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Parking charges increase

Parking charges for electric vehicles (EVs) could climb by as much as 1,800% in Central London according to plans under consideration by Westminster City Council. Opposition councillors warned that the proposed charges, which include CO2 emissions-based costs, "could potentially have a dispro-

for electric vehicles

portionate impact upon disabled people and people on low incomes."

The council had "invested heavily" in EVs according to Councillor Paul Dimoldenberg, Cabinet member for City Management and Air Quality, and the new charges would keep costs "fair, proportionate, and as low as possible."

Currently, the cost to park EVs and plugin-hybrid cars are "extremely low as to be virtually nominal." The new scheme sees tiered costs based on factors including CO2 emissions and the zone parked in. However it will also include new charges for EVs varying from £1.46 to £4.62 per hour for battery-powered electric vehicles (BEVs). This is substantially more than the current hourly rate of 32p for up to four hours in the cheapest zones in the borough. The charges were proposed because, according to Cllr Cunnigham, "the use of EVs is increasing and this trend will only continue, thus rendering our current pay-to-park scheme's charging structure unsustainable going forward. It is therefore felt that now is the time to introduce a fairer and more proportionate scheme"

However, the increased costs would reduce incentives to go green by switching to an electric car and could undermine efforts to reduce emissions and improve air quality. "We are concerned that the proposed fee increases could potentially have a disproportionate impact upon disabled people and people on low incomes," Cllr Cunningham added.

Residents will soon be moving into the new 300 Harrow Road development, a 100% truly affordable housing scheme that has been completed in Westminster. It is the first major development completed by the council's Fairer Westminster strategy that sets out the local authority's commitment to increase the number of affordable homes available.

Half of the 112 homes were previously earmarked for market sale but the council last year changed the scheme to a mixture of council homes for social rent and affordable intermediate rent. All one-bedroom homes, including the studios, are set at intermediate rents and the homes with at least two bedrooms are council homes for social rent. This helps to meet the need for family-sized homes in Westminster.

The development at 300 Harrow Road is also the nation's first to provide the highest

airflow rate for any heating and cooling system of its type. This keeps homes at the desired temperature year-round and at a low cost. Residents can benefit from the use of air source heat pumps, solar panels, rainwater collection, and living roofs. This results in lower energy bills and a reduction in carbon emissions. The heat pumps provide heating and cooling to tenants and are 300% more efficient than standard gas boilers.

Along with the new homes, there are wider benefits for the community including a new enterprise space, community centre, and an early years childcare facility. As part of the council's social value commitment, the scheme also provides employment opportunities and skills initiatives with apprenticeships and work placements for locals in partnership with Willmott Dixon. 15 jobs have been created by this scheme and were retained by the contractor.





Housing Estate given Green Flag

Westminster City Council is the sole borough in the country with Green Heritage Accreditation for a housing estate as the addition of the Hallifield Estate secures the coveted Green Flag. This means the borough has not one but two Green Heritage Accreditation, marking an important milestone in the preservation and enhancement of historic features within its green spaces.

The council already holds three Green Flag Accreditation and says it will continue to "uphold its commitment to outstanding green space management," adding that the "dual success underscores the council's commitment to conserving historical features

at the highest standards while maintaining their character and appearance."

The Green Flag Award is an international recognition that recognises "superior green space management." Unlike automatic recognition, Green Flags are given following rigorous assessment, including mystery shoppers on on-site evaluation.

Currently boasting Green Flag Accreditations for Lillington & Longmoore Estate, Churchill Gardens Estate, and Lisson Green Estate, Westminster City Council expanded its portfolio last year by applying for the Hallfield Estate to be considered for the prestigious Green Flag. This marked the first entry for a new site in a decade.

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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 Santa image: Ralph from pixexid.com



Immigration plan could damage London's night industry, Night Czar warns



London's Night Czar, Amy Lamé, has warned of the hugely damaging impact that the Government's new immigration plans will have on the capital's night-time industries. The Night Czar has warned that plans from the Home Secretary's office, to raise the minimum salary needed for skilled overseas workers from £26,200 to £38,700, will cause significant long-term damage to a hospitality industry already struggling to fill vacancies.

There were 8,500 hospitality visas issued last year in the UK with the majority of them likely to have been based in the Capital. Analysis from UKHospitality has shown that around 95% of those visas would no longer be eligible under these plans, despite being offered competitive salaries.

"Our Capital's life at night is the best in the world," London's Night Czar, Amy Lamé, said, "but our hospitality industry has been facing significant pressure following the impact of the pandemic and ongoing cost-of-

shortages and challenges to fill vacancies since our departure from the EU, and these plans from the Government, will only make this worse and risk hugely damaging this vital industry. It will almost certainly lead to more businesses closing their doors for good.

She continued, "there is no doubt that more has to be done to provide British workers with the right skills, but we simply cannot close this industry off from the rest of the world. Our hospitality businesses need more skilled workers right now. I urge Ministers to urgently reconsider their plans and recognise the value and importance of our hospitality industry to help drive our economic recovery."

living crisis. "Businesses are already experiencing staff

Record number of night workers receiving at least **London Living Wage**

A record 80% of workers in night time industries now receive at least the London Living Wage according to new data, and the Mayor of London, Sadiq Khan, has today called on the Government to do more to help those working at night. Virtually all aspects of London's £520 billion economy are active around the clock and a quarter of London's workforce (1.3 million people) regularly work between 6pm and 6am. However, night workers can need more support compared to daytime workers.

Research from The Liminal Space shows that those who work at night are 37% more likely to have a heart attack, 44% more likely to have diabetes and six times more likely to get divorced than those who work during the day.

The Mayor is calling on the Government

to step forward and recognise the distinct needs of night workers and commission further research into how the impact of working at night can be reduced. The number of workers in night time industries receiving at least the London Living Wage has risen to a record 80%, up from 72% in 2017. However, more than a third (39%) of night time cultural and leisure workers including hospitality, private security, arts and entertainment- are still paid below the London Living Wage.

The capital's hospitality industry is already struggling to fill vacancies and the Mayor and Night Czar have warned that the Home Secretary's plans to raise the minimum salary needed for skilled overseas workers from £26,200 to £38,700 will cause significant long-term damage.

The Mayor of London, Sadiq Khan, has announced £170,000 of funding for a dedicated London team of cybersecurity experts to better protect Londoners from online harm. The new investment is part of a one-year pilot to boost the reach and capacity of the award-winning charity, the Cyber Helpline, which has already helped 600,000 people nationwide since 2020 and directly supports over 40,000 victims.

The new dedicated helpline team will provide Londoners with free expert advice on cybercrime including offering specialist one-to-one support for victims. The service works through a secure chatbot on the website, recording and processing requests

for help and advice 24 hours a day. It passes them on to a dedicated London team for a one-to-one phone and email contact as needed. The majority of the cases have centred around online harassment, cyberstalking, sextortion, and hacked social media accounts. Fewer than 35% of those seeking help reported their cases to the police.

This comes as new figures show fraud and computer misuse make up to 50% of all incidents of crime in England and Wales. As people do more online, the threat from cybercrime grows, including fraud, data theft, grooming and/or exploitation of children, stalking, and harassment. These crimes are harder to detect, more complex to investigate and operate across borders.







The skull of a "colossal sea monster" has been excavated from the cliffs of the Jurassic Coast in Dorset. It came from a pliosaur, a group of large marine predatory reptiles that swam the oceans 150 million years ago. The 2m-long fossil is among the most complete of its type ever found and gives new insight into these ancient animals.

The skull is part of a David Attenborough special on BBC One on New Year's Day.
There isn't a specimen anywhere else to

match it, according to local paleontologist Steve Etches. "It's one of the best fossils I've ever worked on. What makes it unique is it's complete," he tells BBC News. "The lower jaw and the upper skull are meshed together, as they would be in life. Worldwide, there's

hardly any specimens ever found to that level of detail. And if they are, a lot of the bits are missing, whereas this, although it's slightly distorted - it's got every bone present.

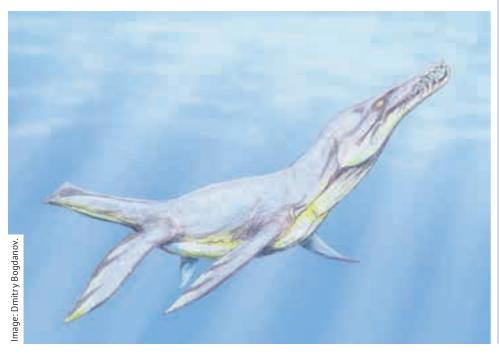
eyeonlondon.online

The skull alone is longer than the height of most humans, giving an idea of how enormous the rest of the animal must have been. With long and razor sharp teeth, it could kill its prey with just a single bite. The teeth are marked with fine ridges, helping their owner

pierce the flesh of its prey.

"The animal would have been so massive that I think it would have been able to prey effectively on anything that was unfortunate enough to be in its space," says Dr Andre Rowe from Bristol University. "I have no doubt that this was sort of like an under-

Prehistoric 'sea monster' discovered in Dorset



Network rail investing £4.2 billion to improve Scotland's railways



Network Rail has announced that it is spending £4.2 billion in Scotland's railways in the next five years to "make it safer, greener and more reliable.

Among the projects is electrifying the railway between Barrhead station and Glasgow Central for a "greener and more sustainable railway." Engineers have spent the past two years installing 14,400 metres of overhead power cables and renewing 130 metres of track. A milestone was reached after building work was completed and the first electric test trains ran along the route. This means that Network Rail is on track to bringing quieter electric trains. Work was also carried out at Barrhead station where the platform three was expanded by nine metres. This allows

for longer, four-carriage electric trains.

Another project is to reconnect Levenmouth in Fife to the railway for the first time in 50 years. This £116 million Scottish Government-funded project has been underway since 2019, laying down new track for the electrified line. Two new accessible statins are being built, at Cameron Bridge and at Levon. This hopes to be completed by the spring of 2024 and will lead to more transport, leisure and job opportunities for the local community. More public transport also means fewer cars on the road, meaning an improvement in air quality and a reduction in traffic.

Visit networkrail.co.uk for more information on the scheme and the other plans.

Remote Essex island to be used in the fight against climate change

Major works to build and sustain swatches of new saltmarsh habitats on a remote Essex island have reached a major milestone. This provides a lifeline for the land and its wildlife in a works with a changing climate and rising sea

Healthy saltmarshes are among the largest carbon lock-ups in the marine environment. However, rising sea levels and climate change are eroding these vital habitats with 85% of the UK's saltmarshes being lost since the mid 19th century.

Northey Island, cared for by the National Trust, is the largest single block of saltmarsh habitat in the Blackwater Estuary and has been at the forefront of coastal

adaptation for the last three decades. Since 2020, the Trust has been undertaking the largest habitat creation project in the island's history, helping to make the area better at withstanding impacts from climate change. Earlier this year, a 40-metre section of embankment was lowered and a further 200-metre section was removed. This allowed the sea to flood into an area east of the island. Over time, the hope is that high tides will deposit seeds and sediment, creating around 10 hectares of new saltmarshes. Along with other coastal adaptation work carried out on the island, a further 60 hectares of saltmarshes will be protected around the island for future generations.



London Home Football Traffic Watch

Compiled & edited by Fahad Redha

January 20, Arsenal v Everton, 14:00 January 21, Chelsea v Man United, 12:30 January 24, Chelsea v Real Madrid, 20:00 January 28, Tottenham v Man City, 14:00 February 4, Chelsea v Everton, 14:00

December 23, Fulham v Burnley, 15:00 December 23, Tottenham v Everton, 15:00 December 27, Chelsea v Crystal Palace, 19:30 December 28, Arsenal v West Ham, 20:15 December 31, Fulham v Arsenal, 14:00

December 31, Tottenham v Bournemouth, 14:00 January 5, Fulham v Rotherham United, 19:30 January 5, Tottenham v Burnley, 20:00 January 6, Chelsea v Preston North End, 17:30 January 7, Arsenal v Liverpool, 16:30 January 13, Chelsea v Fulham, 12:30

January 20, Arsenal v Crystal Palace, 12:30 January 30, Fulham v Everton, 19:45 February 3, Arsenal v Liverpool, 15:00 February 3, Chelsea v Wolves, 15:00 January 30, Tottenham v Brentford, 19:45

International News

Leader Vol Microsoft is planning to invest \$3.2 as France's. The UK's AI sector also conbillion (around £2.5 billion) in the UK tributes £3.7 billion to the UK economy and for artificial intelligence (AI) infraemploys 50,000 people across the country." structure and training. This marks the To support research on AI, Microsoft domain firm's largest investment in the country also plans to extend its Accelerating umanity since it started doing business here four Foundation Models Research (AFMR) decades ago. Brad Smith, vice chair and program to include prioritised access to president of Microsoft, described the Graphics Processing Units (GPUs), crucial investment in a blog post, stating that, for machine learning and the development ethical alongside the investment, the company of AI models, for the country's science and would also give UK-based researchers research community. Internet and businesses prioritised access to AFMR drives interdisciplinary research its Accelerating Foundation Models on AI alignment and safety, beneficial Research program. applications of AI, and AI-driven scien-'This infrastructure investment," he tific research and discoveries, including said, "will help to meet the exploding change in natural and life sciences. This hopes demand for efficient, scalable, and sustainto harness "the power of AI to accelerate able AI-specific compute power and the scientific discovery via multiscale multineeds of the private and public sector waitmodal data generation through prioritised ing to take advantage of the latest cloud access to Microsoft's AI tools." The proand AI breakthroughs. gram includes researchers from the UK's Microsoft also plans to make a multitop universities, including Cambridge, million-dollar investment to "train one Oxford, Imperial College, UCL, Bath, and ical million people with the skills they need Nottingham. to build and work with AL" That would To support UK workers, Microsoft also include initial training for unskilled workhas plans for a multi-million-pound investers hoping to enter the field of AI. "The ment to train as many as one million people program," Smith said, "will focus on buildwith the skills they need to build and work ing AI fluency, developing AI technical with AI, including expanded training for skills, supporting AI business transformapeople looking to start or transfer to a career in the sector. The program will work tion, and promoting safe and responsible cybers AI development and use." The training, he added, will include "the first Professional a in partnership with multiple learning and non-profit partners and focus on "building Certificate on Generative AI" and will also AI fluency, developing AI technical skills, offer follow-on and advanced training for supporting AI business transformation, industry professionals. and promoting safe and responsible AI Any prospective trainer is expected to complete Microsoft's "Responsible Generative AI" training, ensuring that development and use, including the first Professional Certificate on Generative AI.' processe The announcement comes as the they adhere to "the ethics and principles of Chancellor announced plans for an addideveloping AI solutions responsibly. tional £500 million into advanced comput-Chancellor of the Exchequer, Jeremy ing for AI at the Autumn Statement. This Hunt, celebrated the news in a blog post. brings the government's total planned The UK, according to Hunt, is leading public investment to over £1.5 billion. Europe in AI with its endeavours in the field, providing nearly £3.7 billion to the help This hopes to provide the country with the power infrastructure needed to "create a worldblock as well as employing over 50,000 law people. He called this a "vote of confileading AI ecosystem" where scientists and researchers "continue to make extraordidence" for the UK. "The UK is the tech hub nary new discoveries, benefiting all of society, and making the UK the best place in of Europe with an ecosystem worth more than that of Germany and France combined improve threat the world to start and grow an AI start-up," and this investment is another vote of according to the government. confidence in us as a science superpower.' 'Microsoft is one of the founding The investment from Microsoft was fathers of modern technology, and today's confirmed as Prime Minister Rishi Sunak concept unveiled £29.5 billion of investment announcement is a turning point for the into various innovative sectors, includfuture of AI infrastructure and development in the UK," Prime Minister Rishi Sunak said. "The UK started the global ing tech, life sciences, renewable energy, housing, and infrastructure at the Global conversation on AI earlier this month, and Investment Summit. "The UK is already the leading European Microsoft's historic investment is further tech ecosystem," the government says, evidence of the leading role we continue to which last year was worth more than play in expanding the frontiers of AI to hardouble Germany's and three times as much ness its economic and scientific benefits. solve issue Norvig





