



Simon Schama:
America will never
be the same again

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Lady Macbeth,
four-letter needle-
work and learning
from Cate Blanchett.
Judi Dench in her prime
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Chris Patten:
How the Tories
lost the plot

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Amy Jenkins:
The me generation
is now in charge

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the guardian

Backlash over Blair's school revolution

City academy plans condemned by ex-education secretary Morris

An acceleration of plans to reform state education, including the speeding up of the creation of the independently funded city academy schools, will be announced today by Tony Blair.

But the increasingly controversial nature of the policy was highlighted when the former education secretary Estelle Morris accused the government of "serial meddling" in secondary education.

In an article in tomorrow's Education Guardian she writes: "Another round of structural change won't by itself achieve universally high standards. Worse than that it could be a distraction. In five years' time, whose children will be going to these new academies? Will choice and market forces once again squeeze out the children of the disadvantaged?"

Today, the prime minister will say: "It is not government edict that is determining the fate of city academies, but parent power. Parents are choosing city academies, and that is good enough for me."

He will also set out the future of local

education authorities as "commissioners of education and champions of standards", rather than direct providers.

The academies replace failing schools, normally on new sites, in challenging inner-city areas. The number of academies will rise to between 40 and 50 by next September. This month 10 city academies started, bringing the total to 27, and Mr Blair will insist the government is on target to reach 200 by 2010. City academies have proved to be among the most hotly debated aspects of his public sector reforms. The Commons education select committee has criticised them as divisive and teaching union leaders have also denounced the expansion of an "unproven" scheme.

However, this will not deter Mr Blair who will point out that in the last academic year the proportion of pupils receiving five good GCSEs in city academies rose by 8 per cent, four times the national average.

Patrick Wintour and Rebecca Smithers

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UK link to terror snatches

The United Nations is investigating the CIA's use of British airports when abducting terrorism suspects and flying them to prisons around the world where they are alleged to have been tortured. The inquiry, led by Martin Scheinin, a special rapporteur from the UN Commission on Human Rights, comes as an investigation by the Guardian reveals the full extent of the British logistical support. Aircraft used in the secret operations have flown into the UK at least 210 times since the September 11 terror attacks. Foreign Office officials have denied all knowledge of the

secret flights, telling MPs on the foreign affairs select committee that the ministry has "not granted any permissions for the use of UK territory or air space", and suggesting to the Guardian that it was "just a conspiracy theory" Privately, Ministry of Defence officials admit that they are aware of the flights, and that they have decided to turn a blind eye. "It is not a matter for the MoD," said one. "The aircraft use our airfields. We don't ask any questions. They just happen to be behind the wire."

Ian Cobain and Richard Norton-Taylor

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Bad'day mate Aussies lose their grip



Shane Warne at the Oval yesterday. Sport » Photograph: Kieran Doherty/Reuters

Column five

The shape of things to come

Alan Rusbridger

Welcome to the Berliner Guardian. No, we won't go on calling it that for long, and yes, it's an in-legant name.

We tried many alternatives, related either to size or to the European origins of the format. In the end, "the Berliner" stuck. But in a short time we hope we can revert to being simply the Guardian.

Many things about today's paper are different.

Starting with the most obvious, the page size is smaller. We believe the format combines the convenience of a tabloid with the sensibility of a broadsheet. Next most conspicuously, we have changed the paper's titlepiece and headline fonts. Gone is the striking 80s David Hillman design – adapted over the years – which mixed Garamond, Miller and Helvetica fonts. In their place is a new font, Guardian Egyptian, which is, we hope, elegant, intelligent and highly legible.

The next difference you may notice is colour. The paper is printed on state-of-the-art MAN Roland ColorMan presses, which give colour on every page – something that sets us apart from every other national newspaper. The effect will be to give greater emphasis and power to our photography and, we hope, make the whole paper a touch less forbidding than it sometimes may have seemed in the past.

G2 has also shrunk: it is now a full colour, stapled news magazine with newspaper deadlines. Sport has expanded into its own section – at least 12 pages every day, again in full colour.

As the week progresses you'll notice further changes. There are one or two new sections. There will be new columnists, both in G1 and G2 – most notably the pre-eminent commentator Simon Jenkins, who joins us from the Times to write on Wednesdays and Fridays.

Continued on page 2 »

National

Police chief blames Orangemen for riots

More than 2,000 police officers and soldiers clashed with loyalists in Belfast in the worst riots for more than a decade. The violence erupted after a small Orange Order parade was rerouted by fewer than 100 metres away from Catholic homes. Hugh Orde, Northern Ireland chief constable, accused Orangemen of taking part in and stoking up the riots, which spread to Ballymena, Antrim, Carrickfergus, Larne, Ballyclare, Glengormley and Ahoghill. More than 30 police and soldiers were injured as rioters used automatic weapons, petrol bombs and blast bombs to attack the security forces, who responded with 450 baton rounds.

