoncourt. The recordings are not studio quality - they are taken from the 'air checks' the BBC made as they were broadcast but not intended for general release. Jon Tolansky and his company, Music Preserved, has done us all an immeasurable favour by cleaning up these and thousands of other tapes that would otherwise have been lost. The brief clip of the Dvorak rehearsal with the LSO in 1959 is fascinating too because one never really understands conductors' quality until they have been followed in rehearsal and one has understood how they tease out the details of the score. For anyone serious about hearing the music making of the last century at its finest, these discs are a wonderful find.

Stanford
Partsongs, Pastorals and Folksongs

The Sixteen
Harry Christophers (Conductor)

CORO 16207

At the turn of the 19th century there was a huge market for music arranged for small choirs, suitable for the good amateurs who regarded choir nights (as they still do) as one of the most enjoyable of the week. Composers, prompted firmly by their publishers, ransacked national song traditions and demure poetry collections looking for suitable material. Charles Stanford, one of those Irishmen who was happy to declare his roots but had his career firmly in London, was a dab hand at producing a steady stream of partsongs that were grateful to sing and delightful to listen to. Not surprisingly The Sixteen and Harry Christophers sail through this selection with immaculate attention to timbre, diction and detail, without ever losing the flow or compromising the ensemble. It is the sort of singing that only a crack professional choir can achieve and amateurs yearn for. Surprisingly, given Stanford's relaxed style, this is the first complete recording of the Six Elizabethan Pastorals, Op. 49, the Eight Partsongs Op. 127 and the Six Irish Folksongs, Op.78 - and the first ever recording of nine other Irish folksongs that do not have an opus number because they were never published and have

been lurking in the storerooms of the British Library until rescued for this disc by, Jeremy Dibble. More fool those Edwardian publishers! In truth Stanford's settings of all the lyrics have a conformity of style and harmonic language which means the songs flow by without huge differences emerging but this is a collection that is pure pleasure in every sense.

George Lloyd
Symphonies 1 - 12

BBC Philharmonic (Orchestra)
Philharmonia (Orchestra)
Albany Symphony (Orchestra)

George Lloyd (Conductor)

Lyrita SRCD 2417 *Symphonies 1 - 6* (4 CDs)
Lyrita SRCD 2418 *Symphonies 7 - 12* (4 CDs)

If George Lloyd had been born twenty years earlier he would have fitted into some of Stanford's composition classes and probably emerged as one of those endearing composers of charming English music like George Butterworth and E. J. Moeran. Unfortunately for him, he was born the same year as Benjamin Britten (1913) and lived until 1998. Unfortunate because his music is inherently conservative, without Britten's nimbleness, and even makes Walton and Arthur Bliss sound radical. Unfortunate too in that he died just before the resurgence of romanticism and easy listening in this century. His creative life was just in the wrong era and for many years he gave up trying to be a professional composer and earned his living from a market garden, growing mushrooms in Kent. Having said that, he wrote 12 symphonies between 1933 and 1989 which all show his craftsmanship and deft orchestration. Lloyd conducted these recordings when he was in his late sixties and there was then a certain amount of guilt in the music business about his neglect. I remember meeting him for lunch when the discs were first issued. He was a charming, unfailingly sincere man but deeply hurt by the way he felt he had been treated by critics and BBC producers. The trouble is, these are not great symphonies but neither are they bad. They just don't quite bite hard enough. Even the Twelfth sounds like film music from the fifties. But it is what it is and Lloyd does have his devotees because he is an undoubtedly individual voice. If you want to be engaged but not challenged, these works will give satisfaction.

Brahms
Symphonies 1 - 4

Chamber Orchestra of Europe
Yannick Nézet-Séguin (Conductor)

Deutsche Grammophon DG 486 6000 (3 CDs)

Earlier in this column I wrote that one never understands a conductor's real quality until seen in rehearsal and a few weeks ago I watched the COE and Nézet-Séguin working on Mahler in Baden-Baden's Festspielhaus. I can report that his ear for detail is extraordinary. These Brahms recordings were made in the same hall two years ago and released the week we arrived there this July. Though he is French-Canadian, rather than simply French, he has the same attitude as Monteux, preferring to concentrate on precision and blend rather than weight. This is the great advantage of working with a chamber orchestra, rather than the full modern symphony version. The clarity of Brahms' orchestration, rather than the suffocating folds of Viennese plush, comes through. Brahms was a frequent visitor to Baden-Baden's relaxed holiday spa resort (the Festspielhaus is built on the site of the railway platforms at which he would have alighted) and he finished the First and Third symphonies there. It is that serious but cordial side of the composer that this set captures so well.

Arts & Culture by Simon Tait

Blocking the imagination

In the porch of the Dulwich Picture Gallery in South London hangs a torrent of wisteria, festooning a poster for the current exhibition, *Yoshida: Three Generations of Japanese Printmaking*—a deliciously seasonal if subtle echo of the show inside.

In the first room of the exhibition, devoted to Yoshida Hiroshi, the paterfamilias of this extraordinary dynasty of woodblock artists, is a captivating image of more swathes of wisteria. It's perfect in every detail, which is the mark of the finest woodblocks in the Japanese tradition. The blossoms are reflected precisely in the lake below with delicate shade changes.

But it's not true—the garden is wholly imaginary, an example of the design concept Hiroshi introduced called *shakkei*, or “borrowed landscape,” in which a scene is enhanced by added notional charms, or even completely fake. Coincidentally, the wisteria in John Soane's handsome portal is fake too.