londoncalligraphy.com See website for dates

Jewellery making: all levels

This practical course will guide you in crafting metal jewellery to your own designs. Geared to all levels of experience, simple projects practising basic skills are set for beginners and intermediate learners, while more experienced makers are encouraged to extend their skills and experiment with complex approaches such as chain-making and stone-setting. Beginners will learn basic jewellery-making skills - piercing, filing, drilling, polishing, annealing and soldering. Intermediate/ advanced learners will have the opportunity to work on individual projects and to practise, improve and perfect their basic skills. You will have one-to-one advice and demonstrations from the tutor when

citylit.ac.uk

February 19 – March 25

Level 2 Certificate in Floristry

If you are interested in starting your career in floristry this is the course for you. The City and Guilds Level 2 Certificate in Floristry is an intensive one day a week course for two terms. You will gain an introduction to art and design for florists, how to plan, prepare and construct floral arrangements, including some specialist designs. On successful completion of this course you can progress to the more intensive Level 2 Diploma. This is a Level 2 Certificate course. To join this course you must have done a Foundation in Floristry, or equivalent.

waes.ac.uk January 12 - July 26

begin to learn about how to make tapas and most importantly - eat them! If you're vet to experience true Spanish cuisine, you're in for a real treat! This Spanish Tapas Class will teach you how to master the most loved Spanish food tradition - tapas. Perfect for entertaining and sharing (if you can)! On arrival for this fun and hands-on class, you will be greeted with a glass of wine, which will flow throughout the evening. Once you have made yourself at home you will get started with a fun and exciting demonstration displaying the dishes you will be cooking throughout the evening. You will be taught the traditional Spanish essentials behind some of the most famous dishes, and you'll be adding the Avenue twist for some exciting variations. With the help of the chefs, you will then get hands-on and cook up your feast before enjoying your gorgeously home cooked food with new and old friends - Spanish style!

theavenuecookeryschool.com See website for dates

Mastering Macarons - Macaron Making Course

Learn to create perfect macaron (French macaroon) every time with this one-day cooking course in London. The recipes taught include Macaron de Nancy, coconut macarons, traditional French macarons, and chocolate ganache. A six-hour group practical lesson (inclusive of a 30 minute break), all ingredients, a recipe booklet, an apron and tea towel. After completing this cookery course, you will leave with all items created during the day along with a mastery of macaron techniques. No prior knowledge is required for this course and it is suitable for both novices and cooks with some experience.

February 17

cordonbleu.edu

Commercial Management Training Courses

IPI Academy's commercial management courses, are especially designed for the commercial/contracts manager, will give you best practice knowledge and skills to make difficult decisions effectively and confidently as well as allowing you to gain a sound grasp of contract law and understand the financial principles and business implications on which a contract is built. The role of a commercial/contracts manager is exceptionally demanding and complex, especially as companies are increasingly looking at cost as a means of providing competitive advantage. By proactively managing contracts and understanding the commercial implications for your business you will be able to anticipate risks and resolve problems before they arise. ipi.academy

See website for dates

High Performance People Skills for

Learn how to develop strong, influential relationships with people from a variety of backgrounds, nationalities and professional functions. Empower and inspire your people to unlock their potential and build successful teams across different settings. Acquire critical coaching skills to share and receive feedback, helping your people to build on their strengths and improve their weaknesses. Become a truly authentic leader by focusing on what makes you unique. Gain skills and tactics to confidently confront poor performance and difficult people. Learn how to empower, delegate and influence others, even in situations where you have little authority. london.edu

March 4-8

Science, Technology, Engineering, & Maths

Make A Coffee Table Day Class

Make a coffee table to take away. The standard material used for this project is Pine. An upgrade to hardwood is possible if you are trying to match the table to your existing furniture. You will cut materials to size from the drawing, learn marking out techniques to create mortise and tenons for the side rails of the table and machine up the pieces for the table top. Use the Jointer to machine the edges for a perfect fit and the router to create the perfect mortise. $greatbritish woodshop. \dot{co.} uk$

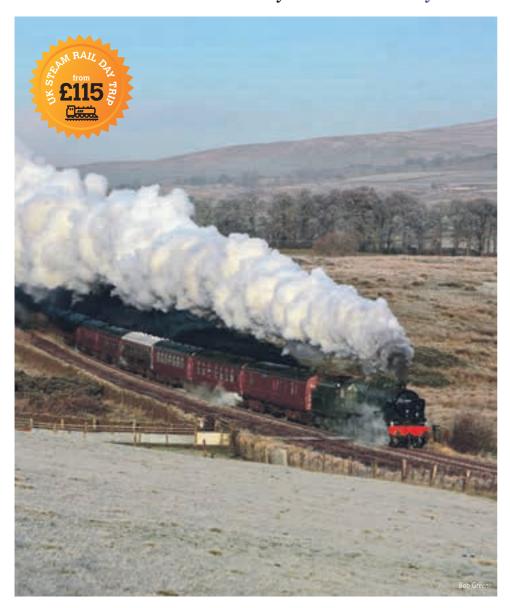
February 14

Sport & Fitness

Boom Cycle Class

Boom Cycle puts the fun factor into getting your sweat on. You decide how far to push yourself, the instructors are there to guide and encourage you the whole ride. It's the ultimate, 'party on a bike' experience for anyone looking for that full body workout. Everyone can be, and is part of, the Boom Cycle experience. Come join the party. boomcycle.co.uk

See website for dates



The Winter **Cumbrian Mountain Express**

Saturday 27th January, 17th February and 16th March 2024

This trip provides a wonderful opportunity to get out and about during the winter months, with the added bonus of steam haulage over the Northern Fells, including the spectacular Settle & Carlisle Railway. We have a high speed journey down the West Coast Main Line to Carnforth, hauled by a blue Class 86 electric locomotive. We then enjoy a circular steam tour outwards via Shap to Carlisle and back via the Settle and Carlisle line.

Join us from London Euston, Watford Junction, Milton Keynes, Northampton, Rugby, Nuneaton, Crewe and Preston to visit Carlisle.

There are three classes available:

Premier Dining includes a full English breakfast and a four course dinner freshly prepared on board and silver served at your seat.

First Class includes morning tea or coffee with a bacon/breakfast roll and a muffin and an afternoon service of tea or coffee with a savoury of the day followed by a scone with butter and jam.

Standard Class includes a reserved seat usually at a table for four.

	Fares	Adult	Junior	Family
	Premier	£295	£205	£898
	First	£195	£135	£593
	Standard	£115	£85	£358

Have a great day – The Safe Way – your welfare is our priority. Our travel procedures are available on our website. Refreshments available to purchase on board. Tables for two can be guaranteed in First/Premier for a £30pp supplement subject to availability. Organised by The Railway Touring Company.

The Railway Touring Company **UK Day Trips 2024**

The Bath & Gloucester Steam Express Saturday 10th February

Join us from London Paddington, Slough, Reading, Newbury to visit Bath or Gloucester.

The White Rose Saturday 24th February

Join us from London Kings Cross, Stevenage, Huntingdon and Peterborough to visit York.

The Cheshireman Saturday 2nd March

Join us from London Euston, Watford Junction, Milton Keynes, Northampton, Rugby and Nuneaton to visit Chester.

The Whitby Flver Wednesday 27th March

Join us from London Kings Cross, Stevenage, Huntingdon, Peterborough and York to visit Whitby.

The Cumbrian Mountain Express Saturday 11th May and 22nd June

Join us from London Euston, Watford Junction, Milton Keynes, Northampton, Rugby, Nuneaton, Crewe and Preston to visit

The Cumbrian Coast Express Saturday 1st June

Join us from London Euston, Watford Junction, Milton Keynes, Northampton, Rugby, Nuneaton, Crewe and Preston to visit Carlisle.

The Tynesider

Saturday 8th June

Join us from London Kings Cross, Stevenage, Huntingdon, Peterborough and York to visit Morpeth.

The Swanage Belle

Wednesday 26th June

Join us from London Victoria, Staines, Woking and Basingstoke to visit Swanage.

The North Wales Coast Express Saturday 6th July

Join us from London Euston, Watford Junction, Milton Keynes, Northampton, Rugby, Nuneaton and Crewe to visit Llandudno Junction or Holyhead.





















For more information please visit railwaytouring.net or phone 01553 661 500

The Railway Touring Company The Old Stables, Estuary Road, King's Lynn, Norfolk, PE30 2HL THE BOTTOM LINE by Doug Shanks

AUTUMN BUDGET:

The Autumn Budget 2023, while presenting a façade of economic optimism and strategic fiscal planning, has been met with a wave of scepticism from various quarters. Analysing this response requires delving into the nuances of the budget and the broader economic context in which it was framed.

TAX REFORMS: BOLD PROMISES, UNCERTAIN OUTCOMES

The headline of the budget is the implementation of the multinational top-up tax (MNTT), in line with the OECD's "Pillar 2" global minimum tax for larger multinationals. While this aligns the UK with international efforts towards a more equitable tax system, the success of such measures depends heavily on global cooperation and consistent implementation across jurisdictions. The complex nature of international tax legislation, coupled with the varied interests of participating countries, casts doubt on the practical efficacy of these reforms.

The global tax reform initiatives, while theoretically sound, present a labyrinth of implementation challenges. The reliance on international consensus and the intricacies of multinational tax compliance make the actual effectiveness of these reforms a matter of serious concern.

SIMPLIFICATION OR A STEP BACKWARDS?

The abolition of the offshore receipts from intangible property (ORIP) tax, initially set up to target IP holding structures of technology companies, is another contentious point. This simplification effort may ease some administrative burdens, but critics argue that it might also signal a retreat from aggressive measures against tax avoidance, particularly by high net worth entities and multinational corporations. Such a move can be seen as a concession to big businesses, potentially undermining the equitable distribution of the tax burden.

Furthermore, there's growing unease over the current methods of fraud prevention. The existing approach, often seen as overly aggressive, may actually hinder effective regulation. Advocates for reform argue for a more thoughtful, preventive strategy that emphasizes systemic changes and equitable enforcement. The call is for the government to shift focus towards fostering transparency and cooperation in tax matters, moving away from punitive actions. This balanced approach aims to create a fairer and more functional tax system, aligning with broader economic and social objectives.

ECONOMIC PROJECTIONS: OPTIMISM VS. REALITY

The budget's foundations rest on certain economic projections that some analysts find overly optimistic. Amidst global economic uncertainties, including geopolitical tensions, supply chain issues, and the residual impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, these projections might be disconnected from potential global economic downturns. Critics argue that these optimistic forecasts could lead to unrealistic expectations, potentially setting up the economy for a harder fall if these projections aren't met

PROMISES UNDER SCRUTINY AMIDST ECONOMIC UNGERTAINTIES

PUBLIC SECTOR AND SOCIAL WELFARE: THE HIDDEN COSTS

A significant portion of the budget's strategy focuses on private sector growth, with measures to incentivise investment and business activity. However, this emphasis raises concerns about the potential neglect of the public sector and social welfare programmes. Critics fear that prioritising private sector growth might lead to reduced funding for essential public services, widening socioeconomic disparities. The budget's approach could be seen as favouring corporate interests over public welfare, raising questions about long-term social and economic sustainability.

FISCAL DRAG: THE SILENT TAX INCREASE

The decision to freeze income tax thresholds until 2028, while seemingly benign, effectively constitutes a stealth tax increase due to fiscal drag. As incomes gradually increase with inflation, more people will find themselves in higher tax brackets. This aspect of the budget has been criticised for its indirect approach to increasing tax revenue, which could disproportionately affect middle-income earners.

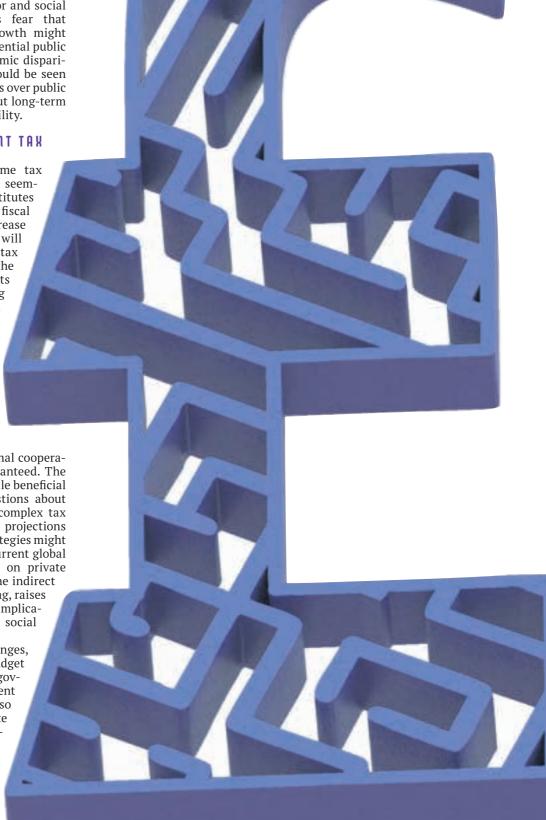
A SCEPTICAL OUTLOOK

The Autumn Budget of 2023, though framed as a step towards fiscal stability and growth, is met with a critical view on various fronts. The effectiveness of its tax reforms

hinges on a level of international cooperation that is by no means guaranteed. The simplification of tax codes, while beneficial in some respects, raises questions about the commitment to tackling complex tax avoidance schemes. Economic projections that underpin the budget's strategies might be too optimistic, given the current global uncertainties. And the focus on private sector growth, coupled with the indirect tax increases through fiscal drag, raises concerns about the long-term implications for public services and social welfare.