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Law

Judges may block deportations

The government faces a confrontation with judges over its attempts to deport terrorist suspects to Middle Eastern and north African countries with poor human rights records. Four appeal court judges who may have to decide whether deportations can go ahead have told the Guardian they will refuse to rubber-stamp the UK's human rights deals with countries such as Jordan and Algeria. Despite being urged by the home secretary to respect the country-to-country agreements, the judges say they will demand evidence that the assurances are "worth the paper they're written on".

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International

Israeli troops leave Gaza after 38 years

Israel lowered its flag in the Gaza Strip for the last time yesterday as the government declared an end to 38 years of occupation and troops withdrew from demolished Jewish settlements. The last troops were expected to leave overnight. Palestinian leaders described it as a "liberation", but said Israeli controls on border crossings and other restrictions maintained the occupation. Thousands of Palestinians gathered on roads leading to the settlements, ready to storm the rubble once the last troops were gone. A 12-year-old boy was seriously wounded by gunfire from an Israeli tank still guarding the settlements.

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Financial

Sky's Premiership rights under threat

BSkyB's 13-year monopoly over live broadcasts of Premier League football games is under immediate threat. Media regulator Ofcom has told the European Commission it should force whoever holds the Premiership TV rights to sell a number of games to rival broadcasters. A separate regulatory plan under consideration in Brussels could see individual broadcasters limited to 50% of the live games put up for sale. The League, meanwhile, is resisting all attempts to remove its "exclusivity premium," arguing that clubs' finances will be undetermined. The current rights deal expires in 2007.

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Bigger isn't always better...



Monday 12.09.05

Stop smiling

If you want to leave the country, you're going to have to keep your mouth shut **Page 6** »

Embracing the contemporary

Sir Nicholas Serota offers an exclusive preview of Tate Britain's new rehang (featuring Jacob and the Angel, below, by Sir Jacob Epstein) **Page 9** »

Nerves of steel

Simon Hoggart watches from behind the scenes as Andrew Marr takes over Sir David Frost's Sunday slot, in the first edition of Sunday AM on BBC1 **Page 11** »



Surprise comeback

Gerhard Schröder closes the gap with Angela Merkel in Germany's election race **Page 19** »

Baghdad-led operation

Iraqi and US troops seize control of Tal Afar, an insurgent stronghold in northern Iraq, after a two-day offensive **Page 23** »

Master tactician

Japan's prime minister, Junichiro Koizumi, is on course for a landslide poll victory that would give him the mandate to continue his reforms **Page 24** »

Pressure to perform

Investors in Rank are not happy. They want the casinos-to-films group either to be broken up or for new management to be installed **Page 26** »

The Speculator

A new column puts real money on the line: the Guardian is putting up £10,000 in cash for Nils Pratley to buy and sell shares. He will report on his progress in the weeks to come **Page 30** »



Buildings of beauty

For one weekend some of London's most unusual and secretive buildings will be open to the public. Britain's leading architects recommend which you should rush to see first. In our new Culture section **G2 page 18** »

Hats off to Ms Blow

Isabella Blow reveals her style secrets **G2 page 26** »

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

Contact us

The Guardian's new format and redesign are the biggest changes to the paper for many years. If you have a question or want to contact us, the relevant details are below.

For queries and comments about the new format, or missing sections, please ring

0800 839 100

or email whatdoyouthink@guardian.co.uk

For the Readers' editor, Corrections & Clarifications on specific editorial content, please ring

020-7713 4736

or email reader@guardian.co.uk

Letters for publication should be sent to letters@guardian.co.uk or the address on the letters page

The shape of things to come

« continued from page 1

On Saturday there are further changes, including a redesigned and expanded Weekend magazine.

The main change – the format – is in response to unambiguous research which shows that readers increasingly find broadsheet newspapers difficult to handle in many everyday situations, including commuting to work.

But our research showed equally clearly that there were many things readers didn't want changed – including our comprehensive commitment to news and the intelligence and seriousness of our coverage and comment. They welcomed a wide variety of views, but they wanted news first.

The Guardian's digital edition is now read by nearly 11 million people a month around the world. No other paper in Britain comes close to the size and diversity of our audience. The challenge in redesigning the paper was to remain true to the journalism while making it more convenient to read and handle.