Hiroshi started his career in the tradition of Japanese woodblock set by Katsushika Hokusai, who died 26 years before Hiroshi's birth. Both were taught in the Ukiyo-e tradition of painting, which was devoted mostly to portraying famous geishas and Kabuki actors.

Hokusai moved on, applying his woodblock techniques to nature and gradually eschewing traditional practice. The universally popular exemplar is his *Great Wave off Kanagawa*, the most reproduced image in the world. He transformed what had been a staid practice into a radical new genre, though still recognisably Japanese.

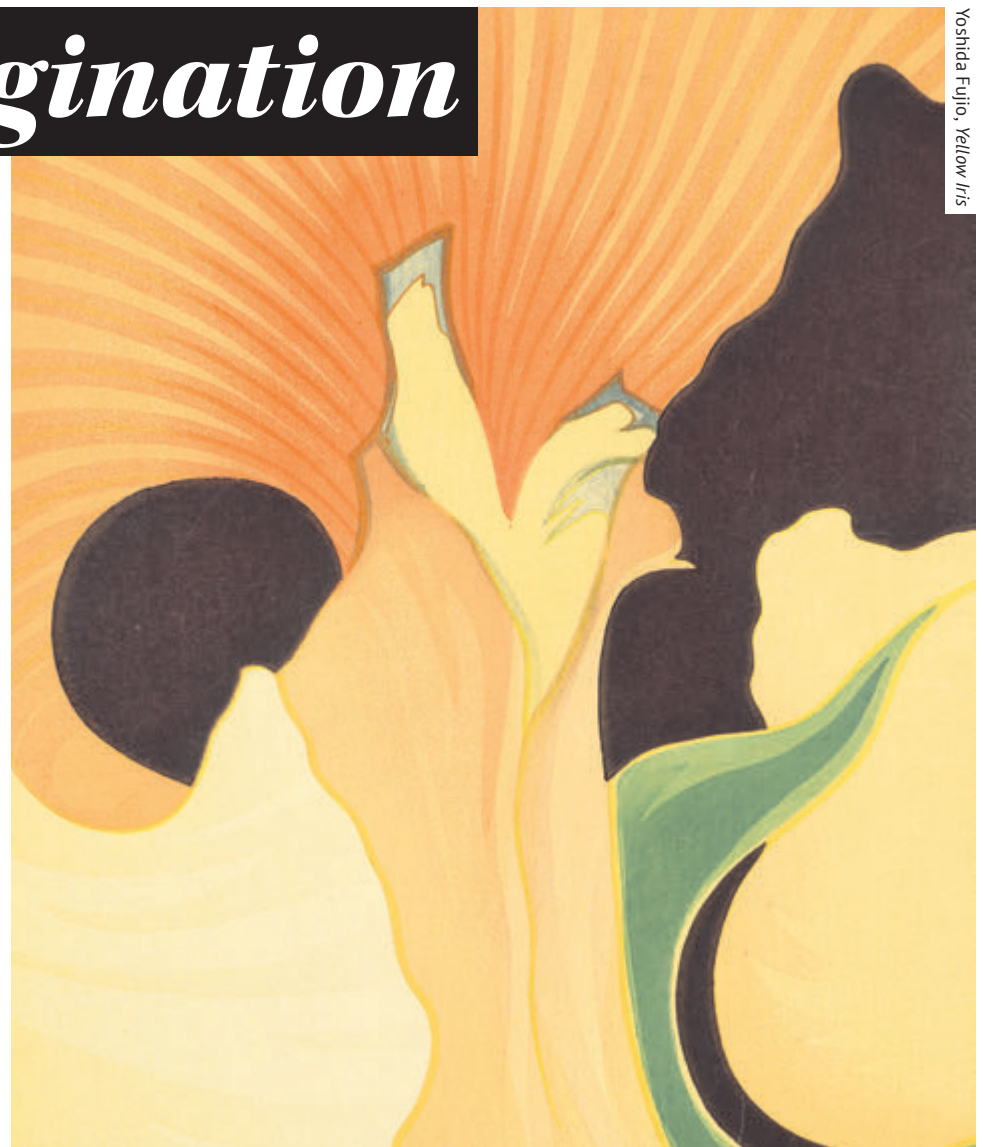
Like Hokusai, Yoshida Hiroshi—who

abandoned his birth name of Ueno to adopt that of his art teacher, Yoshida Kasaburo—changed his way of working completely halfway through life. He had been a Western-style *yōga* painter until he was 44, when he joined the new print movement working in woodblock, adapting *ukiyo-e* and becoming a pioneer of the *shin hanga* movement, incorporating Western tropes in what became his famous landscapes. Unlike Hokusai, Hiroshi travelled widely abroad to the United States, Southeast Asia, and Europe—he even visited the Dulwich Picture Gallery in 1900 aged 25.

This exhibition tells the story of a small family of six individuals whose choice of genre, a particularly exacting one, they mastered, manipulated, and made, eventually, into portfolios that came to owe little to recognisable national characteristics in a growingly global art market.

Yoshida Hiroshi was born in Kyushu in 1876, and his talent as a painter was spotted early on by his secondary school art teacher, Yoshida Kasaburo, who adopted him at the age of 15. Hiroshi studied with Western-style painters, *yōga-ka*, and at 17 continued his studies at Tokyo's Fudōsha painting school. His reputation grew at home and abroad, with his first American exhibition in Detroit in 1899, after which he went travelling, exhibiting in the Paris Exposition of 1900 and in the 1904 St. Louis World's Fair. Yet, the family that was to come were blissfully unaware of his fame abroad—his granddaughter Ayomi, born in 1959, was 31 before she saw the cherry trees print in Detroit and for the first time realised that Hiroshi had worldwide renown.