As the UK navigates these changes,

the success of the Autumn Budget will depend not only on the government's ability to implement these policies effectively but also on how these policies resonate with the evolving global economic landscape. The scepticism surrounding the budget highlights the importance of adopting a cautious and vigilant approach towards fiscal policy, especially given the current climate of uncertainty.





What, When, Where? ELIM & PHOTOGRAPHY December '23 - February '24

A World in Common: Contemporary African Photography

Bringing together a group of artists from different generations, this exhibition will address how photography, film, audio, and more have been used to reimagine Africa's diverse cultures and historical narratives. Moving beyond a traditional photography exhibition, the show seeks to explore the many ways images travel across histories and geographies. Using themes of spirituality, identity, urbanism and climate emergency, the exhibition will guide the viewer through dream-like utopias and bustling cityscapes viewed from the artists' perspectives. The exhibition follows artists across the many landscapes, borders and time zones of Africa to reveal how photography allows the past and the future to co-exist in powerful and transformative ways. Bankside SE1 9TG tate.org.uk

DANCE & OPERA

Until January 14

Edward Scissorhands: Matthew Bourne's New Adventures Sadler's Wells

Based on the classic Tim Burton movie and featuring the hauntingly beautiful music of Danny Elfman and Terry Davies, Bourne and his New Adventures Company return to this witty, bittersweet story of an incomplete boy left alone in a strange new world. In a castle high on a hill lives Edward: a boy created by an eccentric inventor. When his creator dies, he is left alone and unfinished with only scissors for hands until a kindly townswoman invites him to live with her suburban family. Can Edward find his place in the well-meaning community which struggles to see past his curious appearance to the innocence and gentleness within? Rosebery Avenue EC1R 4TN

sadlerswells.com
Until January 20

Giselle

London Coliseum

Giselle is a haunting story of innocence and betrayal – a timeless tale about the redemptive power of love. A young peasant girl, Giselle, is in love with Albrecht, a Duke who hides his title and his engagement to another. When Giselle discovers he has deceived her, she is driven to madness, and dies of a broken heart. Late at night, the Wilis gather by her grave, ready to welcome her into their fold as the vengeful spirits of betrayed brides, who force men to dance to their death. Will Giselle's love protect Albrecht from his fate? From the sunny optimism of Giselle's idyllic village life to a moonlit world of mystery and menace, Mary Skeaping's enthralling production features some of ballet's most dramatic scenes and otherworldly images.

London Coliseum, St Martin's Lane WC2N 4ES londoncoliseum.org January 11-21

Elektra

Royal Opera House

Klytämnestra plotted with her lover Ägisth to murder her husband King Agamemnon. Her daughter Elektra sent her brother Orest away to protect him. She is now an outcast in her mother's home, and her unkempt appearance and repeated honouring of her dead father provoke Klytämnestra's anger. Elektra longs only for revenge. Her sister Chrysothemis is desperate to escape from the palace. Klytämnestra is wracked with guilt and Elektra tells her it will only be assuaged by the queen's own violent death. News comes that Orest is dead. Then a mysterious man arrives at the court. Elektra recognizes the man as her brother. Orest. She is overjoyed. Orest begins to take his vengeance by brutally murdering his mother. Ägisth arrives, unaware of what is happening. Orest strikes him down too. Orest is acclaimed by the court and Elektra finally performs her dance of triumph, which has its own deadly conclusion.

Bow Street WC2E 9DD roh.org.uk

Ockham's Razor: Tess

The Peacock

January 12-30

An ensemble of performers weave together Hardy's words and the extreme physicality of circus to tell this tale of power, loss and endurance. Against a backdrop of projections, the cast wield wooden planks, climb shifting walls and move through ropes and swathes of linen to evoke the vast landscapes and interior worlds of Hardy's sexual Wessex. Female relationships, desire, consent, privilege and poverty; themes which resonate now as much as ever. See Tess as Hardy intended; strong, heroic and powerful. Ockham's Razor are a contemporary circus company who combine circus and visual theatre to make work that is arresting and entertaining. Portugal Street WC2A 2HT

Portugal Street WC2A 2HT sadlerswells.com January 31 – February 3

EXHIBITIONS

The Credit Suisse Exhibition: Frans Hals

National Gallery

Four hundred years since they were painted, Frans Hals's portraits still breathe with life. There's the hint of a smile, a hand resting nonchalantly on a hip, and just occasionally, a burst of laughter. Hals

was one of the most sought-after painters of his generation. A gifted artist whose deft brushwork was unparalleled, he built his reputation on a new style of portrait – highly unusual in his time – that showed relaxed, lively sitters, often smiling, and even laughing. 17th-century Dutch audiences were enthralled, and the popularity of his portraits earned him the status of Haarlem's famous son.

Trafalgar Square WC2N 5DN nationalgallery.org.uk
Until January 21

Burma to Myanmar

British Museum

From influential superpower to repressive regime, Myanmar, also known as Burma, has seen dramatic fluctuations in fortune over the past 1,500 years. Experiencing decades of civil war and now ruled again by a military dictatorship, Myanmar is an isolated figure on the world stage today, and its story is relatively little known in the West. However, the extraordinary artistic output of its peoples, over more than a millennium of cultural and political change, attests to its pivotal role at the crossroads of Asia.

Great Russell Street WC1B 3DG britishmuseum.org
Until February 11

REBEL: 30 Years of London Fashion

Design Museum

The exhibition is a landmark collaboration with the British Fashion Council (BFC) and celebrates the 30th anniversary of the BFC's NEWGEN programme, an initiative that supports the best emerging fashion design talent and aims to build global, high-end brands of the future. Guest-curated by BFC Ambassador for Emerging Talent Sarah Mower MBE and co-curated by Design Museum Senior Curator Rebecca Lewin, this exhibition tells the story of hundreds of fearless young designers who have transformed the fashion landscape, and brings together exuberant, rebellious and radical garments. The show features nearly 100 innovative fashion looks from groundbreaking debut and early collections, many of which have entered pop-culture history – and launched global design careers.

224-238 Kensington High Street W8 6AG designmuseum.org

Until February 11





Women in Revolt! December 23 - February 24

Art and Activism in the UK 1970-1990 Tate Britain

The first of its kind, this exhibition is a wide-ranging exploration of feminist art by over 100 women artists working in the UK. It shines a spotlight on how networks of women used radical ideas and rebellious methods to make an invaluable contribution to British culture. Their art helped fuel the women's liberation movement during a period of significant social, economic and political change. In the 1970s and 1980sa new wave of feminism erupted. Women used their lived experiences to create art, from painting and photography to film and performance, to fight against injustice. This included taking a stand for reproductive rights, equal pay and race equality. This creativity helped shape a period of pivotal change for women in Britain, including the opening of the first women's refuge and the formation of the British Black Arts Move-

Millbank SW1P 4RG tate.org.uk **Ongoing**

FAIRS & FESTIVALS

Disney100: The Exhibition

Dive into the world of The Walt Disney Company and experience 100 years of magic like never before! Disney100: The Exhibition is a once-in-a-lifetime event celebrating the iconic characters and stories that have captured the hearts of audiences around the globe. Disney has curated special behindthe-scenes glimpses into the creation of the most popular characters, films, shows, and attractions - from Disneyland to Walt Disney World and beyond. The ten magnificent and imaginatively themed galleries, with moving stories, unique interactive installations, and exciting background information, will take visitors on a journey through 100 years of The Walt Disney Company, celebrating the classics, as well as the latest members of the Disney family.

Royal Victoria Dock, 1 Western Gateway E16 1XL excel.london

Until January 21 *FAIRS & FESTIVALS*

Destinations: The Holiday & Travel Show Kensington Olympia

Grab your passport and prepare for the adventure of a lifetime at the return of Destinations: The Holiday & Travel Show. Showcasing the limitless diversity of sights, cultures, landscapes and wildlife the world has to offer, let your wanderlust go into overdrive with 600 leading travel brands to explore. Need help planning your next escape? Speak one-on-one with

travel specialists offering unlimited travel ideas, guidance and tailor-made deals. A climb to the gravity-defying Tiger's Nest Monastery in Bhutan? An expedition cruise through Patagonian waterways? Relaxing by the turquoise lagoons of French Polynesia? Whatever's on your bucket list, anything is possible with exclusive show-only offers and discounts. Hammersmith Road W14 8UX

olympia.london **February 1-4**

The Winter Decorative Antiques & Textile Fair 2024

Battersea Park

The Decorative Fair has, over its 35 years, built a powerful reputation amongst the decorating trade and private buyers. Some 130 specialist dealers showcase every discipline of antiques, fine and decorative art and 20th century design, dating from the 1700s to the 1970s at a wide range of price points. Exhibitors are resourceful in finding unique and special items to create and finish an interior scheme or garden room. Many exhibitors present room-sets, providing further inspiration on how to imaginatively display items. The Winter Fair is the perfect source for interior sparkle to brighten up your home, from modernist or period lighting and mirrors, to cheerful contemporary paintings and colourful works of art such as studio glass, crystal, and silverware. Or treat yourself to a new piece of jewellery or a vintage watch. Winter is also when The London Antique Rug & Textile Art Fair (LARTA) takes place up on our mezzanine, with 15 specialist dealers in rugs and carpets, tribal weavings, and a huge variety of antique textiles for decorating with, and collecting. If you are searching for a rug, or original textiles for the wall such as embroidered panels or tapestries, you'll find a great range to choose from.

Evolution London, Battersea Park SW11 4NJ decorativefair.com/winter-fair January 23-28

Relax, Restore, Reset: **Breathwork and Sound Healing**

Alexandra Palace

Sound Practitioner Kate Stewart and Breathwork Practitioner Lisa Sibley invite you for an evening of deep healing, rest and connection in the Creativity Pavilion. Experience the powerful combination of conscious connected breathwork and the soothing sounds of the Crystal Singing Bowls. The intention of this journey is to provide a safe space to deeply relax, to let go of what is no longer serving you, to open the heart, heal the body and to help bring about balance. Lisa will guide you to consciously connect to your breath whilst journeying through the energy centres in your body (Chakras). This helps create a sense of calm throughout your body, relaxing your mind and allows inspiration and transformation to flourish in the present moment.

Alexandra Palace, Alexandra Palace Way N22 7AY alexandrapalace.com January 24 - March 20

FAMILY & CHILDREN

Wonderlab: The Equinor Gallery.

Science Museum

This unmissable interactive experience will ignite your curiosity, fuel your imagination, and inspire you to see the world around you in new and exciting ways. Enjoy live science shows and demonstrations,

meet our wonderful science Explainers, and reveal the beauty of the science and maths that shape our everyday lives. Spread across seven different zones, there's loads of opportunity to interact with real scientific phenomena. See lightning strike before your eyes, play with forces on giant slides or travel through space under a canopy of

Exhibition Road, South Kensington SW7 2DD

sciencemuseum.org.uk **Ongoing**

Tots at the Docks

Museum of London Docklands

Free monthly play sessions inspired by the history of London's Docklands. Dive deep in the river, stack cargo, put on a puppet show or build the tallest tower! Tots at the Docks is an unticketed drop-in session that usually takes place on the last Wednesday of the month between 10.30am-2pm. On selected dates, as well as Tots at the Docks, the museum will be running additional (and totally free!) special events for under 5s with a range of fantastic early years partners.

No 1, West India Quay, Hertsmere Road E14 4AL museumoflondon.org.uk December 20 – March 27

A Christmas Carol

Alexandra Palace Filled with Dickensian, spine-tingling special effects, prepare to be frightened and delighted in equal measure as you enter the supernatural Victorian world of A Christmas Carol. It's a cold Christmas Eve and mean-spirited miser Ebenezer Scrooge has an unexpected visit from the spirit of his former business partner Jacob Marley. Bound in chains as punishment for a lifetime of greed, the unearthly figure explains it isn't too late for Scrooge to change his miserly ways in order to escape the same fate, but first he'll have to face three more eerie encounters.

Alexandra Palace Way N22 7AY alexandrapalace.com **Until Ianuary 7**

Winter Wonderland

Hyde Park

From high adrenaline rides to familyfriendly performances, classic festive treats to the newest in London's street food scene, and cosy fire pit bars to mythical ice kingdoms - there's guaranteed to be something for everyone. Make the most of your festive season in true Winter Wonderland style! The event will be open from 10:00am to 10:00pm daily, excluding Christmas Day. Mornings are great for families, where you can explore Winter Wonderland at a leisurely pace. When the evening comes around, Hyde Park is transformed by thousands of sparkling lights – so grab your mulled wine, hot chocolate, or stein of Bavarian beer and get ready to join in the festive fun.