Our ability to plan this new paper and invest in it has been made possible through our ownership structure. The Guardian is owned by the Scott Trust, established in 1932 by the same families which had started the paper in 1821. The trust reinvests income from other business to ensure that the

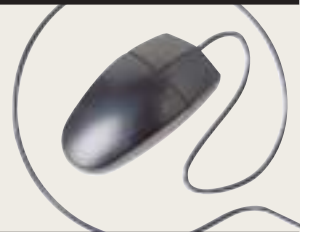
Guardian can remain a serious, progressive voice in a world in which news organisations are increasingly in the hands of fewer and fewer multinational companies.

No paper ever stands still. The paper you are reading today will evolve. We would like you to be part of that evolution. Because we don't have a proprietor or shareholders our main relationship is with the readers. It's important to know what you make of the changes and how we could improve still further. We promise to read every single response.

We hope you enjoy this new Guardian. To those hundreds of thousands of readers who have stayed with us throughout – thank you for your loyalty. To the few who found the old broadsheet paper forbidding or inconvenient – welcome back. To new readers who may have been intrigued enough by the Berliner to buy it for the first time in a while – or possibly ever – welcome, too. We hope the Guardian may surprise you.

Email all responses to the new paper to Whatdoyouthink@guardian.co.uk

Today on the web 9/11 anniversary



Ben Rooney



Four years on and the tragedy of the September 11 attacks is still raw. The 911 digital archive, funded by the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, has captured a vast range of material, from video compilations to audio diaries. 911digitalarchive.org

The net wouldn't be the same without conspiracy theories – and they don't come better than 9/11. "I know and believe that 9/11 was a controlled demolition," writes Rick Rajter on Hammer Of Truth. "I'm willing to stake my reputation on it." That would be the reputation of a "foosball ninja and ultimate frisbee enthusiast". Big stake. hammeroftruth.com

Many Americans, like Ed Strong, worry that the memory of 9/11 will be used to

silence critics. "President Bush and many of his vocal supporters aren't content to wrap themselves in the flag... The ultimate demagogic weapon is to exploit the memory of Sept 11, 2001." edstrong.blog-city.com

But the most poignant site is the victims site. Each of the 2,996 killed is remembered on their own tribute page. Like that for George Paris, 33, written by his wife. "George, you will always be my soulmate, my angel. I will see you every time I look at our daughter... Rest in peace, my love, we will be together again someday." september11victims.com

guardian.co.uk

Saturday's most popular pages

1 **England v Australia, Fifth Test**
Over-by-over coverage

2 **World summit on UN's future**

3 **Disaster chief loses hurricane job**

4 **Polly Toynbee on US inequality**

5 **Naomi Klein on New Orleans**

[Read them all at guardian.co.uk/topstories](http://guardian.co.uk/topstories)

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News

Belfast riots



Barricade of fire
Vans set alight by loyalist paramilitaries block Belfast's Shankill Road during the rioting, the worst in many years, according to the chief constable Sir Hugh Orde
Photograph: Alan Lewis/Photopress

Return of the gun and the bomb

Chief constable condemns role of Orange Order as violence erupts after re-routing of loyalist parade

Angeliqe Chrisafis

The chief constable of Northern Ireland yesterday accused members of the Orange Order of stoking a weekend of violence in Belfast that led to more than 30 officers being injured as they came under automatic fire and were bombarded with petrol bombs.

Sir Hugh Orde said his officers had come under sustained and organised attack in one of the worst nights of rioting in years and the "worst violence ever faced by a force in the UK". It was lucky that none of his men and women had died. "Petrol bombs don't appear by accident, blast bombs do not appear by accident and certainly firearms have to be planned to be produced in the way they were produced," said Sir Hugh.

"I have seen members of the Orange Order in their sashes attacking my officers. I have seen them standing next to masked men. The Orange Order must bear substantial responsibility for this. They publicly called people on to the street."

The Orange Order called Sir Hugh's

remarks "inaccurate and inflammatory", but the chief constable said he would release footage showing Orangemen working alongside paramilitaries.

The violence erupted in west Belfast and then spread to the north and east of the city as well as to Ballymena, Antrim, Carrickfergus, Larne, Ballyclare, Glengormley and Ahoghill. Paramilitary gunmen opened fire on police and soldiers and cars were hijacked and set alight so regularly that roads were closed and motorists urged to stay at home.

All this had happened because one relatively small Orange march at Whiterock in north Belfast had been rerouted fewer than 100 metres away from Catholic homes and the gate in the peace wall between the two communities welded shut. Such was the fury among the Orange Order and unionists in general that the parade had been postponed for three months until this weekend.