But it was not until about 1920 that

Yoshida Fujio, *Yellow Iris*

Yoshida produced his first woodcut, a depiction of a shrine. In 1923, he was back in the States where he found a growing enthusiasm for Japanese prints, and his woodblocks started to show a combination of *ukiyo-e* and *yōga*, like the magical imagery of his *Kumoi Cherry Trees* seen here. In 1925, he started his own studio and began his series of European and American prints, the Alps and Venice's canals, for instance. He died in Tokyo in 1950, aged 73, after returning from another painting excursion around Japan for the last time.

His work was painstaking—there is a display of the tools Hiroshi used, with a short film about his studio. He would normally use as many as ten overlaid colours to give increasing depth to a print and take anything from 30 to 100 impressions. Somehow, he was able to portray the dry air of the Egyptian desert and the damp atmosphere of urban Japan.

Hiroshi's wife, Fujio, who died in 1987 aged 100, was also a renowned watercolourist and printmaker, the first woman in Japan to study Western-style painting, and the first Japanese female artist to gain a reputation abroad with her close-ups of flowers and floral motifs that verge on the abstract, like this *Yellow Iris*—she would put the flowers in fishbowls to magnify their details.

Their eldest son, Toshi, born in 1911, started in his father's *shin hanga* footsteps but then developed his own style, trying

new ways of applying colour to add more drama to his woodblocks. You can see him here starting with startlingly delineated townscapes, but in the 1940s graduating to abstract prints that found a new facet to the genre. His close-up of canal waters in Bruges is a mesmeric evocation.

His brother, younger by 15 years, was Yoshida Hodaka, who broke away from family practice by incorporating collage and photo-etching into his work, inspired by Pop Art and Surrealism. His *Profile of an Ancient Warrior* betrays his admiration of the Spanish painter Joan Miró. His wife, Chizuko, was also a fêted artist who co-founded the first group of female printmakers in Japan, and her work absorbs the influence of Abstract Expressionism.

Their daughter, Ayomi, is the last of the Yoshidas. Her technique, still following the woodblock tradition, has harnessed new technology to create immersive works enveloping whole rooms and those within. The last room in the exhibition is hers, containing a single piece. Called *Transient Beauty*, it's inspired by her grandfather's early masterpiece, *Kumoi Cherry Tree*, commissioned for and built in the gallery that her grandfather first visited over a century ago. It is a dream-like experience in the Japanese tradition, but unlike Hiroshi's visions, this one is ephemeral: when the exhibition ends, it will disappear forever.

Dulwich Picture Gallery, until November 3

Yoshida Hiroshi, *Kumoi Cherry Trees*

Yoshida: Three Generations of Japanese Printmaking

Health & Wellbeing by Natalie Shanahan

In a world filled with constant hustle and bustle, finding moments of tranquillity and calm can feel like a luxury. The pressures of modern life, from work deadlines to personal responsibilities, can leave us feeling overwhelmed and drained. This is where ancient traditions can come in. Famous in Ayurvedic and Chinese medicine, adaptogens are plants and fungi that help soothe the mind, boost energy levels, and restore inner peace.

Stimulants

Rhodiola Rosea

Known for improving cognitive function and reducing fatigue. This adaptogen primarily acts on the central nervous system (CNS) by influencing neurotransmitter levels—serotonin, dopamine, and norepinephrine, by inhibiting their degrading enzymes. Its role as a Selective Estrogen Reuptake Modulator (SERM) makes it particularly beneficial for managing menopause-related cognitive, psychological, cardiovascular, and osteoporotic conditions. To derive its benefits, a suggested starting dose of 150mg, twice a day is recommended. For optimal results, combining Rhodiola with Schisandra in the morning can enhance focus and concentration. However, caution is advised as Rhodiola may interact with immunosuppressants, prescription monoamine oxidase inhibitors (MAOIs), and can potentially lower blood pressure.