Hyde Park hydeparkwinterwonderland.com Until January 1

Fitness Focus supplement

Swimming

Aside from being a valuable skill that could save your life one day, swimming is one of the best ways to get fit, giving your whole body a full workout. It can engage and tone every one of your muscles and help you burn calories. In addition, swimming removes the need for weights or any equipment, as the resistance from the water fills the gap. There are various techniques to learn and master and a number of disciplines including water aerobics, water polo, racing, and diving. And best of all, it's completely inclusive to all ages and fitness levels, allowing you to practise at your own pace. It is also a low impact exercise and therefore can be good for anyone with injuries or conditions such as arthritis.

ymcaclub.co.uk

Rock Climbing

Like swimming, climbing can be practised by most people without much equipment. You don't necessarily have to be a certain age or height to be a great climber. There may be some factors that make some more predisposed to the sport than others but that shouldn't put you off from trying. There are so many skills to master but they help strengthen your muscles, helping to make it a very rewarding sport for beginners and professionals alike. The satisfaction when you reach the summit, even if it's just a wall, will make you want to go back, time and time again. And just as swimming opens up many possibilities the next time you travel, learning to climb could open the door to a new kind of adventure that you never considered before! londonclimbingcentres.co.uk

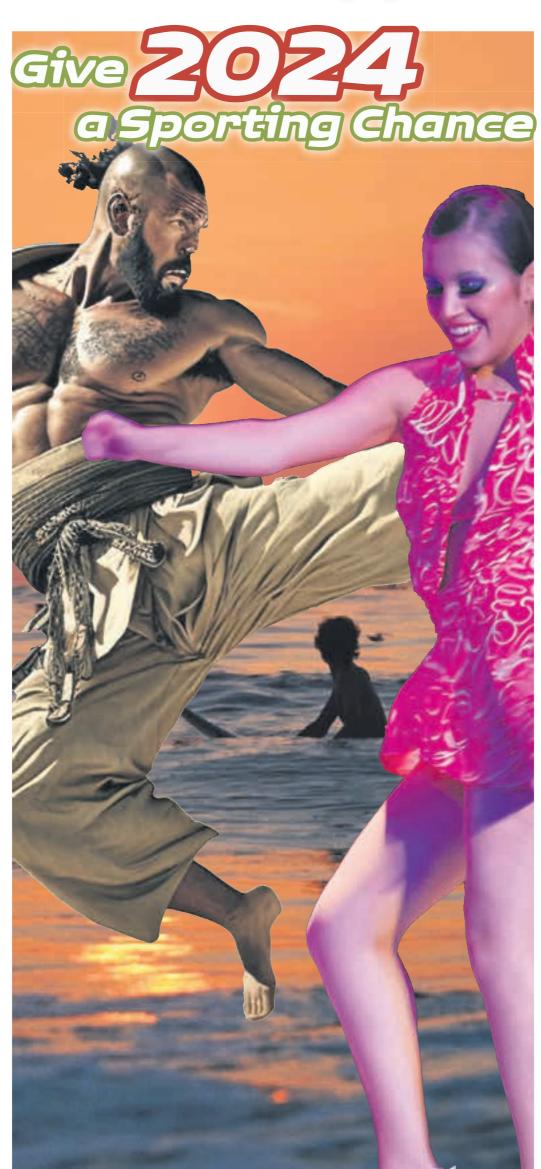
Yoga

Few sports can help your physical and mental wellbeing as much as yoga. The slow movements and deep breathing techniques help with blood flow and warm up your muscles. Meanwhile, holding a pose can build up strength. It can also be as good as basic stretching for easing pain and helping to improve mobility for those with lower back pain. No wonder it's recommended as a treatment for chronic low back pain. Even the discomfort of arthritis, one review by John Hopkins has found, can be eased with some gentle yoga. Research has shown that it helps with mental health including a boost in alertness and enthusiasm as well as a reduction in stress. Multiple studies have highlighted its benefits in arthritis, osteopenia, balance issues, oncology, women's health, and chronic pain, to name a few.

johnreed.london

Martial Arts

The first obvious benefit to martial arts is self-defence. It can give you the skills you need to survive dangerous situations. However, it has also been shown to improve flexibility as well as improving memory and learning skills. Linked to that, all martial arts promote special awareness along with coordinated movements with another person. Some even employ the use of props and tools



to that end. Some, including Kempo, encourage the lower part of the body to act as a base to allow the upper body to manoeuvre. And because of the environment, they can also promote social skills and teamwork. This is especially valuable for children, allowing them to resolve conflicts and show compassion. Additionally, repetitive movements and stances will benefit your health in other ways including improved posture, better freedom of movement, and as a result, a lower risk of injury.

lower risk of injury.

martialarts-fitness.co.uk

Dancing

If you want the benefits of martial arts but are put off by the idea, why not try dancing? It's as much a sport as it is an art form and a way to express yourself. All cultures from ancient times to the modern day have developed their own forms of dancing. It is a truly creative outlet that builds self-confidence and a sense of accomplishment. A new world can open up once you learn the basic rhythms of dancing. You can burn as much as 250 to 450 calories per hour, making it a great way to manage your weight. Being on your feet helps strengthen your bones and moving your joints improves flexibility. According to a study done by the Albert Einstein College of Medicine, dancing has been shown to help slow the onset of Alzheimer's, dementia, and Parkinson's.

city-academy.com/danceclasses

Surfing

Surfing offers a dynamic full-body workout that strengthens muscles, improves cardiovascular fitness, and enhances flexibility and coordination. Beyond the physical benefits, the sport creates a unique connection with nature, providing stress relief. Surfing isn't confined to the waves; it opens up opportunities for travel and exploration, turning coastal destinations into your playground. Whilst chasing the perfect waves you will get the chance to explore the world's various climates and cultures, from bustling cities to remote villages. Surfing will offer a deeper appreciation for the environment, with many surfers becoming advocates for the protection and preservation of the ocean. But it's not just about the workout, travel, and environmental consciousness; there's a profound beauty in surfing that will stimulate all the senses.

Surfingengland.org

Motorsports

If you've ever been on a long drive, you know that driving is more than just sitting down. It requires serious concentration and motorsport is the pinnacle of it. Learning to control a car on a race track will teach you all about car control. You need lightning-fast reaction times to find the right time to brake, and great coordination to manage the gears and pedals. And there are fantastic communities all over the world bringing people passionate about these machines together.

Compiled & edited by Fahad Redha

Eitness Focus by Natalie Shanahan

The past few years have seen a welcome surge in menopause awareness. Previously, women's health has been under-researched, misunderstood, and dismissed. It was only in 1993 that women were allowed to participate in clinical trials, even for products specifically meant for them!

fear of "bulking up". This mindset must change. Both men and women naturally lose muscle as they age. In fact we lose about 8% each decade after age 30 and this decline accelerates during the peri-menopause and after age 60 in men.

Heavy lifting sends a signal to the brain to activate all the available muscle fibers

shorter but more intense HIIT. This style of training can boost your VO2 max (how much oxygen you can use) by as much as 46%, raise your power at lactate threshold and significantly lower your resting heart rate. It also stimulates the body to increase your mitochondria content, allowing you to burn more fat for energy when you are

not exercising. It is as if your body knows it

is going to need energy for these workouts

and causes your liver and muscle cells to

absorb glucose from your blood and store it

as glycogen ready to fuel your next session.

A task previously performed by E2 in your

reproductive years. This is an excellent

way to balance blood sugar and improve

insulin sensitivity, therefore improving

cardiovascular and metabolic health for

Too many long medium intensity work-

outs can not only cause extreme fatigue

but also result in increased levels of the

stress hormone, cortisol. This hormone

increases during menopause anyway and

encourages the body to store fat round

the middle. To counter this effect,

consider swapping out one of these

vears to come.

that is responsible for that stressful 'flight or fight' feeling, doing wonders for your energy levels.

Another important factor to consider is nutrition. There are so many conflicting nuggets of wisdom out there, it is hard to know what is best. Like most things in life, the answer is nuanced. Everyone is different and there is no one size fits all answer. However, there are some non-negotiables

Pumping Iron for for active women. The most important of which, is to eat a protein rich meal before Perimens are changing. Where menopause Perimens is no longer non

is concerned, information is no longer non existent or just a paragraph in the medical textbooks. It can be found in prime time documentaries, the press and social media.

It is now widely accepted that regular exercise and a healthy diet can help manage symptoms of menopause. However, what if you already do that? According to the Pure Gym UK fitness report, around 10 million people are currently members of a gym. This is predicted to increase over the next decade. Why then do countless women, who workout regularly and eat healthily, still suffer with the fatigue and weight gain associated with this phase of life. The 'move more, eat less' tactic associated with weight loss that worked so well in their 20s, is now leaving them exhausted, undernourished and thick around the middle. As hormones change in the perimenopause, so training methods must too.

There are three main types of estrogen, estrone (E1), estradiol (E2) and estriol (E3). E1 is the only estrogen your body makes after menopause. E2 is the most common type in women of child bearing age. E3 is the main estrogen in pregnancy. Estradiol (E2) is an anabolic hormone, essential in muscle growth and repair. As this hormone decreases in perimenopause, women find it increasingly harder to maintain lean metabolically active muscle. With less muscle, these women have less energy for training and burn less calories at rest, which can in turn, result in the well known middle aged spread.

The best way to attenuate this is to turn up the intensity. Think strength, power and HIIT (high intensity interval training). Lifting weights that are heavy enough to fatigue the muscle after only 3-8 repetitions, will build strength and increase metabolic rate even in the absence of E2.

Unfortunately, there is still a general trend among women to do lighter weights for higher repetitions out of

possible in order to get the job done. This mind muscle connection works on a neurological level to create a really strong contraction and produce explosive power. On a cellular level, it stimulates the production of mitochondria, the powerhouses of the cells. The more of these, the greater the resting metabolic rate and the less chance of that middle aged spread. Combine these intense workouts with adequate rest, sleep and enough protein to really reap the benefits. For those women out there who fear they will end up looking like Arnie, you can rest assured, you won't even come close! In fact, testosterone, one of the main anabolic hormones in both men and women, is significantly lower in women than in men. This makes it incredibly hard for women of any age to gain muscle size, even when they want to. In fact, men's levels are around 200-1200 ng/dl, compared to just 15-70 ng/dl in women of reproductive age. Even men at the lower end of the range (200 nd/dl), will still have more than twice the amount as a woman at the higher end of the women's normal range (70 nd/ dl). Therefore, focusing on nutrition and training to maintain as much metabolically active lean muscle mass is essential at this stage of life.

You may think it sounds counterintuitive to up the intensity when already exhausted. It doesn't have to be. By truly recovering you will be ready to push to your max in each session. If you are battling through long endurance sessions several times a week, it will be worth lowering the duration by a couple of days and a

and after exercise. Don't cut carbs, instead choose nutrient dense options from wholegrains, root vegetables, pulses and fruit. Don't go down the low fat route, get plenty of omega 3 rich seafood, nuts and seeds. Eat plenty of fiber from whole food sources and have a wide variety of fruit and vegetables in every meal.

There are a host of other health benefits associated with strength training. These include stronger bones, younger looking skin, improved cognition and it is one of the most important things you can do to reduce the risk of neurodegenerative disorders as you age.





Redefining Fitness

A Q&A with **PROATHLON** founders, **Rachel Surgeoner** & Simon Jackson

How did the idea for Proathlon come about, and what motivated you to create a fitness centre that focuses on small group personal training?

Rachel Surgeoner, my wife and cofounder of PROATHLON, planted the seed for setting up our own facility. We both worked as freelance personal trainers at Fitness First in Paternoster Square, running successful small group training programs. However, coaching in a busy gym became frustrating. We explored the idea of opening our own facility focused on small group personal training, offering high-level coaching at a fraction of the cost of 1:1 sessions. After a ski trip, Rachel found the commercial unit on 21 Ludgate Hill, and Proathlon was born.

Can you share more about the unique features of Proathlon's small group personal training sessions and how they differ from traditional fitness classes?

Our small group sessions prioritise coaching, making them more comparable to 1:1 training than traditional classes. With a maximum group size of six, we can offer individual coaching, catering to diverse fitness levels. Our bias towards weight training, using a variety of equipment, ensures members become proficient in many exercises.

In a market filled with various fitness options, what do you believe sets Proathlon apart, especially in terms of personalised support?

Our program delivers results, with members getting fitter, stronger, and increasing muscle mass. Every member receives a personalised lifestyle and nutrition plan, joining a private Facebook group for nutrition education. Regular check-ins for review and improvement contribute to a holistic approach to health and fitness.

The combination of personalised training plans, nutrition support, and ongoing assessments is a comprehensive approach. How did you come up with this holistic approach to fitness, and what benefits have you seen for clients?

We recognized that without focusing on nutrition, daily non-exercise activity, and recovery, members would achieve average results at best. Our holistic approach not only reduces body fat but also improves overall health, mood, energy levels, sleep, and more.

Can you elaborate on the range of classes Proathlon offers, and how do you ensure each class caters to diverse fitness levels?

We offer weight training and sweat sessions. Weight training focuses on coaching safe and effective techniques, while sweat sessions are high-energy and great for cardiovascular fitness. New members go through a 1:1 initial assessment, guiding them to the most suitable sessions

The dedication of your expert trainers is highlighted. How do you go about selecting and training your trainers to ensure they align with Proathlon's commitment to client success?

Finding exceptional, passionate trainers who are also nice people is challenging. Our team, together for over eight years, regularly meets to fine-tune programs and discuss client progress, ensuring alignment with Proathlon's commitment to success.

Could you share a success story or an example where a client's fitness goals were achieved through Proathlon's training programs and support?

Karin Zarnack, aiming to reduce body fat, experienced transformative results through a personalised program combining weight training, reduced highintensity sessions, and careful nutrition monitoring. Another success story is Nick Harrison, who lost 12 kg of fat mass while improving overall fitness, strength, and well-being.

As the owner, what challenges have you faced in establishing and running Proathlon, and how have you overcome them?

The greatest challenge has been COVID-19, prompting a quick shift to online sessions. Support from the community was crucial. Juggling multiple roles led to employing a business coach, facilitating systemization and delegation, allowing a focus on working on the business, not just in it.

How do you stay updated with the latest trends and research in fitness, and how does this knowledge influence the programs and services offered at Proathlon?

Continuing professional development is at the heart of PROATH-LON. We submit points annually to exercise professional registers. If a new exercise, program, or nutrition intervention holds value, we include it after putting ourselves through it first.

Looking ahead, do you have any plans for expanding or introducing new features and programs at Proathlon? How do you envision the future of the fitness centre?

In 2024, we're doubling our timetable, introducing two new weight training sessions and one new sweat session. Expansion is on the horizon, making Proathlon an exciting space to watch





Sports fixer becember to February

Serpentine Running Club

January 1, New Year's Day 10k, Lee Valley Indoor Open Meeting

January 1, New Year's Day 3k Fun Run

January 6, Country to Capital

January 6, Middlesex XC Championships

January 7, Regent's Park 10k

January 7, Welwyn Half Marathon

January 13, Start Fitness Metropolitan League 8k

January 20, Lee Valley Indoor Open Meeting

January 21, Canterbury 10 mile

January 21, Farnborough Half Marathon

January 21, St Albans Fred Hughes 10 mile

January 26, Muscat Marathon

January 27, Lee Valley Indoor Open Meeting

January 27, Southern Counties XC Championship

February 4, Chichester 10k

February 4, Regent's Park 10k

February 4, Watford Half Marathon

February 7, Lee Valley Indoor Open Meeting

serpentine.org.uk

Swim Serpentine

Swim Serpentine is a swimming event that takes place in the world-famous Serpentine lake in London's Hyde Park. There are four distance options to choose from, making this the perfect event for an enjoyable and memorable open water swim.

swimserpentine.co.uk

Cycling in 2024

New Year's Day Ride to Kent, London Clarion New Year's Day Ride to Horton Kirby via Farningham and back to London.