Last week saw two nights of serious rioting and a daily blockade of rush-hour traffic by small groups of loyalist protesters after police had launched raids aimed at curbing the feud between the ri-

val loyalist paramilitary groups, the UVF and LVF, that has claimed four lives this summer. The turf war escalated further on Friday when two men were shot in separate gun attacks in Portadown, one a clear attempt to kill the son of the murdered LVF leader Billy "King Rat" Wright.

Then tension hit a higher notch when Ian Paisley, leader of the Democratic Unionist party, warned that the Whiterock parade could prove "the spark which kindles a fire there could be no putting out". Mr Paisley had been due to address Orangemen at Saturday's march before the rally was abandoned when loyalist paramilitaries opened fire on the police and army and the first gun battle broke out. Police officers later admitted that it had been "mob rule".

Yesterday young men in pink and yellow jumpers (the current fashion for young loyalists) ate bacon sandwiches after setting up a new burning barricade further down on Albert Bridge Road, which for quarter of a mile looked like a battle zone, with burned-out cars, lorries and even a caterpillar digger. The police "opened" the road yesterday morning by

Outbursts



knocking aside large bins with their armoured Land Rover before withdrawing.

Despite admitting to being "beat out" after 18 hours of "non-stop action", the young loyalists' anger at the police and the peace process was unabated. "This is not a peace process, this is a republican process," one of them told the Guardian.

Another added: "We have got the guns out now and we are not putting them away. They have got rid of everything Protestants hold dear, the UDR and the Royal Irish Regiment. The police is now filled with Taigs [Catholics] and they treat us young Protestants as scum. They have the Americans, the South, Blair and all the rest. Who have we got? The Grand Old Duke [of York, aka Ian Paisley] and Reg bloody Empey [Ulster Unionist leader]."

The Irish foreign affairs minister, Dermot Ahern, said yesterday: "It's an extremely worrying turn of events. What happened last night was a huge effort to intimidate nationalist communities, who fear very much for the future."

Eyewitness, page 20 »
Jonathan Freedland, page 33 »

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National

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City academies are unstoppable, says Blair

Schools programme to be further expanded

Local authorities may no longer be providers

Patrick Wintour
Rebecca Smithers

Tony Blair is to signal a speeding up of his radical domestic reforms today when he announces he wants to push ahead rapidly with his controversial programme to build city academy schools.

The prime minister will announce that the government is on course to have 40 city academies in place by September next year and will meet its target of 200 by 2010, changing the face of secondary education in Britain's cities.

He will also unsettle Labour backbenchers by saying he wants local education authorities no longer to be providers of education but instead commissioners and champions of good standards. The city academy programme is arguably one of the government's most controversial education policies because it hands power and influence to private-sector sponsors who have no track record in education.

Sponsors, ranging from self-made millionaire businessmen to church groups, some of which believe in creationism, donate up to £2m and in return are given a major say in the school's ethos and operations. Taxpayers meet the remaining costs of a new academy, which run to about £25m so far. The schools are free to run their own curriculum, set pay and control assets.

There have been reports that the chan-

cellor, Gordon Brown, is anxious about some of Mr Blair's plans for an education white paper, as well as the burgeoning role of the private sector within the NHS. However, Mr Blair is determined to ensure his public sector reforms are irreversible by the time he stands aside.

Contrary to recent suggestions that Downing Street was cooling on city academies, Mr Blair will instead portray them as the centrepiece of the education system, saying the movement is now unstoppable. He will argue there is overwhelming evidence that they are raising standards faster than other schools.

He will point to evidence that the number of pupils in city academies who secured good GCSE results in 2004-05 increased by 8%, four times the national average, and a PricewaterhouseCoopers survey showing nine out of 10 parents in city academies are satisfied with their child's education. Mr Blair will also reject suggestions that they are selecting atypically wealthy pupils by suggesting the number of children receiving free school meals in city academies is nearly twice the national average.

But David Chaytor, Labour MP for Bury North and a member of the all-party education select committee, which earlier this year called for the programme to be halted subject to an evaluation, said he opposed a rapid expansion. "My view is that the academies programme is a very exciting idea but hugely problematic. Nobody disputes the fact that the government is committed to improving urban education, but is the way to do it really by handing huge power and control to private sponsors for just £2m?"

As a further thrust of his renewed push for state education reform, Mr Blair will today encourage academies and top specialist schools to act in federation with neighbouring schools that are failing.

He has already given secondary schools powers to become foundation schools if governing bodies wish them to do so, giving them freedom from local admission policies.