Schisandra

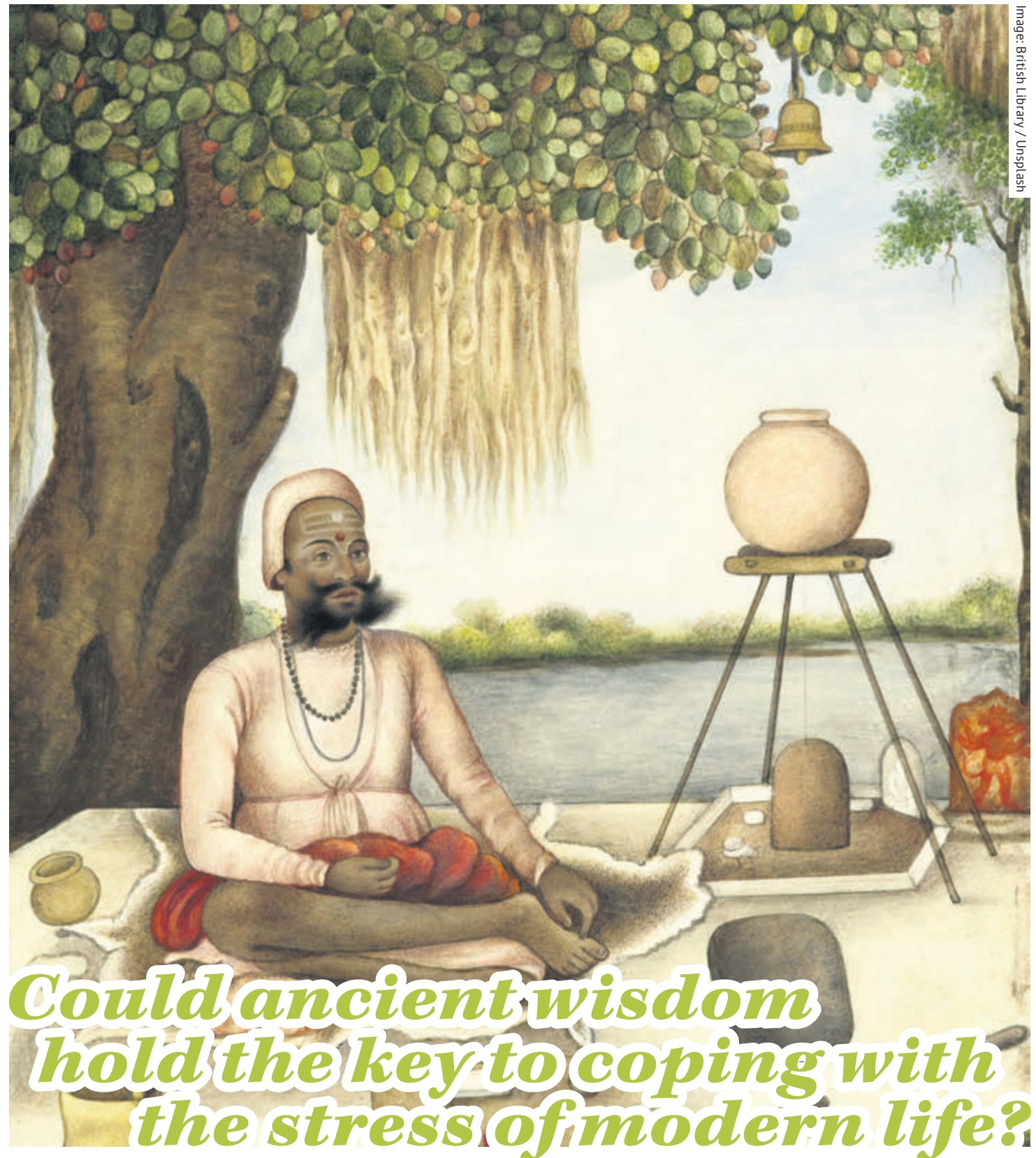
Another potent adaptogen, also known as Magnolia Berry, offers benefits such as improved endurance, mental performance, and increased working capacity. Its mechanisms involve boosting blood vessel compliance through nitric oxide release, modulating oestrogen levels by increasing the excretion of estrogen metabolites, and enhancing aerobic capacity by inducing oxidation in the mitochondria. Studies have suggested doses ranging from 500mg to 2 grams of Schisandra extract daily for cognitive and physical performance enhancement. Schisandra is often recommended to start solo, delivering focus and energy without the caffeine crash. After two weeks of consistent use, Rhodiola can be added for synergistic benefits.

Maca (Red Peruvian variety)

This Peruvian Ginseng, a member of the Brassicaceae family, is another adaptogen popular for its support of sex hormones. Maca is high in glucosinolates, natural components of many pungent plants such as broccoli, cabbage, and sprouts. This compound has many important roles, including moderation of estrogen metabolism, reducing inflammation, regulating adrenal and thyroid function. Studies have also shown it can improve mood and anxiety. As with all adaptogens, first try the smallest effective dose. Dr Stacey Sims recommends 2g per day for menopausal vasomotor symptoms or 3.5g per day for mood and psychological reasons. However it does contain goitrogens and so it is not recommended for those with thyroid issues.

Siberian Ginseng

This adaptogen works on the neuro-endocrine-immune complex to protect against the effects of stress. It also stimulates the central nervous system, enhancing physical and cognitive performance. It supports



Could ancient wisdom hold the key to coping with the stress of modern life?

the adrenals and increases T-helper cells and natural killer cell activity, which can be valuable in treating chronic fatigue syndrome. It can be useful in menopause as it binds to estrogen receptors, increasing estrogenic effects. Always look for standardised Siberian ginseng root extract (0.5% eleutheroside E, 0.3% eleutheroside B). Because of its immunomodulatory effects, it may be contraindicated in those with autoimmune disease or on immunomodulatory medications. It can also increase the risk of bleeding so if you are on blood thinning medications it is best to avoid.

Calming

Holy Basil (Tulsi)

Holy basil is revered for its anti-anxiety properties, which can help reduce stress and improve mood, which make it great for

anyone struggling with sleep. It has antimicrobial and immune enhancing properties. It reduces oxidative tissue damage, modulates cortisol and improves glucose control. However it does reduce blood clotting capacity and therefore not suitable for anyone on anticoagulants.

Ashwagandha

Ashwagandha, also known as Indian Ginseng or winter cherry, is a member of the nightshade family. It has hormone balancing properties, helping increase the effect when activity is low, but will block excess stimulation when activity is too high. Ashwagandha slows, stops, reverses or removes neuritic atrophy and synaptic loss. This means it protects brain and nerve cells against damage and age related deterioration. It can reduce cortisol, the stress hormone, and therefore has anti-anxiety and anti-depressant properties. Together

with Holy Basil in the afternoon they have a profound calming effect, modulating neurotransmitters and cortisol for better sleep. Add black pepper to increase absorption. Ashwagandha does increase luteinizing hormone, T3 and T4, which means it is not suitable for those with hyperthyroidism. Other contraindications include men diagnosed with hormone-sensitive prostate cancer, as it increases testosterone levels and can interfere with treatment. It also reduces blood clotting capacity so do not use it on anticoagulants.