February 25, Hell of the Ashdown, Westerham, Kent

March 2, UKCE Cambridgeshire Classic, Huntingdon Cambridgeshire

March 3, Kentish Killer 2024, Longfield, Kent

Running Events in the South-East

December 20, Chase the Moon Battersea Park, 5K & 10K

December 23, Wimbledon Christmas Run

January 6, Battersea Park Half Marathon

January 6, Tatton 5K & 10K

January 7, Victoria Park, 5K, 10K, & Half Marathon

January 13, QE Olympic Park, 5K & 10K

January 14, Dorney Duathlon

January 14, Run Heaton Park, 5K, 10K, Half Marathon, & Junior Race

January 14, Richmond Park Half Marathon

January 14, Run Dorney 5K, 10K, & Half Marathon

January 21, Regents Park, 5K & 10K

January 24, Chase the Moon Battersea

Park, 5K & 10K

January 27, Lee Valley Velopark

January 28, Crystal Palace 5K, 10K, Half Marathon, & Juniors

January 28, Finsbury Park 5K, 10K, & Half Marathon

January 28, Chepstow Running Festival 5K, 10K, & Half Marathon runthrough.co.uk

Festive Swims around London & South-East

Through December including Christmas Eve, 27th, & 29th, Hampton Pool hamptonpool.co.uk

Christmas Day, Brockwell Lido brockwellswimmers.com

December 26, Deal Rotary Icebreakers Boxing Day Dip, North side of Deal Pier December 26, Folkestone Lions Club Boxing Day Dip, Sunny Sands Beach folke.life

Festive Swims in the South-West

December 25, Boscombe Macmillan White Christmas Dip, Right of Boscombe Pier **whitechristmasdip.co.uk**

December 25, Bude Surf Life Saving Club, Crooklets Beach *visitbude.info*

December 26, Paignton Lions Club, Paignton Seafront Beach **flipflopsorwellies.co.uk**

December 26, St Ives, Pothminster Beach **stivesindecember.co.uk**

January 1, Lyme Regis, Sandy Beach flipflopsorwellies.co.uk

Gymnastics

January 28, Jumpz Gymnastics New Year Invitational 2024, Jumpz Gymnastics Club

February 4, Gymnastics For All, The Vault, West Oxfordshire Retail Park, Haddon Place, Carterton OX18 3FP

February 10-11, Ruby, Topaz & Quartz, The Vault, West Oxfordshire Retail Park, Haddon Place, Carterton OX18 3FP

February 24-25, Ruby, Topaz & Quartz, Flic Flac Gymnastics Centre, Charnock Richard, Lancashire

independentgymnastics.com

Ice Rinks in London

Until New Year's Eve, Skylight, Tobacco Dock Ice Rink, Wapping Lane, St. Katharine's & Wapping, E1W 2SF

Until January 1, Hyde Park Winter Wonderland, Hyde Park, W2 2UH

Until January 1, Skate West End, Westfield London, White City, W12 7GF

Until January 3, Alexandra Palace Ice Rink, Alexandra Palace Way, N22 7AY

Until January 7, Glide at Battersea, Battersea at Circus Road West, Nine Elms, London, SW8 5BN

Until January 7, Queen's House, Queen's House, Greenwich, SE10 9NF

Until January 7, Hampton Court Ice Rink, Hampton Court Palace in East Molesey, KT8 9AU

Until January 7, The Ice Rink at Westfield London, Westfield London, White City, W12 7GF

Until January 7, The Queen's House Ice Rink, Greenwich, Romney Rd, London, London, SE10 9NF

Until January 14, Somerset House, Strand, WC2R 1LA

Until February 24, Canary Wharf Ice Rink, Canada Square Park, Canary Wharf, E14 5AB

Ice Rinks in the South

Until December 31, Lightning Fibre Ice Rink Eastbourne, Enterprise Centre, Eastbourne, East Sussex, BN21 1BD

Until January 3, Skate Bournemouth, Lower Gardens, Westover Road, Bournemouth, Dorset, BH2 5AH

Until January 7, Brighton Royal Pavilion Ice Rink, The Royal Pavilion, Brighton, East Sussex, BN1 1EE

Until January 7, Westquay on Ice, The Esplanade, Medieval Walls, West Quay Shopping Centre, Southampton, Hampshire, SO15 1QE

Gardens, Barry Avenue, Windsor,
Berkshire, SL4 5HZ
Until January 7, Ice Skating in The Park,

Until January 7, Windsor on Ice, Alexandra

Bognor Regis, West Sussex, London Road, Bognor Regis, West Sussex, PO21 1UU

Until January 7, Portsmouth on Ice, Guildhall Square, Portsmouth, Hampshire, PO1 2AB

Until February 18, Worthing Ice Rink, Steyne Gardens, Worthing, West Sussex, BN11 3DT





What, When, Where? December '23 - February '24 FILM & PHOTOGRAPHY

The Winter Editions

Photographers' Gallery The Winter Editions is a new Print Sales Gallery collection that celebrates the beauty, wonder, and whimsy of the season as the winter's festivities begin. Twelve artists interpret the theme in their distinctive style, inviting us to embark on a visual journey through winter landscapes that span from the vast expanse of the Siberian Arctic to the lush and mystical forests of Croatia.

16-18 Ramillies Street W1F 7LW thephotographersgallery.org.uk **Until January 21**

London Film Fair

Royal National Hotel

Meet the stars of your favourite classic cinema and cult television programmes. You'll have the chance to get an autograph and have your photo taken with the guests. The London Film Fair will appeal to avid film buffs, collectors, archivists researchers and students making it a must attend event. The conventions also brings dealers from all over the UK, Europe, US, Canada, Australia and South America that specializes in vintage and modern film memorabilia. Items cover the history of cinema from the silents to the present day MUSIC blockbusters.

38-51 Bedford Way WC1H 0DG londonfilmconvention.co.uk January 28

Taylor Wessing: Photo Portrait Prize 2023

National Portrait Gallery

The Taylor Wessing Photo Portrait Prize returns to the Gallery in St Martin's Place after three years. Showcasing talented young photographers, gifted amateurs and established professionals, the competition celebrates a diverse range of images and tells the often fascinating stories behind the creation of the works. The selected images, many of which are on display for the first time, explore both traditional and contemporary approaches to the photographic portrait whilst capturing a range of characters, moods and locations. In addition to first, second and third prizes, the National Portrait Gallery has also launched a new £8,000 commission.

St Martin's Place WC2H 0HE npg.org.uk

Until February 25

Margo Price

Margo Price has something to say but nothing to prove. In just three remarkable solo albums, the singer and songwriter has cemented herself as a force in American music and a generational talent. A deserving critical darling, she has never shied away from the sounds that move her, the pain that's shaped her, or the topics that tick her off, like music industry double standards, the gender wage gap, or the plight of the American farmer.

1a Camden High Street NW1 7RE

koko.co.uk January 30

A Piano & String Quartet Perform Symphonic Anime Film Scores Iazz Café

An intimate live and immersive experience with Stompy's Playground, a piano and string ensemble, lovingly recreates the themes and compositions from Studio Ghibli - arguably the greatest collection of animated films of all time. Lush, romantic, packed with visual energy and excitement, expect to hear the unique and compelling scores from Grave of

the Fireflies, Princess Mononoke, Spirited Away and more performed live alongside a bespoke audio-visual display that'll take you through the magical world of the Japanese animation giants.

5 Parkway, Camden NW1 7PG

thejazzcafelondon.com

January 15

Depeche Mode

O2 Arena

Following stadium and arena shows across Europe, Mexico, Canada and the US this summer and fall, Depeche Mode are set to extend the Momento Mori tour into 2024, with 2 dates at The O2 in January. They'll be joined in support by special guest Nadine Shah. Even more fans will now have a chance to experience the raw, emotive power of the show, hailed by Rolling Stone as "a stunning celebration of life and music." Having sold more than 100 million records and played to more than 35 million fans worldwide, Depeche Mode remains an ever-evolving and singularly influential musical force.

Peninsula Square SE10 0DX

theo2.co.uk

January 22-27





What Is a few Mark Albert Hall Songbook Proposed Albert Hall Songb **Royal Albert Hall Songbook**

The Royal Albert Hall Songbook is a free, interactive concert which explores the vast musical history of one of the world's most iconic venues. Three musicians from Albert's Band will visit you to lead a nostalgic journey through the musical history of the Royal Albert Hall through songs, stories and audience participation. During the one-hour concert, enjoy a series of incredible songs that have been performed at the Hall by artists including Dame Vera Lynn, Sir Tom Jones, The Beatles and Frank Sinatra. All participants will receive a commemorative song book containing the lyrics to the music played and photos from the Hall's archives. Kensington Gore, South Kensington

royalalberthall.com From January 9

TALKS, TOURS, & WALKS

Liquid History Tours

St.Paul's Underground

Following in the footsteps of Shakespeare & Dickens you stumble along the "Street of Shame". Pausing to quench our thirst in at least 4 historic pubs, you can sample the wide selection of beer, gin and other delights at your leisure. From ancient art nouveau gems to back street boozers and Victorian gin palaces we experience some of the oldest pubs in the city, with some dating back 350 years. En-route enjoy iconic sights such as St.Paul's cathedral before exploring hidden alleyways and quiet courtyards far from the maddening crowds. Listen to the gruesome legends of Sweeney Todd, and hear the haunted happenings of London's most ghostly pubs, before finishing on the edge of Covent Garden.

liquidhistorytours.com See website for dates

Sara and Cariad's Weirdos Book Club Live!

Join comedians and authors Sara Pascoe (Out of Her Mind, Taskmaster, The Great British Sewing Bee, Comedians Giving Lectures, Guessable) and Cariad Lloyd (Griefcast, Austentatious, Alan Partridge, Peep Show, QI) for a very special live edition of their Weirdos Book Club podcast to celebrate the paperback release of Cariad's book You Are Not Alone. Weirdos Book Club is a space for the lonely outsider to feel accepted and appreciated. For this live show Sara and Cariad will be joined by some extra special guests! Welcome to your new book club! Cariad's paperback You Are Not Alone, published by Bloomsbury, is available to pre-order with your ticket (for collection on early release on the night of the event). There will be a book signing after the show.

107 Charing Cross Road WC2H 0DT foyles.co.uk January 25

THEATRE

Almeida Theatre

Zula is bold and brilliant, a singer who ignites the stage. Wiktor is withdrawn and damaged, a composer longing to write. Irresistibly drawn to each other, they dream of escape. But in communist-controlled Poland that can be a dangerous thing. Based on Paweł Pawlikowski's Academy Award-nominated film, Cold War is an epic love story spanning the decades and breadth of Europe at its most divided. Featuring traditional Polish songs, stirring choral arrangements, alongside music from Grammy Award-winner Elvis Costello, Conor McPherson's (Girl from



Natural History Museum
Discover the fascinating work of

female scientists whose research has contributed to our understanding of space, meteorites and planetary materials. Take a guided tour of the first-floor Hintze Hall balconies and Minerals Gallery and hear the gripping stories of the female scientists whose contributions changed our understanding of space. Encounter numerous treasures, including rare meteorites, as you learn about the research of female space scientists past and present, including some who've worked at the Museum. Discover more about our displays and the cutting-edge science and space research being done. Cromwell Road, South Kensington

SW7 5BD nhm.ac.uk January 27



Baker Street:

The World's First Underground Meet in front of the Sherlock Holmes statue outside Baker Street Station Discover the origins of the world's first Underground network. Opened on 10 January 1863 as part of the Metropolitan Railway, Baker Street was home to the launch of a revolutionary idea – carrying passengers beneath Victorian London's congested streets. Cutting a 90-minute journey to just 20 minutes, the 'Met' revo-

lutionised travel in the city and provided

the foundation for Metro systems across

the world. Explore closed-off parts of the station including original platforms, disused lift shafts and corridors that are hidden in plain sight - some of which were last accessed by the public over 75 years ago in 1945. Learn about the station's history as the Operational Headquarters for London Underground and hear firsthand accounts from those who worked (and played) there over the years. Marylebone Road NW1 5LD

ltmuseum.co.uk **Until February 11**

the North Country, The Weir) adaptation of Cold War is a compelling story of passion, redemption, and the journey to be free. Almeida Street N1 1TA

almeida.co.uk **Until January 27**

Ghosts

Sam Wanamaker Playhouse

Plagued by the ugly truth of her late husband's legacy, Helene vows to erase the past and start again. Ignorant to the reality of his father's character, Osvald, her son, returns home to face an uncertain future. But when the ember of an illicit romance stands to ruin Helene's plans to play happy family, she is forced to make a decision that threatens to engulf what's left of her - and her son's – life completely. Nearly 150 years after causing a furore when it premiered with its depiction of incest, infection and euthanasia, Director Joe Hill-Gibbins (The Marriage of Figaro, ENO; The Tragedy of King Richard The Second, Almeida), in his Globe debut, brings his version of the first modern tragedy to the Sam Wanamaker Playhouse.

21 New Globe Walk, Bankside SE1 9DT shake speares globe.com**Until January 28**

Finborough Theatre

In May 1979, Progressive Conservative Joe Clark was elected as Canada's youngest ever Prime Minister. By Christmas 1979, it looked as though it was all over. But Clark is young and idealistic, resolute on making his mark in

office, and governing for the whole country, not just his own party supporters. Faced with a critical decision, his colleagues – including his predecessor Pierre Trudeau – take the opportunity to steer him in completely different directions. As the UK heads into what could be another General Election year, this fast-paced satirical political comedy is a dazzling insight into the rapidly changing world of Conservative party politics. A European premiere from multi-award-winning playwright Michael Healey in his fourth production at the Finborough Theatre. 118 Finborough Rd SW10 9ED

The King & I

Dominion Theatre

finboroughtheatre.co.uk

The multi award-winning Broadway production of Rodgers and Hammerstein's The King and I returns to London's West End, following its record-breaking season at The London Palladium and sell-out UK Tour. Starring the critically-acclaimed Helen George (bestknown for her role as the iconic Trixie in Call The Midwife) as Anna, don't miss this "sumptuous" (Times) and "breath-taking" (New York Times) production of the musical classic. The King and I is the greatest musical from the golden age of musicals - with one of the finest scores ever written featuring hits Whistle a Happy Tune and Shall We Dance. 268-269 Tottenham Court Road W1T 7AQ nederlander.co.uk

January 20 - March 2

Compiled & edited by Fahad Redha



Cinema Club by Henry Scott-Irvine



Seaonal screen magic with three of the year's best

Killers of The Flower Moon is the highly praised new film made by America's greatest living filmmaker, Martin Scorsese. The movie is set in the oil fields of 1920's Oklahoma found in the middle of the midwest reservations of the then newly 'oil rich' Osage Indians. Killers of The Flower Moon falls nothing short of being a truly epic time capsule.