In a speech last week, the education secretary, Ruth Kelly, said she would halve the time for failing schools to improve to 12 months. Those judged to have made inadequate progress would be closed or replaced. Teaching unions claimed the proposal may be part of a covert drive to meet the government city academy target.

Jackie Ashley, page 33 »



Prince Charles: 'How much faster can we all go?' Photograph: MJ Kim

Charles tells high-speed Britain to learn from the north

Stephen Bates

The Prince of Wales last night urged the nation to slow down and eulogised the less frenetic pace of life in the far north of Britain.

For an interview on the BBC religious programme Songs of Praise, he also revealed a hitherto unappreciated talent for wooing seals by singing Scottish ballads at them.

Interviewed in the grounds of the Castle of Mey, his late grandmother's country estate on the far northern tip of Caithness where he spends a week every August, the prince railed once more against the modern life that his future subjects find themselves having to lead.

He spoke about the calmness of the region: "It is a gentler, calmer approach to life in a world which has become frenetic, really, and the aim seems to be to go ever faster, but I often wonder 'how much faster can we all go?'"

"I just think we need to remember we are a part of nature and not apart from it, which I think has been one of the great problems of the 20th century."

The remarks chime with his often-voiced support for the environment, old-fashioned architecture, traditional approaches to teaching methods and organic farming.

The prince's annual report, published in July, detailed 500 engagements undertaken, 2,300 letters written and 5,000 guests entertained last year. The prince came under criticism for his lavish transport costs, paid for out of the public purse, to get him to events.

He was said yesterday to be resting at his country home at Highgrove after attending the wedding of his wife's son, Tom Parker Bowles, in Oxfordshire on Saturday.

During the interview with the broadcaster Sally Magnusson, the prince spoke about his childhood visits to the Castle of Mey, which was bought and renovated by the Queen Mother in the 1950s and is now run by a charitable trust from which Charles rents the castle when he stays there.

He recalled how, during his childhood, the royal family used to sail up the west coast of Scotland in the royal yacht, Britannia, and anchor off the nearby village of Scrabster before going ashore for lunch and a potter on the beach. The prince said that his grandmother's close association with the area was what made it special to him.

guardian.co.uk/monarchy »

Blunkett hits back at ex-Met chief's accusation of duplicity and bullying

Patrick Wintour

The former home secretary David Blunkett has hit back at extraordinary claims by the former Metropolitan police commissioner Lord Stevens that he was a duplicitous bully. Mr Blunkett told friends yesterday that his job as home secretary had been to sort out street crime and not become a friend of the commissioner.

Mr Blunkett regards the attacks on him by Lord Stevens as similar to those of another strong-willed public servant, former chief schools inspector Chris Woodhead.

The criticism of Mr Blunkett, who is currently work and pensions secretary, comes in a new autobiography by Lord Stevens being serialised in the News of the World. The two men worked together during Mr Blunkett's stint at the Home Office between June 2001 and December 2004.

Lord Stevens, who retired as Met chief earlier this year, claims people found Mr Blunkett "duplicitous and intimidating". He adds that Mr Blunkett knew little about fighting crime, and constantly briefed against him. He recalls a newspaper story that condemned him following a meeting he had had with Mr Blunkett. "There were only three of us in that office - myself, the home secretary and his dog. And it didn't come from his dog."

Lord Stevens claims it was only after he warned senior political contacts that he would "come out fighting" to defend his reputation that the problems stopped,

and Mr Blunkett displayed a complete change of attitude. "For the first two years of my commissionership, relations with him remained very difficult," Lord Stevens writes. "Articles in the press bore no relation to what had been said at meetings they reported."

Mr Blunkett's aides formally took the high ground yesterday, dismissing the book as an effort by Lord Stevens to promote his book, but there is private anger at the allegations. There is also anger across the cabinet that Lord Stevens has written a book, and writes a regular column in the News of the World. "To do all this so soon after leaving the job is in breach of the spirit of the rules," said one.

Mr Blunkett's aides claim that Lord

Stevens, who was commissioner between 2000 and 2005, never forgave Mr Blunkett for giving him two years, not the six months reported yesterday, to sort out the issue of street crime. It was also pointed out that the Home Office secured an extra £50m from the Treasury and boosted the number of London officers by 5,000, contributing to a fall in street crime of 25%. Before then street crime had doubled in 12 months.

Mr Blunkett's friends said he did not see his role as "getting on with the commissioner, but to make sure the job got done". At the end of the process, police morale had been lifted and a new "respect agenda" had been developed by Mr Blunkett, they said.

Mr Blunkett has previously admitted he had disputes with Lord Stevens on how to inform the public of the terrorist threat. Often accused of overhyping the threat, Mr Blunkett had been taken aback when the commissioner had said an attack on London was inevitable.