Adaptogens can offer a valuable natural approach to promoting overall well-being, managing stress, and enhancing various aspects of health. By incorporating these herbs into a balanced lifestyle and being mindful of their appropriate usage, individuals can support their physical, mental, and emotional wellness.



Travel by Mike Pickup

CASA DE CAMPO

Champagne holidays at Prosecco prices

Images © Mike Pickup

Celebrating its fiftieth birthday, the eleven square miles of the Dominican Republic's Casa de Campo (country house) are home to two thousand luxury villas, holiday homes to the rich and famous including three former US presidents, Justin Bieber, Beyonce, JLo and many more.

Fortunately, for those of us with more modest resources, there are over three hundred hotel rooms and suites scattered around the extensive grounds, plus an 'all-inclusive' package, allowing us to enjoy the same facilities. And what amazing facilities they are!

How it started

The site in Romana was originally home to the world's largest sugar mill, owned by Gulf + Western, famous for such brands as Paramount Pictures and CBS. Its transformation started with the building of the Teeth of the Dog golf course. Designed by the legendary Pete Dye, it opened in 1971.

In 1974 it became an exclusive executive retreat for Gulf + Western. In the same year Indian Prince Maharajah Jabar Singh, renowned for his expertise in polo, was invited to introduce the sport at the newly created resort.

In 1976, La Terraza Tennis Club was constructed and 1984 saw the addition of hotel rooms, complementing the existing private villas. Casa de Campo has continued to grow as more villas, hotel rooms and facilities have been added and is today one of the world's top resorts.

Accommodation

I have been to Casa de Campo twice. On my first visit my accommodation was a two-room suite in a small block situated in the gardens not far from reception. Since then 58 Premier Suites have been added, with their own reception and clubhouse complete with bar and complimentary snacks. On my second visit I stayed in one of these new suites. It consisted of a vast bedroom with sofa, tables and chairs plus a terrace overlooking gardens and a golf course. There was a bath and shower room, separate wash room with his and hers basins and a huge walk-in wardrobe. There was also a fridge, coffee maker, hair drier, iron and, a first for me, a steamer.



Altos de Chavon

What to do

There are three golf courses, including the 'Teeth of the dog', rated the best in the Caribbean. This is golf at its finest. There is also an Equestrian Centre offering horse riding, a dude ranch and three polo pitches. Local and international matches are played regularly. The Centre's Director, Fernando Arata is an Argentinian polo player whose passion for the sport is unquestionable.

Thirteen tennis courts cater for all standards and there are professionals on hand for those looking to improve their skills. The shooting centre has over 200 traps and includes a 110 ft. tower that projects sporting clays—one of the largest in the world. There's even a five-stand Purdey shooting facility. Water sports include sailing, paddle surfing and kayaking on the resort's river. Of course, there is a pool with a swim-up bar, gym and a new thirteen-room spa with lovely garden views. The beach at Minitas also has two pools, one for families and one for adults only.

Not all visitors arrive by air. During my visits I strolled around Casa de Campo's

top-class marina with its 350 moorings, yacht club and boatyard for servicing and repairs. It has restaurants, boutique shops, a supermarket, hardware store and cinema.

I also spent some time at Altos de Chavon. This mock 16th century Mediterranean village was built as a film set but never used. I explored a number of artisan workshops and a fascinating museum covering thousands of years of local history. The village is full of character and its little church is popular for weddings. A nearby amphitheatre holds five thousand people. It was opened in 1982 by Frank Sinatra, followed two days later by Carlos Santana. Subsequent performers have included Elton John, Andrea Bocelli, Gloria Estefan, Julio Iglesias, Michael Bubl  and more.

Food and drink

Close to the main reception there are two restaurants. Lago is a buffet offering breakfast and lunch with stunning views over a golf course and the Caribbean. There is also an a-la-carte restaurant, La Cana, where I enjoyed breakfast, lunch and dinner on several occasions. Diners can eat inside

or outside and there is a shady bar for cool drinks. However my favourite spot for lunch was the Nineteenth Hole, the clubhouse terrace of the Teeth of the Dog golf course. A relaxing cool glass of wine or lager, a toasted Panini and views across the 18th green and the sparkling Caribbean are the things memories are made of.

The marina is home to three more enticing restaurants, two of which are in the all-inclusive package. Causa specialises in Peruvian dishes whilst La Casita focuses on seafood and Spanish cuisine. Altos de Chavon also has two restaurants; I enjoyed La Piazzetta which offers Italian fare, although strangely not pizzas, whilst Chilango caters for those looking for authentic Mexican flavours.

Getting around

Casa de Campo's grounds cover seven thousand acres so guests are provided with a buggy for getting around. Most are bright red but guests in the new Premier Suites get luxury liveried black versions. The restaurants at the marina and Altos de Chavon are some distance from the central area so, not wanting to drink and drive, I used the courtesy shuttle buses. Just park your buggy at reception and hop on a bus.

Summary

There is so much to do in Casa de Campo that it's hard to fit it all in. However, nothing is compulsory and you can do as much or as little as you like. The selection of restaurants means that you have a huge choice and the evening shuttle services to the Marina and Altos de Chavon are great when it comes to dining out. Exploring the resort by buggy is great fun. Naturally, service levels are top class but you will be left in peace unless you want something.