Following on from months of lengthy meetings with the ancestors of the Osage, Scorsese co-authored the film's screenplay. He went on to co-produce and then direct this Covid delayed movie in 2022. This is about as personal a project as Scorsese has ever undertaken. Clearly made on behalf of the surviving Osage who had never really had a voice in the mainstream American media, until now.

The film reflects two types of filmmaking. Epic versus intimate. Diametrically contrasting scenes are cross-cut between the two opposing schools of cinematic tradition. For me, the real strength of this film lies in the intimate static locked-off camera scenes. The dialogue sequences set-up between the main two players. Deputy Sheriff William 'King' Hale, showing Robert De Niro at his most sinister, in this, his tenth collaboration with Scorsese, sat opposite Leonardo Di Caprio in this his sixth collaboration.

Di Caprio plays a seemingly naive hick called William Burkhart, who has just returned from the trenches of World War One, in order to reunite with his Uncle 'King' (De Niro) before meeting and marrying Osage oil heiress, Mollie Kyle (Lily Gladstone). Mollie becomes our central focus in this truly dark web of intrigue. You'll be hanging onto every word she utters regarding this oil town filled with tricksters, thieves, and mercenaries. All masterminded by Sheriff 'King' Hale. Hale is a crooked, self-appointed Godfather, who is hell bent on hiring bounty hunters to destroy the wealthy, often diabetic, Osage. Add to this, the duplicity of Burkhart (Di Caprio) in the context of his 'new' wider Indian family. We witness his secret mercenary 'killer-forhire' instinct. His spirit of betrayal is not only self-destructive, but also on the verge of annihilating the Osage.

So how did a London audience react to this film at The Curzon Cinema, Soho?

Running at well over three and a half hours, I wondered if a beer swilling audience was a good idea? Surely not? Sitting in the front row, I could hear seats flipping-up regularly as people departed to later return. Watching the epic scenes of real vintage cars racing in the muddy streets of this wild frontier town, I recalled an earlier movie in the shape of Sam Peckinpah's, *The Ballad Of Cable Hogue* (1970), where a vintage car and motorcycle arrived at a former Stagecoach post in the desert. This too flagged-up the death of the old wild West. The Killer's of The Flower Moon also vaguely recalls the bounty hunter 'Anti-Western' spirit seen in Robert Altman's, *McCabe Mrs Miller* (1971). It was, however, set in the snow-covered mountains of a North Western gold prospecting town.

With an Apple Inc and Paramount Pictures combined budget of \$200 million to play with, there is much cinematic wizardry in evidence. Using brand new highcamera technology, incorporating single-take tracking, panning, and 'steadicam' shots, the film is extremely well shot. Some scenes reflect the tradition of the opening one-take scene of Orson Welles', A Touch Of Evil (1958). Seated in the front row of a huge screen, I watched the onscreen characters as we followed them in long tracking moves, only to see a visually jarring background, with some rear action appearing to jitter, and in some cases, being turned out-of-focus to cover-up for the new camera technology's 'camera sensor' issues.

Back to the cinema audience...

Finally, turning around, I noticed that the weak-bladdered audience were still there but had wholly removed themselves to the rear five rows in order to get as far away from the jarring background errors as possible. Overhearing me discussing this matter, after the film, a young guy introduced himself, "I work in the camera department on feature films. There's clearly an unresolved technical issue, or error, in the background of some of the more ambitious tracking sequences".

"Perhaps the background action was being made to look like an old fashioned hand-cranked silent movie?" I suggested. We both paused. It was midnight. We were being ushered out of the now darkened cinema with torches. We ventured into the night time of a rain-washed and luminous, Shaftesbury Avenue. Reality beckoned. The magic of the movies was over for yet another night. We night owls headed home. Haunted still by the magnificent owl scenes,

lingering - above all else - from The *Killers* of *The Flower Moon*. The best American movie of 2023. Despite the 'jitters'.



Utopia is a gripping docu-Beyond mentary mainly focusing-in on the life of a family of five escaping from a totalitarian North Korea. We witness some of the few who have successfully escaped south. They bear testament to the regime's fanatical ideology for the forced deification of a North Korean leader through daily worship. Images smuggled out of this Soviet-styled dictatorship show a ruthless Police State where every human face is logged by the Military Police. Cameras auto number and log each individual face via facial recognition technology. The borders between South Korea and North Korea are now so impenetrable that incentives for border guards in the North for a 'shoot-to-kill policy', result in their being rewarded with a year's income for every murdered person. Anyone that is captured is imprisoned in a North Korean Gulag till they die.

We get to meet a South Korean preacher who maintains contact with paid fixers in five bordering countries. Couriers who endeavour to aid the escaping families. This involves refugees sacrificing everything prior to a dangerous journey that can take them through China, Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos, and into Thailand. With the dubious fixers often selling-out the vulnerable refugees to the local authorities for financial rewards that are far greater than the fees taken from those escaping.

Captured by personal cellular phones, and on the filmmakers cameras, we follow the escaping family with toddlers of a primary school age. We observe them at night time crawling through a thorn-filled jungle to eventually make it to a charitable safe house. Chaperoned by the aforementioned preacher and the couriers. Incredible scenes show the glee from the children. Gifts are handed to them upon their arrival inside a safe house. Two young ones are perplexed by the sight of popcorn. They sniff it. They touch it. They feel it. Their faces light-up when they eat it. A truly magical moment.

Proper meals follow this scene.

Later back in South Korea another fixer tells a mother that she had been paying dubious fixers 'lost money' to trace her son who'd tried to escape from North Korea. Lying fixers had claimed to have seen him. The fixers are 'outed' by the more honest ones. The mother who is now resident in

South Korea is seen being told, via a mobile video message, that her son had been captured in North Korea, while trying to cross the border. He was apparently quickly sent to a Gulag 'never to be released' nor reunited with his mother.

She breaks down. This is the reality of being a refugee.

Beyond Utopia won the audience vote for 'Best Documentary' at the 2023 Sundance Film Festival. It was showcased at Curzon Bloomsbury's Bertha Doc House in October-November. It is now streaming online. It's directed by Madeleine Gavin, and distributed by Lionsgate via Madman films.

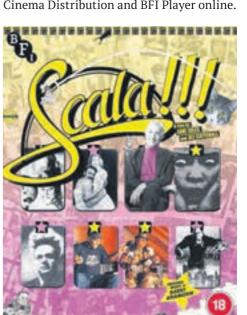
Scala is a new Channel X BFI co-production. A documentary about London's most famous repertory cinema. The venue began its life in the late 1970's on a corner of Charlotte Street, London. Later demolished in 1981 in order to make way for the then burgeoning new Channel 4 TV station, which began transmitting in the autumn of 1982. Moving to Kings Cross, *the Scala Cinema* became a venue of cult status and legend.

In the days before Satellite TV, the Internet, and its variant streaming services, the Scala was the only viable alternative for a mixture of Cult Fayre, Underground Films, Mondo Movies, Horror, Sci-Fi, Alternative Comedy, and items of Titillation. Returning to the building, now a music venue, filmmakers Ali Catterall and Jane Giles interviewed a raft of former Scala Cinema goers and employees. These included such luminaries as comedians Stewart Lee and Adam Buxton, alongside screenwriter and former Films & Filming Magazine reviewer, David McGillivray. They recalled their own hilarious memories with a considerable amount of wit and panache. These tales are generously flavoured with a diverse range of film clips from the variant movies that screened at the Scala from 1982 until the mid 1990's. A legal dispute with Stanley Kubrick over a secret screening of his then "withdrawn" movie A Clockwork Orange led to the venue's eventual demise.

The film's insights and anecdotes are both informative and hilarious. *Scala* is well paced and filled with surprises. The editing is brilliantly structured with a gauged spirit of comic-timing that's seldom seen - or even heard of - in most of today's lofty arts documentaries. So you'd do well to catch this film. I can guarantee that you'll leave smiling.

Scala is soon to be released through BFI Cinema Distribution and BFI Player online.







Classical Music by Lucy Thraves

Lux Aeterna: VOCES8 and The VOCES8 Scholars

Kings Place, Fenella Humphreys, violin Matthew Sharp, cello

Did VOCES8 know, whenever it was that Matthew Sharp. The first of their collabothey chose the theme of 'Lux Aeterna' (Eternal Light) for this Kings Place concert, how remedial that theme would feel by the time the performance came around? Perhaps it's just me, but the onset of shorter days and bad weather feels more abrupt and punishing this winter, so I was glad to cosy up in a packed-out hall for 90 minutes or so, to be whisked away to places that weren't freezing cold and incessantly rainy.

The first stop, in Ligeti's Lux Aeterna, was outer space, through its association (in my mind at least) with the film 2001: A Space Odyssey. Its eerie chords drifted over to us from the singers standing high on the balcony above the stage, the ghostliness of the piece enhanced by not really being able to see their mouths moving from such a distance. It was a good opener: the singers' technical prowess shining through the close harmonies and complex polyphony; and their standing on high also established as a theme the relationship of sound to space. (The concert was part of Kings Place Sound Unwrapped series, whose provocation is the spatial dimensions of live music.) At one point later in the concert, conductor Barnaby Smith, encouraged the audience to join in to create the full surround-sound effect, which I'm not sure they did. Either way, I felt all this would have been better achieved in a building with an echoey acoustic; it didn't quite come off in the modern hall.

The ensemble was joined variously by violinist Fenella Humphreys and cellist

rations was a version of Bach's Partita No.2, the movements interspersed with the composer's chorales (the ones thought to have inspired the partita). Before it began, Smith warned us that the mash-up had gone down, in previous performances, 'like marmite'. I feel generally ambivalent about marmite but I felt quite strongly that didn't like this. One of the pleasures of Bach's writing for solo instruments is the opportunity for the listener to deploy their sonic imagination to colour in the harmonies implied by the single line. However, the audience is denied that opportunity when the choir has taken the pens and is doing the colouring for them. The overall effect was a bit confused, and it seemed at times as though soloist Humphreys, her playing light and agile, was dragging the choir along behind her.

The same was true of Caroline Shaw's and the swallow, a gorgeous work for choir, but here semi-obscured by a specially-written solo violin part inspired by Vaughan Williams' The Lark Ascending. The idea, I think, was to blend two musical evocations of birds in flight, but in this instance, my ear was struggling to land on either the full-bodied choral texture or the decorative violin flourishes, I felt it would have been better to let swallows be swallows and larks be larks.

The highlight was Vasks' Plainscapes, a cinematic work for violin, cello and choir, which evokes the landscapes of its composer's native, Latvia. The soloists' playing was crystalline and the choir ethereal.





There's a moment in the piece where the music breaks down suddenly and the performers whistle like birds. Handled badly: excruciating bathos; handled well, total magic. Thankfully, in this instance it was the latter, testament to a kind of musical surface tension that can hold moments like this together. I felt for the first time the collective holding of breath in an otherwise shuffle-prone audience. The person next to me let out an audible sigh when it was over, whether out of delight or relief or both, it wasn't clear.

The evening closed with a vocal setting of Elgar's Nimrod for the choir on its own, which was lovely, thanks largely to its clarity of texture - something I think the whole concert would have benefitted from more of. On the way out, I reflected that the overall effect was one of slight overembellishment, a Christmas tree with too much tinsel. That said, the individual elements taken separately were superb and the programme was perfect escapism for a wintery weeknight at a time when there seems not much else to be cheerful about.

Arts & Culture by Simon Tait



The Imperial War Museum London's newest permanent exhibition, incongruously called the Blavatnik Art, Film and Photography Galleries, is the first to bring together three visual media providing, says the IWM's new director general Caro Howell, "critical insight and perspective" to conflict from 1914 to 2006.

Jenny Waldman's cultural response to the centenary of the First World War, 14-18 NOW, was a complex and triumphant accomplishment in which artists including Gillian Wearing, Peter Blake, Jeremy Deller and Rachel Whiteread were commissioned to make new work inspired by "The War to End War".

For me, the highlight of Waldman's long festival programme was Peter Jackson's extraordinary *They Shall Not Grow Old* in which his filmic genius brought to life the jerky, smudgy, eroded, badly lit images by repairing and normalising them with colour, natural movement, and sound. For many of us the First World War is irredeemably about death, the perception etched by the statistics, but Jackson's soldiers are not only alive, we recognise them, warm to their buoyant enthusiasm, and cheerfully walk with them through the trenches and over the top. Four million people saw it on its first BBC showing and it was a deeply moving experience.

However, equally as moving is the enormous canvas by the painter best known to us as a society artist, John Singer Sargent, with *Gassed*, newly restored, in which blinded soldiers in a line try to pick their way across the canvas through the dead and dying.

The IWM has over 20,000 artworks, 23,000 hours of film footage and 11m photographs, and just 500 have made it to this exploration of artists at work in conflict, in three media.

The First World War was the first to be recorded on film, albeit primitively by modern standards, but throughout the period painters and photographers have recounted what happens at the points of confrontation and devastation.

Who they were and what they did are spelled out here for the first time, and not all of their work can be classified as art. Much of the official images, many of which have never been exhibited before, sometimes because of their shocking nature, are pure documentary and even more emotionally challenging for their dumb matter-of-factness.

Excerpts from Jackson's film are part of the introduction to the exhibition, and it's seen here alongside the paintings of John Lavery in 1918, John Nash (his familiar Over the Top of the Artists' Rifles charging in the winter of 1917), Evelyn Dunbar (one of a surprising number of female artists commissioned in the Second World War, this picture titled Land Army Girls Going to Bed), Joan Miro (in the Spanish Civil War of 1937), and the 1917 Passchendaele photography of Frank Hurley (better known for his images of Ernest Shackleton's Antarctic exhibition of 1914) and unknown official photographers throughout the century. None but those who have endeavoured can realise the insurmountable difficulties of portraying a modern battle by the camera... I have tried and tried, but the results are hopeless" Hurley said.