The former home secretary also let it be known that he had no desire to go back to the Home Office, scotching reports that he was being lined up by Mr Blair to replace Charles Clarke. Mr Blunkett regards himself as having got his life back since returning to government as work and pensions secretary.

No 10 officials also denied recent reports of a cabinet reshuffle in the autumn.

guardian.co.uk/politics »



David Blunkett as home secretary with then Met commissioner Lord Stevens

WHERE YOU LIVE
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12/09/05

'THIS ALBUM HER SEVENTH IS AN ABSOLUTE DELIGHT.'
THE OBSERVER

A COMPELLING AND UNCOMPROMISING WORK.'
INDEPENDENT



Elektra

National

Been there

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guardian.co.uk/travel/beenthere

Imported foods could be responsible for growth of superbugs

Rogue E coli strains have killed more than 80

Hospitals and GPs urged to chart number of infections

James Meikle
 Health correspondent

A strain of new superbugs thought to have caused more than 80 deaths may have come into Britain in imported food, a study suggests today. At least 83 mostly elderly patients infected with the antibiotic-resistant bacterium have died over two years and many more have been admitted to hospital.

Public health officials want to establish the scale of the problem, usually linked to urinary tract infections, and the origins of the bugs and their mutant enzymes.

Today's study comes from the Health Protection Agency (HPA), which has been collecting reports of blood poisoning caused by E coli submitted voluntarily by hospitals since 1994. The figures show a recent increase in the number of infections that are resistant to more than one antibiotic. The agency is now calling for more surveillance by hospitals and GPs.

Georgia Duckworth of the HPA, who compiled the report, said: "The findings in our report show evidence of people carrying these bacteria in their gut. If this is found to be commonplace in the general population this may point towards the food chain being a potential source; however this area still needs researching."

The problem E coli bugs, carrying enzymes called extended spectrum beta lac-

tamases (ESBLs), were identified in Britain in 2001 and concern grew in 2003. The type causing all the problems is CTX-M-15, of which there are different strains.

This is not the type of E coli which causes food poisoning. This strain is usually associated with urinary tract infections. Most people will recover quickly with a standard course of antibiotics, but some cases can progress to blood poisoning. Complications are more likely in the elderly and those with other serious medical conditions. A study of more than half the known deaths so far suggests only between a fifth and a quarter were directly attributable to the infection.

David Livermore, the director of the antimicrobial resistance monitoring and reference laboratory at the Health Protection Agency, said a that food source was plausible. "You get low-level infection in your gut. You are then later in hospital, you are on antibiotics for other reasons, and a lot of the normal gut E coli get killed off. This one gets growing, and then you get a urinary tract infection and it has a resistant strain."

No bugs similar to those causing the latest crisis have surfaced in livestock in this country, but they have been found in chickens in Spain and cattle in Japan. They spread very quickly in Argentina in the 1990s and are now causing problems in continental Europe and Asia. The problem bugs are resistant to penicillins and cephalosporins, the common workhorse antibiotics. Only two oral antibiotics and a few intravenous ones remain effective. Patients who have had the bug have had complicated infections, rather than simple (if painful) conditions such as cystitis.

SocietyGuardian.co.uk/health

Glasto glamour Fashion debut follows model formula



The Sydney fashion label Sass & Bide made its first appearance at New York fashion week yesterday. Its look for next summer pays homage to Kate Moss's much-photographed wardrobe at Glastonbury Photograph: Steve Wood

Nursing home doctors face GMC hearing over lax care standards

Diane Taylor and Hugh Muir

Two doctors who ran a private nursing home in which 16 people died in circumstances prompting "serious concerns" face disciplinary proceedings before the General Medical Council today amid fresh allegations of lax procedures and inadequate care.

The Guardian has learned how health and social care professionals officials reacted to a catalogue of incidents and omissions at Maypole Nursing home in Birmingham. Documents show they discovered three alleged cases of abuse, one involving a nurse who was recorded as having slapped and hit a female resident. In other incidents, one resident received scalds to the inner thigh and another sustained extensive bruising. The review found "poor standards" of medical notes for many of those who died.

Investigators were unable to ascertain from the records what treatments had been administered to residents who were often frail, confused and ill. In at least one case they were unable to find out how or when the cause of death was established.

The Maypole, which closed at the end of March 2003, was run by Jamalapuram Hari Gopal and his wife, Pratury Samrajya Lakshmi. While running the Maypole, Dr Hari Gopal also acted as a GP to the resi-

dents there, a dual responsibility frowned upon by the GMC. Both doctors have rejected any suggestion of wrongdoing.