Getting there

A number of tour operators offer Casa de Campo holidays with flights to Punta Cana. The transfer time is around 45 minutes but not all packages include transfers, so check with the tour operator. And don't forget your driving licence for that all-important buggy!



Amphitheatre



Hotel rooms in the gardens



CROSS CODE

| | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| 23 | 7 | 10 | 1 | 13 | 22 | 10 | 20 | 26 | | 11 | | 20 |
| | 22 | | 7 | | 16 | | 22 | 10 | 23 | 2 | 12 | 25 |
| 26 | 8 | 1 | 7 | | 9 | 3 | 21 | 22 | | 3 | | 2 |
| | 4 | | 23 | | 23 | | 21 | 22 | 1 | 9 | 22 | 7 |
| 19 | 23 | 7 | 5 | 1 | 7 | 6 | | 14 | | | | 26 |
| 23 | 10 | 22 | 26 | | 20 | 7 | 22 | 22 | | 25 | 3 | 6 |
| 23 | | 1 | | 15 | | 22 | | 6 | | 22 | | 1 |
| 20 | 1 | 7 | | 1 | 15 | 1 | 7 | | 9 | 7 | 1 | 18 |
| 26 | | | 24 | | 13 | 23 | 20 | 3 | 23 | 10 | 26 | |
| 20 | 7 | 3 | 17 | 22 | 26 | | 6 | | 21 | | 26 | |
| 22 | | 10 | | 21 | 23 | 26 | 22 | | 21 | 22 | 5 | 6 |
| 9 | 22 | 10 | 8 | 3 | 21 | | 10 | | 23 | | 22 | |
| 26 | | 26 | | 10 | 23 | 7 | 20 | 25 | 5 | 1 | 7 | 6 |

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ

| | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|----|----|----|----|----|----|---|---|---|----|----|----|----|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 |
| 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | | T | L | | 22 | | 26 |

Each number in our Cross Code grid represents a different letter of the alphabet. You have three letters in the control grid to start you off. Enter them in the appropriate squares in the main grid, then use your knowledge of words to work out which letters should go in the missing squares.

As you get the letters, fill in other squares with the same number in the main grid and control grid. Check off the alphabetical list of letters as you identify them.

MAGIC SQUARE

ACE DRIVING AGREED

Using all 16 letters of the phrase above, form four words each of four letters which will fit in the grid to form a magic square in which the words can be read both horizontally and vertically.

| | | | |
|--|--|--|--|
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |

Quiz Challenge

1. Norwich City football club has what nickname?

2. In the Dr Who TV series, what was the name of the robotic dog?

3. Algernon Moncrieff is a principal character in which Oscar Wilde play?

4. Which Roman town in Britain was the first target of the Boudican Revolt?

5. What A is the name of a species of seabird and a word meaning a burden or encumbrance?
6. The muscle-relaxing drug curare was discovered by tribes in the Amazon Basin who used it for what?

7. Alexander Armstrong and Richard Osman present which TV game show?

8. Rapper, singer and songwriter Drake was born in which country?

9. Who was the first member of the Royal Family to gain a university degree?

10. Which famous architect designed the Guggenheim Museum in New York?

NONAGRAM

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| E | U | S |
| Q | T | I |
| U | O | R |

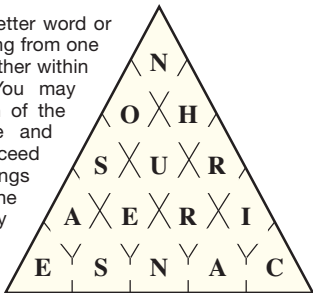
How many words of four letters or more can you make from this Nonagram? Each word must use the central letter, and each letter may be used only once. At least one word using all nine letters can be found.

Guidelines:
28 Good; 33 Very Good; 39 Excellent.

Any word found in the Concise Oxford Dictionary (Tenth Edition) is eligible with the following exceptions: proper nouns; plural nouns, pronouns and possessives; third person singular verbs; hyphenated words; contractions and abbreviations; vulgar slang words; variant spellings of the same word (where another variant is also eligible).

WORD PYRAMID

Spell out a 15-letter word or phrase by moving from one chamber to another within the pyramid. You may only enter each of the chambers once and may only proceed through openings in the walls. The first letter may appear in any chamber.



FIVE ALIVE

| | | | | |
|----|----|----|----|----|
| JK | IA | TU | NE | ST |
| OU | | SR | | HO |
| DY | OI | UA | RN | YG |
| EO | | AC | | LA |
| SD | AE | EL | DE | SY |

Here are two miniature five-square crosswords using the same grid – but the letters have been mixed up. You have to work out which letters belong to which crossword.

CRYPTIC CROSSWORD

| | | | | | | | | | | | |
|----|---|----|---|----|----|--|----|---|----|--|----|
| 1 | 2 | | 3 | | 4 | | 5 | | 6 | | 7 |
| | | | | | | | | 8 | | | |
| 9 | | | | | | | 10 | | | | |
| | | | | | | | 11 | | | | |
| 12 | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | 13 | | 14 | | | | 15 |
| | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 16 | | 17 | | 18 | | | | | 19 | | |
| | | | | | | | 20 | | | | |
| 21 | | | | | 22 | | | | | | |
| | | | | 23 | | | | | | | |
| 24 | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | 25 | | | | | | |