The exhibition is roughly divided into five sections whose titles are not always helpful because of their generality, which does not always seem to relate to the rooms' contents, but at the centre of it is "Practice and Process", which has some of the equipment and possessions of artists and photographers in conflicts - the slouch hat and pencil box, Ronald Searle, kept with him throughout his imprisonment by the Japanese in Changi Jail, John Nash's paint brushes, Edward Ardizzone's sketchbook filled as he followed the Allies in Europe and North Africa, Channel 4's Paul Eedie's Baghdad press pass from 2003, of war artists, photographers and filmmakers.

Singer Sargent is not the only famous image-maker to make a surprising

appearance. Some, like CRW Nevinson and the Nash brothers, are known for their great images of war, but others less so. Here is the 24-year-old Stanley Spencer, painting casualties arriving at a dressing station in 1916; the 'English Impressionist' Percy Wyndham Lewis, who introduced us to 'Vorticism' and was a volunteer gunner when he created a stark picture depicting the dehumanising effect of war among soldiers; David Bomberg, who was to nurture a whole generation of leading artists after the war, lost his brother in the trenches and his work was changed forever by his front line experiences (in a drawing he creates the fearful atmosphere of a sappers' tunnel as they undermined enemy positions); Cecil Beaton, who photographed the Blitz aftermath in London in 1940.

"A new subject matter has been found for Art, not War, which is as old as the chase of Love, but modern War", Wyndham Lewis wrote after the war was over.

And while we marvel at the devastation of Paul Nash's painting of the Menin Road, nearby is a 1970s photograph of a quiet Northern Ireland country lane dominated by the two large cement boulders of an unmanned road block. The similarities and the contrasts are striking. Next to an image of the BBC's Alastair Leathwood reporting from Helmand in 2006 there is a black and white of Ethel Gabain, the French-Scottish artist best known for her portraits of actresses, but here dressed in a tweed jacket and skirt and, of course, a suitable wide-brimmed hat, as she records a London bomb site in 1940.

The images, though, are also visceral in their reporting, especially through the movies made by unrecorded official cameramen who, in images rarely seen until now, faithfully filmed the horrors of the 1944 D-Day landings, soldiers falling, shot, as they splashed ashore, bodies still where they lay on the beach, dead German defenders of the shoreline. The cameramen follow the Allies inland as they liberate and capture – we see one German







in his steel helmet, up to his armpits in rubble, delicately brushing dust off his Wehrmacht collar.

Then there are the death camps, which the curators have not shirked from showing in all their ghastly reality (the gallery is in the space once occupied by the Holocaust exhibition, now moved elsewhere in the building), hills of emaciated bodies, local villagers forced to rebury them respectfully ovens still packed with skeletons, two small boys in liberated Bergen-Belsen, sharing one bowl of soup, a bewildered girl bumping into people as she wanders aimlessly.

The works by women is strikingly different in this display, no more so than in the context of the Nazi death camps. An image by Edith Birkin has rows of muti-coloured cloaked skeletons gazing out, which recalls her being deported to Auschwitz in 1944 where both her parents died, before she was moved to Bergen-Belsen, from where she was liberated. Even more stark, is the oil by Doris Zinkelsen, who volunteered as a Red Cross nurse but was one of the first artists into Bergen-Belsen, where she painted the unburied half-naked bodies she encountered – "The shock of Belsen was never to be forgotten... the ghastly smell of Typhus" she wrote in a letter home. "The simply ghastly sight of skeleton bodies just flung out of the huts".

ou bring the party. We raise the bar!

Antiques & Art by Anthony J. Lester, FRSA

It's tinsel time again so how about a wee dram to get into the Christmas spirit? George Bernard Shaw described whisky as liquid sunshine, so I think he would have warmed to a bottle of Macallan 1926 single malt. Distilled in sherry casks for six decades only 40 bottles were produced. Since it was bottled in 1986, this

whisky has been recognised as the most soughtafter Scotch, as was exemplified in 2019 when Sotheby's sold a bottle for a record £1.5 million. Of the 40 bottles, at least one is believed to have been opened and consumed, while another is thought to have been destroyed during a Japanese earthquake in 2011. So, whisky aficionados

The Christmas Spirit

In 1983 a young aspiring art dealer called Chris Beetles, mounted an exhibition devoted to original illustrations at his home in Maida Vale. It proved so inspiring and popular, that it became an annual happening. The 40th The Illustrators: The British Art of Illustration 1831-2023 takes place until 30th December, at the Chris Beetles Gallery, 8 & 10 Ryder Street, SW1Y 6QB, and is accompanied with an impressive, scholarly 240-page illustrated catalogue. With over 300 works, prices range from $\bar{\mathfrak{L}}300$ each for amusing ink cartoons by Kathryn Lamb (b. 1959) to £17,500 for John Burningham's (1936-2019) watercolour illustration for Bora: The Adventures of a Goose with No Feathers, published in 1963. Among compositions that grabbed my attention are Autumn Evening (£6,500), a watercolour by George Clausen, RA (1852-1944) and three of William Heath Robinson's (1872-1944) brilliantly mad fantasy drawings, which were reproduced for Problems of a Structural Engineer. Running along side The Illustrators, is The Law Show, over 180 works that celebrate, satirise and caricature the British legal system. There is much to bring a smile to your face!

I am often asked if there are any art disciplines that are unjustifiably undervalued and my reply is always, pastel. From the general public, the medium has attracted myths such as "the colours fade" and "only amateurs use pastels." Totally untrue! These are the facts – pastels have a long and distinguished record in art history. In the hands of a skilled exponent pastel is the most poetic and responsive of mediums – for verification, just visit *Impressionists on Paper – From Degas to Toulouse-Lautrec*, the inspirational exhibition taking place until 10th March at the **Royal Academy**, Burlington House, Piccadilly, W1J OBD.

Further evidence of pastel's strengths can be found between 24th January and 10th February at the Mall Galleries, The Mall, SW1. Founded in 1899, The Pastel Society mount their 125th Annual Exhibition at the gallery and among the over 300 alluring works are examples by Liz Balkwill, Sarah Bee (b. 1951), Cheryl Culver (b. 1947), Roger Dellar

(b. 1949) and the Society's President Richard Rees. I have the task of selecting one artwork that I consider "best in show" and this will receive *The Anthony J. Lester Art Critic Award*. Make a visit and see if you agree with my choice! And if you want to know more about the Society's history, I suggest *The Pastel Society: Pastel Painting and Drawing 1898-2000* (ISBN: 0 9537927 0 6).

I recall vevering Nick Archer's (b. 1963) paintings in group shows, such as the ING Discerning Eye at the Mall Galleries, so I can recommend his solo show taking place until 12th January at **Long & Ryle**, 4 John Islip Street, SW1P 4PX. Situated just behind Tate Britain this gallery has, over the last 35 years, built a reputation for introducing high quality contemporary art from established British artists, of which Rye-based Archer's creations are textbook examples. On view are thirty of his striking, richly coloured oil paintings of intriguing landscapes, figure and flower subjects. He clearly enjoys a balance between painting in a realistic manner and the abstract qualities created when pouring the paint and allowing sympathetic accidents to occur. The results are most amenable.

The New Year brings the rollout of the art and antiques fairs, with first being **The Mayfair Antiques and Fine Art Fair**, Marriott Hotel, Grosvenor Square, W1K 6JP, which takes place between 11th-14th January. With around forty dealers it is one of the smaller gatherings but is high on quality and style. Highlights will include a very rare set of four stunning silver fruit bowls and stands hallmarked for 1751/52 on offer at £69,500 by **Mary Cooke Antiques Ltd**, while **Wimpole Antiques** will be seeking around £20,000 for a spectacular 1960s gold and diamond bracelet by French luxury jewellers, Van Cleef & Arpels.

Over its 35-years **The Decorative Fair**,

Over its 35-years **The Decorative Fair**, Evolution, Battersea Park, SW11 4NJ, has built a powerful reputation amongst the decorating trade and private buyers and I certain hail it as one of my "must see" events. The Fair is staged three times a year, the next taking place between 23rd and 28th January, 2024, and brings together around 130 specialist dealers. What makes this event special is the range





VISIT

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were excited on 18th November when Sotheby's offered a bottle of this rare malt – speculation was rife, "what would it sell for?" After keen bidding, the sum paid was a mindblowing £2,187,500. Given that the novelist Raymond Chandler said,

"There is no bad whisky. There are only some whiskeys that aren't as good as others", I will be calling into my local supermarket for my bottle. I wish you all a wonderful Christmas and all good arty things in 2024. Oh, now where is that whisky? Cheers!



of unusual and unique items dating from the 1700 to the 1970s and the inspirational roomsets that some dealers unveil. The fair is also the perfect place to discover the latest trends, among which are modernist studio ceramics and old-fashioned but very useful hall chairs. This winter's outing also has the bonus of incorporating the London Antique Rug & Textile Art Fair (LARTA). Among the fourteen specialists are Villa Rosemaine from France with some awesome 18th century costumes and Phil Bell Antique Oriental Rugs who will feature a rare 19th century Melas rug (£3,750). As always, there is a free shuttle of small coaches from outside the Sloane Square Hotel, Sloane Square, to the Fair.

Another event celebrating its longevity is the London Art Fair, Business Design Centre, Islington, N1 0QH, which is mounted between 17th-21st January. Established in 1989, it brings together over 120 UK galleries who showcase a diverse cross-section of art from emerging talent to established names such as Elisabeth Frink, Maggi Hambling, David Hockney and Paula Rego. As well as London dealers such as **Osborne Samuel**, who will have bronzes by Henry Moore and Lynn Chadwick, and Browse and Darby, with works by Lucian Freud and Augustus John, there are several provincial galleries, including Norfolk-based Adrian Hill Fine Art, whose stand (G9A) will display work by Tracey Emin and L. S. Lowry. The event hosts a number of free panel discussions with leading experts - full details: www.londonartfair.co.uk

My feature on film posters in last month's EyeOnLondon (Edition 18) generated much interest from readers. Several wanted to know how much the James Bond, Dr. No Quad film poster, sold for at Ewbank's. Estimated at up to £15,000, the buyer had to part with £24,700 to acquire it. I also mentioned the Pullman Gallery, 14 King Street, St. James's, whose stock includes rare vintage posters. This generated enquiries along the lines of "I love vintage posters, but they are so expensive" (some can cost £30,000!). Problem solved - visit the inspiring **Pullman Editions**, 94 Pimlico Road, SW1W 8PL. The sister company of the Pullman Gallery, Pullman Editions, offers an impressive range of exclusive Art Deco inspired posters. Printed on high quality 100% cotton fine art paper, each poster is limited to an edition of just 280 and costs £420. My personal favourites include a striking Art

Deco flavour image of *Battersea Power Station* and *St. Moritz: Cresta Run*, a bold depiction by artist Charles Avalon of this famous Toboggan run. The gallery has so many stunning posters, the problem is which to buy!

For art and antiques devotees there is much to look forward too, so here are a few dates for the 2024 diary.

7th-23rd February: Annual Scottish Show, Panter and Hall, 11-12 Pall Mall, SW1Y 5LU.

29th February-9th March: Royal Society of British Artists, Mall Galleries, The Mall, SW1.

1st March-30th June: *Angelica Kauffman*, Royal Academy, Piccadilly, W1J 0BD.

6th-10th March: Affordable Art Fair, Evolution, Battersea Park, Queenstown Road, SW11 4NI.

28th March-13th April: Royal Institute of Painters in Water Colours 212th Exhibition, Mall Galleries, The Mall, SW1.

7th-12th May: *The Spring Decorative Fair*, Evolution London, Battersea Park, SW11 4NJ.

8th-12th May: Affordable Art Fair, Lower Fairground Site, Hampstead Heath, NW3 1TH.

9th-18th May: Royal Society of Portrait Painters Annual Exhibition, The Mall, SW1.

18th June-18th August: Royal Academy Summer Exhibition, Piccadilly, W1J 0BD.

27th June-1st September: Francis Alÿs Barbican Art Gallery, Silk Street, EC2Y 8DS.

29th June-13th October: *In the Eye of the Storm: Modernism in Ukraine*, 1900-1930s, Royal Academy, Piccadilly, W1J 0BD.

27th June-2nd July: *Treasure House Fair*, Royal Hospital Chelsea, South Grounds, SW3 4SR.

26th-29th September: *British Art Fair, Saatchi Gallery*, Duke of York Square, King's Road, SW3 4RY.

1st-6th October: *The Autumn Decorative Fair*, Evolution London, Battersea Park, SW11 4NJ. The Tribal Art London Fair (TAL) will take on place on the Mezzanine.

4th-10th November: *Winter Art & Antiques Fair,* Olympia, Hammersmith Road, W14 8UX.

9th November, 2024-16th February, 2025: *Michelangelo, Leonardo, Raphael: Florence, c. 1504*, Royal Academy, Piccadilly, W1J 0BD.





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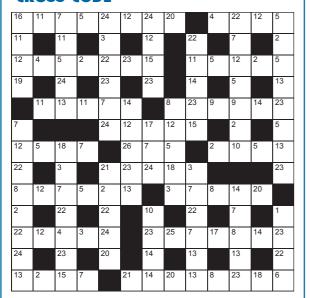








CROSS CODE



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.

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ

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

SUPPOSE PUPPY HOME

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

- 'Warp' and 'weft' are terms used in which activity?
- What is Britain's smallest native songbird?
- 3. Where can the Edgeworth-Kuiper Belt be found?
- Ruth Wilson plays Marisa Coulter in which BBC TV fantasy series based on the books of Philip Pullman?
- Which golfer rallied from three shots back in the final round to give Spain its first-ever US Open winner in 2021?
- DiCaprio film made in 2000, a 1960s rock band and a Nevil Shute book?
- According to the Barbra Streisand song, 'People needing people, are the luckiest people in the...' what?
- 8. The Khyber Pass links which
- Associated with the Indian subcontinent, a tabla is what sort of musical instrument?
- 10. The Battle of the Gabbard was fought in which conflict?

 (\mathbf{H})

 $\mathbf{A} \times \mathbf{C}$

NONAGRAM



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.

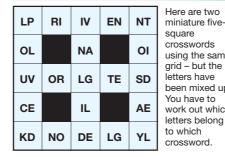
Guidelines: 29 Good; 34 Very Good; 40 Excellent.