The review team, comprising health officials, police and social services, examined 26 deaths at the 36-bed nursing home in 2002. Of those, 17 involved bronchopneumonia and two became the subject of police investigations, although no further action followed. In three cases, the reviewers found the causes of death recorded as "unsatisfactory".

The Guardian first revealed concerns about the Maypole last year, when Aiden Cotter, the Birmingham coroner, was asked to formally review 16 of the deaths. Seven nurses employed by the Maypole are now being investigated by the Nursing and Midwifery Council.

After an initial review, officials concluded that while there was no suggestion that residents had been harmed deliberately, some patients were not given "the appropriate drugs, at the appropriate dosage, at the appropriate times".

Today's GMC hearing will consider allegations that Dr Gopal and Dr Lakshmi "behaved in a manner that was inappropriate, irresponsible, inadequate, not in the best interests of his patients and not in the best interests of the residents of a nursing home".

SocietyGuardian.co.uk/health



Today in Media
Why Ricky Gervais thinks Richard Briers is the greatest living British sitcom actor, and the inept middle manager Briers played in a funny, sad and largely forgotten 1980s TV comedy. Page 2 >>

Memory is all in the blocking out

Alok Jha
 Science correspondent

Scientists have worked out why even the healthiest of us become more forgetful as we age. Although we are just as able to concentrate on tasks, we get worse at blocking out irrelevant information, and the distraction makes us far worse at remembering details.

"If you are unable to block out distracting information, you can't really attend to what you are supposed to attend to," said Mark D'Esposito, a neuroscientist at the University of California, Berkeley. Professor D'Esposito and colleagues compared young adults with people aged

between 60 and 77 who showed no signs of any memory-loss disorders. They were shown pictures of faces and scenes of nature while lying inside a brain-scanning functional magnetic resonance imaging machine. When asked to recall names, the older group showed no drop in activity in parts of the brain responsible for dealing with scenes (and vice versa), while the younger group did.

The study, published today in Nature Neuroscience, supports an emerging theory that the parts of our brain which deal with higher functions, such as the frontal lobes, are the first to deteriorate as we age. The frontal lobes are the area of the brain responsible for deciding the importance of any sensory information.

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National

Keep your face straight: passport grins pass into history



Mark Lawson

From today, Britons must reveal less in photobooth snaps – for security reasons

It sounds like something from an Orwell novel: British citizens who hope to be allowed to leave the country are no longer allowed to smile. But this new seriousness really did come into effect at midnight: forthwith, if you want to get out, then keep your mouth shut.

In fiction, this interdiction on grinning would result from some tyrannical ban on happiness.

In fact, it's a practical matter: the new biometric recognition scanners purchased to improve security at border controls are only able, due to some idiosyncrasy of their digital instructions, to recognise straight faces.

So, from this morning, potential travellers must produce in the curtained booth or photographer's shop what the official form calls "a neutral expression with your mouth closed".

Because some people's eyes close when they produce what you might call a serious smile, you are also required to show your whites.

If the arrival of this rule itself tempts anyone to leave the country, they should not go to the United States, where the earlier introduction of this sombre equipment means that passport holders have already been staring straight ahead for more than a year.

As airports around the world are forced to show their teeth against terrorism, embracing "international anti-fraud standards", travellers will soon be unable to show their own at most immigration controls.

The irony of these little rectangular snaps being changed by terrorism, though, is that some of the most haunting images of the attacks on travellers in the last four years come from passport photographs.

When newspapers or books print galleries of the homicidal hijackers from 9/11, the men all stare straight from the page with a uniform margin of neutral background around their hair and ears: one of them even has a telltale flash of curtain behind him. The same is true of many of the 7/7 and alleged 21/7 terrorists in Britain.

At an earlier time when assassination rather than terrorism was what nations most feared, one of the best remembered images of JFK's presumed killer, Lee Harvey Oswald, was also the one he used to show to border guards.

The most famous image of the German spy Mata Hari is also the one she carried next to her breast.

Crucial clues in the American atom spy case in 1949 were six sets of passport snaps used by the conspirators on documents.

While the introduction of face recognition technology may improve international security, the denial of the right to smile means that our passports (and, in time, ID cards) will now paradoxically reveal less of our identity than before.

As shown by the invention of the poker face by gamblers, it's the twitches of the

lips and cheeks that really give us away, for good or ill.

Richard Nixon's ill-timed, ill-fitting grin – coinciding, for example, with police attacks on students – captured his essential character, just as Kelly Holmes's goggle-eyed, open-mouthed joy on taking a second gold symbolises the incredulous vindication of athletic effort.