ACROSS

1. Encouraging words in child-raising (3-1-5)
8. Yorkshireman initially takes wrong key (4)
9. A lady who will suit you? (9)
11. Donkey follows a hare and badger (6)
12. Delay action, say, for a heavy load (6)
13. Novel Swiss family (8)
16. Cook apple and fry stick insect with it (8)
20. Prohibition his undoing – dismiss the thought from your mind (6)
21. Some extra velocipedes needed for journey (6)
23. Tried to change record first – what disgrace! (9)
24. Go off with a cycle of duty (4)
25. Emphasise where one can find a sleeper (9)

DOWN

2. Not disturbed by French translation of ‘flea’ as ‘puce’ (8)
3. Assert in court with some legal legerdemain (6)
4. Manner of take-off on the runway (8)
5. Band of soldiers needing help to start with (4)
6. Evade the way round town (6)
7. Argue about a boy (6)
10. Mistakenly I ask for alcoholic drink (4)
14. Rod has notes as prompt to cook outdoors (8)
15. Leaving out nothing with young lady I take on (8)
16. Outlook is tense (6)
17. Yes, the pig’s home is insubstantial (6)
18. Cut down and dismissed (4)
19. Open a French piece of wax (6)
22. Most important shareholder? (4)

SUDOKU

Easy

Each row and each column must contain the numbers 1 to 9, and so must each 3 x 3 box.

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

Hard

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 9 | | 3 | 8 | | | | |
| | | 7 | | | | 9 | | 3 |
| 6 | | | | | 7 | | | |
| 7 | 1 | | 2 | | | | 3 | |
| | 3 | | | | | | | 6 |
| | | | | 9 | | 8 | | 7 |
| | | | 1 | | 2 | | 6 | |
| | | | | 6 | | 5 | | |
| | | | | | | | 8 | |

EQUALISER

| | |
|---|---|
| 9 | 1 |
| 5 | 3 |
| 1 | 2 |
| 6 | 2 |
| 2 | 2 |

Place the four signs (add, subtract, multiply, divide) one in each circle so that the total of each across and down line is the same.

Perform the first calculation in each line first and ignore the mathematical law which says you should always perform division and multiplication before addition and subtraction.

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To try our new puzzle, Zygolex, go to www.zygolex.com

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SOLUTIONS

ACROSS
1. Potency (8)
6. Pack to capacity (4)
8. Poem (3)
9. In the fresh air (8)
10. Slat (4)
12. Sound of young bird (5)
14. ----- Callas, opera singer (5)
17. Pale (4)
18. Tropical tree (8)
20. High acidity of the blood (8)

DOWN
24. Mistake (4)
25. Glaringly bright (5)
26. Small boat (5)
29. Jupiter (4)
30. Unfriendly (8)
31. Scarlet (3)
32. Vertical spar (4)
33. Small telescope (8)

CRYPTIC CROSSWORD
1. The Canaries; 2 K9; 3 The Importance of Being Earnest; 4 Camulodunum (present-day Colchester); 5 Albatross; 6 To tip poison arrows for stunning game; 7 Pointless; 8 Canada; 9 Pointless; 10 Frank Lloyd Wright

NONAGRAM
Down – Kudos; Trace; Shyly.
Across – Kitties; Diary; Seedy.

MAGIC SQUARE
Reason: 10 Sak; 14 Barbecue; 15 Omission; 16 Future; 17 rest; 20; 21; 22; 23; 24; 25; 26; 27; 28; 29; 30; 31; 32; 33; 34; 35; 36; 37; 38; 39; 40; 41; 42; 43; 44; 45; 46; 47; 48; 49; 50; 51; 52; 53; 54; 55; 56; 57; 58; 59; 60; 61; 62; 63; 64; 65; 66; 67; 68; 69; 70; 71; 72; 73; 74; 75; 76; 77; 78; 79; 80; 81; 82; 83; 84; 85; 86; 87; 88; 89; 90; 91; 92; 93; 94; 95; 96; 97; 98; 99; 100; 101; 102; 103; 104; 105; 106; 107; 108; 109; 110; 111; 112; 113; 114; 115; 116; 117; 118; 119; 120; 121; 122; 123; 124; 125; 126; 127; 128; 129; 130; 131; 132; 133; 134; 135; 136; 137; 138; 139; 140; 141; 142; 143; 144; 145; 146; 147; 148; 149; 150; 151; 152; 153; 154; 155; 156; 157; 158; 159; 160; 161; 162; 163; 164; 165; 166; 167; 168; 169; 170; 171; 172; 173; 174; 175; 176; 177; 178; 179; 180; 181; 182; 183; 184; 185; 186; 187; 188; 189; 190; 191; 192; 193; 194; 195; 196; 197; 198; 199; 200; 201; 202; 203; 204; 205; 206; 207; 208; 209; 210; 211; 212; 213; 214; 215; 216; 217; 218; 219; 220; 221; 222; 223; 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Just when human spirits were being damned or rose above the unexpected, with the General Election, and the lead-up to taking the vote having the appearance of a Punch and Judy show, a number of exciting events in the chess world gave sustenance and credibility to the belief in everlasting human achievement and a gorgeous future for human creative abilities.