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

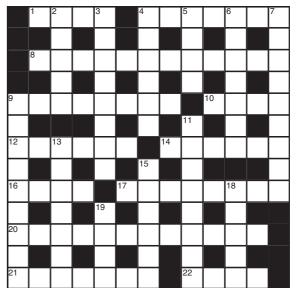
WORD PYRAMID

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 's \times n \times e through openinas in the walls. The first letter may 'I \times S \times N \times L appear in any $N \rightarrow O \rightarrow R$ G

FIVE ALIVE



CRYPTIC CROSSWORD



ACROSS

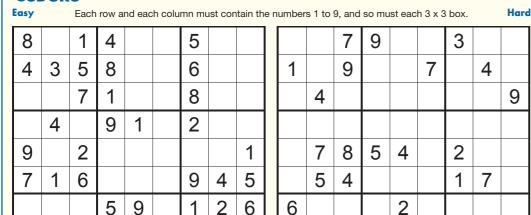
- Flighty part of an armchair? (4)
 Unattached monk has his
- liberty (7)

 8. What a leech needs and
- why how gruesome (12)
- 9. Paddy and Edward
- toughened the metal (8) 10. Everybody alongside the
- western barrier (4) 12. Reflected light from
- Ulster (6) 14. Have success at present
- with fan (6) 16. In the jungle noticed a
- narrow valley (4) 17. Supervisor to disregard
- 20. Grants Hamlet order to
- preserve his independence (2,4,6) 21. Form of dry heat used to produce a chemical
- compound (7) 22. Part of these regions had dried up (4)

DOWN

- 2. I knock this religion (5)
- 3. Mathematics from new grey tome (8)
- 4. Workman who is more suitable (6)
- 5. Not the right time to give out (4)
- 6. Scorn theologian going round the island with lan in a frenzy (7)
- 7. Ship might take Rose
- 9. Daily means of
- communication (9)
- 11. I'm coming up with allowances for settlers (8)
- 13. Put out waste by road that's official (7) 15. Develop but do not start to
- turn (6) 18. Chemical discovered in
- Leicestershire (5)
- 19. Mother takes me up first to see the girl (4)

SUDOKU



9

7

1

4

7 6

EQUALISER

square

crosswords

using the same

been mixed up

work out which

letters belong

crossword.

grid - but the

etters have

You have to

5 10 $6\bigcirc 2\bigcirc 4$ 1 2 12 🔾 12 🔾 3 3

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.

This puzzle page is supplied by Sirius Media Services Ltd.

To try our new puzzle, Zygolex, go to go to © Sirius Media Services Ltd

SOLUTIONS

6

2

vitta; vittle. native; neat; nett; nettle; tael; tail; tain; tale; talen; teat; tean; tean; tein; tele; telen; tein; tilen; tilen leet; lent; levant; levitate; lint; lite; lateen; latent; latte; latten; leant; leat; entail; entitle; event; inlet; ital; late; ante; anti; atilt; eaten; elate; elite;

(1) Across – Liven; Volts; Dodgy. : BVIJA BVIJ

Corsair; 21 Dye; 23 Assets; 25 Soppy; 27 Snipe; 28 Run on. Down - 1 Midge; 2 Segue; 3 Analyst; 4 Ghetto; 5 Seine; 6 Lissome; 7 Outcome; 12 Nor; 14 Rear; 16 Haft; 17 Elastic; 18 Richest; 20

4

2

Across - 1 Mustang, 5 Salvo; 8 Hoe, 9 Degrade; 10 Inset; 11 Enemy; 13 Tremolo; 15 Shoe; 17 Errata; 19 Accode; 22 Faro; 24 Accods; 26 Riser; 29 Tie up; 30 Evasion; 31 Put; 32 Cathy; 33 ONICK CROSSWORD:

Mayflower; 9 Telegraph; 11 Migrants; 13 Steward; 15 Evolve; 18 Down - 2 Islam; 3 Geometry; 4 Fitter; 5 Emit; 6 Disdain; 7

Across – 1 Wing; 4 Freedom; 8 Bloodthirsty; 9 Tempered; 10

Across – 1 Wing; 4 Freedom; 8 Bloodthirsty; 9 Tempered; 10

Down – Duok; Ingle; 176 Wing; 14 Winnow; 16 Glen; 17 Overseer; 20 At arm's flooring; 22 Sere.

Down – 2 Islam; 3 Geometre: 3 Geometre: 3 Geometre: 3 Geometre: 3 Geometre: 4 Winney; 22 Sere.

esby. 'dund 'sndo 'edou MAGIC SQUARE:

QUIZ CHALLENGE: 1 Weaving; 2 The goldcrest; 3 Beyond the outermost planet in the solar system; 4 His Dark Materials; 5 Jon Rahm; 6 Beach (The Beach Boys, On the Beach); 7 World; 8 Afghanistan and Pakistan; 9 Twin hand drums; 10 The First Anglo-Dutch War.

6

Clockwise from 1 left – multiply; subtract; divide; add. Total: 8.

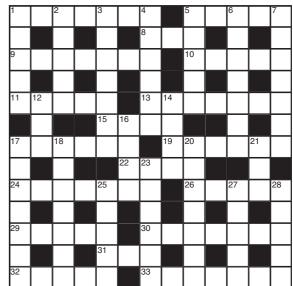
EQUALISER:

MORD PYRAMID:

8

Ester; 19 Emma.

QUICK CROSSWORD



ACROSS

1. Wild horse (7)

5. Fusillade (5) 8. Garden tool (3)

9. Demean (7)

10. Tines (anag.) (5) 11. Foe (5)

13. Tremulous 15. Item of

footwear (4)

17. Misprints (6)

19. Submit (6) 22. Card game (4) 24. Approaches

DOWN

1. Gnat (5)

33. Physician (7)

2. Follow on (mus.) (5)

5. French river (5)

boldly (7)

26. Part of stair (5)

30. Act of eluding (7) 31. Place (3)

32. Wuthering Heights heroine (5)

29. Tether (3,2)

3. Psychiatrist (7) 4. City slum area (6)

18. Most wealthy (7) 20. Pirate (7) 21. Colouring agent (3) 23. Possessions (6)

6. Lithe, flexible (7)

7. Result (7)

12. Neither (3)

17. Pliable (7)

14. Back part (4)

16. Tool handle (4)

25. Sentimental (5) 27. Game bird (5) 28. Continue

uninterrupted (3.2)

6



While rumbles in the political jungle continue unabated over the ownership of the Elgin Marbles, or at least those parts currently ensconced in the British Museum, Raymond Keene, in The Article online, has continued the debate, weighing the pros and cons and quoting important facts - with my blessing that I first put forward in The British Chess Magazine two decades ago about the influence the marbles had on the design of the Howard Staunton chess set from the 1840s. Particularly, on the new design for the Knight (a horse's head and neck) the design of which I identified in the Lord Elgin collection in the British Museum's collection. King Charles III was also drawn into the debate recently when he was seen sporting a tie at the recent Climate Change Summit, which included a design and colours based on the Greek national flag, interpreted by some as the monarch's support for the Greek cause. Another more natural reason may be that his father was Greek.

Raymond Keene's prodigious number of literary book publications (he holds the Guinness Book of World Records for the most numbers of books on sport, that is, chess books) includes two new titles. The first of which, 'Napoleon and Goethe,' is a triumphal recognition of these two titans of the 18th and 19th centuries, whom Sir Winston Churchill, in referring to Napoleon, said, 'Bonaparte, the greatest man of action ever known to human records' Ray is probably today a reincarnation of the best qualities of those intellectual polymaths and upbeat characteristics that define and personify Goethe and Napoleon, role models for Keene in his formative years. This book distils in succinct, easy-to-read sections, well-laidout pages that captivate the essence of the two protagonists' ideas, strategies, thought models, and actions - some of which most of us are conversant with in generalised terms, but Keene uncovers the intricacies, backgrounds, and generic sources that informed them. And yes, chess is a major and important factor in both their lives, and as we know, in Keene's too!

Keene's book records games of Bonaparte, with a section the author has composed of five games of chess, which illustrate similar battle principles outlined in earlier chapters in the book about Napoleon's war craft in action and the key principles he employed. The author has drawn on key lessons outlined in Sir Charles Osman's 'A History of the Peninsular War,' and Sir Arthur Bryant's trilogy on the Napoleonic Wars. Even the art of music joins the 'battle' with Ludwig van Beethoven's 'Battle Symphony' inspired by Salamanca and Victoria. One of Keene's five illustrative games to Victoria is based on David Howell v Luke McShane's British Championship confrontation, Hull, 2018, Ruby Lopez, Steinitz Defence Deferred, in association with The Battle of Austerlitz, and the lessons to be learned from Napoleon's '... most important engagement of his career.' This decisive victory by the Grande Armee terminated the War of the Third Coalition.

The Challenge

The chess puzzle, has David Howell as White play on move 32. Qe4,.....? Why was this a move in the wrong direction and what had Howell missed that would terminate the game?

The solution is opposite

The Boys and their Marbles

The battle is considered a tactical masterstroke, in the same class as such other momentous set pieces. Napoleon's strategy was to lure the opposition into a premature battle. He surrenders the central high ground, only to regain it in a devastating counterattack. This battle also provided the material for 'one of the most memorable chapters of Tolstoy's, War and Peace.' The Howell/McShane game parallels The Battle of Austerlitz, where White penetrates on the Queen's side and much of the centre, only to be felled by a focused offensive against the white King's depleted fortifications. The finale of this game is the focus of this month's puzzle, 'and comes as a thunderbolt' (see below). I'm including the other four exemplars of actual battles and their correspondences that Keene illustrates so that after Christmas pudding has taken its toll and you lay floundering on the sofa, your thoughts can turn to something more constructive in the following pairings the author provides:

The Battle of Gaugamela with the Immortal Game of chess played between Adolf Anderssen v Lionel Kieseritzki. The Battle of Cannae with 'my own game against GM.Kovacevic. The Battle of Pharsalus with another of my wins against 10-time British Champion Johnathan Penrose, and the Lines of Torres Vedras exemplified by my counter-attacking victory against Graham Sandiford. (4 being the Battle of Austerlitz). Of course, and at Christmas time, you may already be challenged

and are headfirst in attacking the battle of the bulge from eating too much! If the latter, you may be excused!

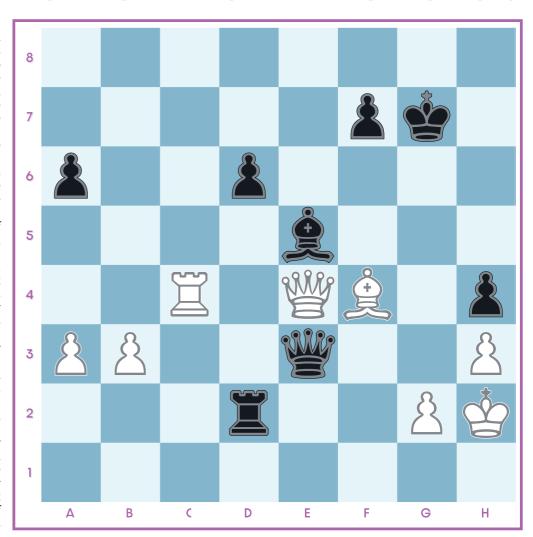
Keene is with his Herculean cranial compound a present-day ennoblement, apotheosis, reincarnation of that rich mental confluence between the man of action, the strategy of success in performative action, and the man of letters, cultural and historical pejoratives, of the really, really good, and the really great! Keene is without a doubt one, if not the only one of our present-day writers on chess who can bring to the table a multitude of further subjects thoroughly understood, both culturally and historically of great substance and relevance. His eloquence as a writer is unsurpassed and without doubt irreplaceable in a world fast becoming 'without reason.' Although, it isn't just about reason; it's to be in touch and understanding the immortal greats, the touchstones of immortality.

And here Keene is equally persuasive in drawing a parallel with his own educational upbringing and developing an appetite at an early age to understand more and inquire and ask questions. It wasn't just by rote that the author developed a compendium of interlinked subjects, and a synergism as he outlines adroitly his engagement with Baudelaire's beliefs, for example, excelled in his poetry and writings. This cornucopia of knowledge and his explanations of how they have come about, and the cultural shoots that have grown in consequence are, he states and hopefully, a blueprint of sorts for young readers as well as those mature people to follow and use in a pragmatic way in their own developments towards a rich, culturally defined assertive mind, and for the better!

Keene gives Goethe similar status to Napoleon in his book manifesting their great respect for each other's integrity, high aspirations, and the methodology needed to achieve such successes in both mind and action. Keene outlines Goethe's first great literary success, 'The Pain and Sorrows of Young Werther' published in the form of letters from the young man to his great love and her responses, and the ultimate tragedy that results from her declining his marriage proposals with the result he commits suicide! Far from the book being hastily hidden and put to the bottom of the pile, it was a huge success and made Goethe's reputation. Napoleon similarly wooed Josephine with many letters about his proposal to marry her and which she declined, and Napoleon himself like Werner saying he couldn't carry on living without her by his side! Of course, we know that Napoleon won the day, like most of the battles he fought, and she succumbed eventually to his advances! The Werner Syndrome was a medical condition eventually coined in name to cover the number of excessive suicides that followed the publication of Goethe's book, and Napoleon was so enamoured with it, i.e., the book, that he took it on his battle excursions, reading it at least 7 times and keeping it under his pillow! The German language and that nation's history were special subjects for Keene at college and his university days at Cambridge. Even then Goethe's, 'Faust' was mainstream and studiously examined as an exemplar of the actions and mindset a man might make

in order to find the truth about the world and the place Goethe's existed within?

I'Îl leave the reader to discover Keene's translation of Faust and the up-to-date inclusions he makes from the German, when they read the book. I can thoroughly recommend this book to readers of most ages, although 10 years of age I suggest is probably the youngest age for a child to absorb the material as presented. 'Napoleon and Goethe,' by Raymond Keene OBE, GM, is published by The Brain Trust, ISBN 979-8-86767603-2, and is available from Amazon. A further book by the author, 'Chess in the Year of the King,' which contains 41 of his columns previously published in 'The Article,' an online publication, and 'The British Chess Magazine,' is published by Hardinge Simpole, ISBN 978-1-84382-234-9 hardback. ISBN 978-1-84382-235-6 paperback.



The Solution

The counteractack in this game, as in The Battle of Austerlitz, 'came almost like a lightning stroke from a seemingly clear sky!' Keene says, 'Napoleon was not just a master strategist and tactician but also, and vitally, an expert opportunist, who had mastered the art of concealing his true objective from the opposition, until the decisive moment materialised.'

32. Qe4,?... 32...,Qg3+!! White resigns as after 33.Bxg3,Bxg3+. 34.Kg1,Rd1+, leads to a forced mate.





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