Given the election results and only days into Labour's landslide victory, the formation of the new Government heralded the appointment of Britain's first female Chancellor and finance minister, Rachel Reeves, who was a junior chess champion into the bargain! She stated on being appointed, 'It was the honour of my life,' and a 'historic responsibility being the first woman to be appointed Chancellor of the Exchequer', Britain's top economic and finance policymaker! In outlining her political development over the years, and most recently under Starmer as finance chief in 2021, she credits her father and a primary school teacher for fuelling an interest in chess, becoming the British Girls Under 14 Chess Champion, stating, 'This prepared me for my career in politics.' She stated further that 'chess is about getting you to look ahead, to think strategically and not just tactically, and to think about what your opponent's next move is going to be as well as your own!' This bodes well for chess at Government level, and chess as just described is and has been a tool for educational learning and putting in place methodologies for pupils and students in their learning curve. Although recently and under the past Government of Rishi Sunak, a one-off grant was given to chess to expand its presence by, for example, placing chess tables and sets in public places as one way of encouraging the general public to take up the Royal Game, it would be of even greater importance if chess was recognised as a sport by the new Government under Starmer. In that way, chess could be annually supported by grants from The Ministry of Sport and Culture. Practically every country in the world recognises chess as a sport and it is financially supported as such in these countries from Central Government! Funding from Sport England cannot be accessed for chess as it isn't officially recognised as a sport here in England! Time to ring in the changes, Rachel?

In August last year, Rachel Reeves challenged Rishi Sunak to a game of chess when the report came out of the PM's support to install 100 chess tables in British public parks which Reeves declared was far too little a number to make an impact on the general public! Along with the monetary one-off grant, Sunak avowed his intention to expand the game in schools! 'The PM stated at the time his (honourable and creditable) desire to get more British children playing chess, describing it as a "great skill" during his visit to Washington at the time. He linked this to, "the UK's inherent,"

The Challenge

The chess puzzle below is between Rachel Reeves v Abigail Cast played at the 4NCL tournament in March 1995. Reeves as White has played her King 66. Kg5..

What was Black's response given that they are a piece down in this end game?

The solution is opposite

The Chancellor's Craze, Chess Pays

anti-maths mindset' that he believed has hampered efforts to improve numeracy.' He further stated, 'I won't sit back and allow this cultural sense that it's ok to be bad at maths, to put our children at a disadvantage. It's about how we value maths in this country.' Fine words but I never found out the result of the Reeves versus Rishi Sunak chess game, and after nearly a year of that PM's fighting talk, no updates as to how any implementations of it have enriched children's education, given that six-figure sums of Government money have been changing hands? Perhaps Rachel could enlighten us?

On the question of children's engagement with chess, the recent announcement that a nine-year-old child would be representing England as one of our 10 Open team competitors in the forthcoming 180 countries Chess Olympiad to be held in Budapest, Hungary, this coming September! I will endeavour to find out how good her maths is.

Nine-year-old Bodhana Sivanandan, named as part of the English squad for the Chess Olympiad in Budapest, Hungary, this coming September marks another landmark in her stellar chess career. Before that, she will be participating in the British Championships in Hull, from 25th July to 4th August, which includes the British Women's Championship, and will be the youngest ever female contender to participate in this event. Her inclusion in the Chess Olympiad in England's team makes history as the youngest player ever to represent England internationally in any of our sporting activities! She is also on track to become the youngest grandmaster in the world. She lives in Harrow, London, and her parents are mystified as to where her talent has sprung from? Although her mother and father can play chess, none of the family has ever played competitively, and Sivanandan, who works in IT, and Lakshmy Prius, her mother, have said, 'It was all her own interest, she was just drawn to it, we never pushed her to chess or to train for it. During the pandemic, we, unlike many families, didn't see 'The Queen's Gambit' film that encouraged many more female players to take up the sport, but did watch 'The Queen of Katwe' film, 2016, about a young girl growing up in a slum in Uganda and who starts to play chess'. In March

2022 she won silver in the under 8 girls' group in the European Youth Rapid and Blitz Chess Championship aged six! Last December at the European Rapid and Blitz Chess Tournament in Zagreb, Croatia she became 'the youngest girl to avoid defeat against a GM, Vladislav Nevednichy, in a competitive game.' Perhaps Bodhana's temperament also lends itself to competitive sports in that she never gets flustered. She never gets an adrenaline rush when playing, she says, 'I just try to stay calm to find the best moves.' Her mother has said, 'From her face, we can't tell when she comes out of a match whether she won, drew or lost, her expression is always the same!' Bodhana's skills have drawn comparison with the young Judit Polgar, the Hungarian prodigy who at nine years old astounded everyone, including the players, at the 1986 New York Open with her prowess, and who went on to attain her GM title, a record at the time. Many accolades are being bestowed on Bodhana, such as from the IM and commentator, Lawrence Trent, who has described her 'as one of the greatest talents in recent history and hailed the maturity of her play, her sublime touch as truly breathtaking.' The rating order for the forthcoming Olympiad is, Vitiugov 2678, David Howell 2675, Michael Adams

2672, Gawain Jones 2640, Luke McShane 2617. The women's team are Jovanka Houska 2333, Lan Yao 2325, Harriet Hunt 2304, Katarzyna Toma 2241, and Bodhana Sivanandan 2185. Good luck to our teams and wishing Bodhana every success!

The Solution

66. Kg5, closing down the Black King's advance and attacking h5, Bg2, trying to keep the Black Bishop from being smooth and 'hopelessly' aiming to protect the advance of their e-pawn (their only hope left) on e6.
67. Bg6+, unfortunately for Black, White has seen further and attacks both the black King with check and the h5 pawn. The game is really over at his point! Good forking by White!
67...Kf7. 68. Bxh5, the last Black pawn moves to e5 in the knowledge that it and Black's game are now doomed!
69. Kf5, e4. 70. Bg5, Kh7, a waiting move.... 71. Bg6+, wait no longer!
Kg7. 72. Be8, Kf8. 73. Bc6, Bh3+. 74. Kf4, 1 - 0.

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