The most powerful screen actors – Jack Nicholson, Julia Roberts and Nicole Kidman, for example – are often associated with signature displays of amusement: a terrifying rictus, a face-wide smile and an impish, dimpled twist of the lips.

Conspiracy theorists, though, may note that the government that has put our laughing gear into storage is led by a politician whose perma-smile has become a political handicap, identified with insincerity.

Perhaps it isn't a software problem with the scanners at all but part of a wider New Labour drive towards public gravity.

The poignancy of today's enforced solemnity is that, somewhere at a government office in Britain late on Friday afternoon, someone will have become the last Brit to be allowed to show their teeth around the world.

Whatever the reasons – technological innovation, security or Labour conspiracy – the death of the toothy passport grin now takes its place alongside other moments of cultural transition in the history of the UK: the end of peacetime conscription in 1960; AA patrolmen ceasing to salute their customers in 1961 and, due to become law in December this year, the removal of the terms "bachelor" and "spinster" from wedding certificates.

Yard says arms fair may affect anti-terror drive

Richard Norton-Taylor

One of the world's biggest arms fairs opens in London tomorrow amid strong opposition from Scotland Yard and human rights campaigners.

The biennial Defence Systems and Equipment International in Docklands has provoked an angry response from senior officers concerned about the resources needed to police the event at a time when they are under pressure from the threat of terrorist attacks. Campaigners are angry that countries whose human rights records have been criticised by British ministers, including China, have been invited. China is subject to a European Union arms embargo.

Steve House, an assistant commissioner responsible for security at the arms fair, said taxpayers should not have to foot the bill. "It is denuding London of policing at a time of unprecedented demand", he said. "The defence industry makes huge profits. I think we should be getting some money from the people exhibiting inside the centre. At the moment the taxpayers are having to pay. I don't think it looks right or is right."

The previous arms fair, two years ago, cost more than £4m in a police operation involving about 4,000 officers. Spearhead, a subsidiary of the publishing group organising the exhibition, Reed Elsevier, said it was too late to ask the arms companies to pay for policing. Sir Robin Wales, the mayor of Newham, said the fair was not welcome in his borough. "I have never welcomed this event; I don't want it in this borough. I hope this will be the last fair of its kind to be held here." But neither he

£4m The cost of policing one of the world's biggest arms fairs in an operation that could involve some 4,000 officers

nor Ken Livingstone, London's mayor, who is equally opposed to it, can stop it.

The Ministry of Defence is so sensitive about the countries it has invited to the exhibition that it will not identify them until today, although Chinese defence officials have told the Guardian they will be attending. Delegations from Indonesia and Colombia, two other countries with poor human rights records, will also be there, according to Campaign Against Arms Trade. The campaign said officials from the two countries had told it they would be coming. More than 1,000 companies will be exhibiting their latest weapons systems, including the biggest American and British arms firms. Israel will also be represented. Two years ago, Israel Military Industries Ltd showed off its cluster bombs – controversial weapons because unexploded "bomblets" pose a threat to civilians.

The sale of cluster bombs was singled out last week by the editors of the Lancet in their call for the medical journal's owners, Reed Elsevier, to stop promoting the arms fair. At least 15 manufacturers of cluster bombs will be at the arms fair, according to Campaign Against Arms Trade.

Two Chinese firms are exhibiting, including the Hainan XinXing Import and Export Company. Arms companies and traders from Pakistan, India, South Africa, Sweden, Norway, France, Germany and the Czech Republic also have stands.

guardian.co.uk/armstrade

In happier times

Richard Nixon after a TV address to the country in October 1970



Tony Blair demonised for Tory billboard adverts in 1997



Jack Nicholson as Batman's nemesis, the Joker, in the 1989 film



Kelly Holmes wins the 800 metres at the 2004 Olympics in Athens



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National

York

Inmate injured in attack at high-security prison

A top security prisoner is in hospital with serious injuries after being stabbed by two other inmates at Full Sutton high security jail near York. Police are questioning prisoners and staff after the attack at the weekend, a year after another inmate, Arif Hussain, was found dead in his cell. Prison staff have been accused of ignoring Hussain's screams for hours before he died. Full Sutton, which opened in 1987, to specialise in high-risk prisoners, holds some of the most dangerous criminals, including those suspected of terror offences. The injured man has not been named. **Martin Wainwright**

Stoke-on-Trent

Ceramics firm insures star designer for £1.5m

A pottery designer has had her life insured for £1.5m on the advice of bankers to the ceramics specialists Moorcroft. Work by Emma Bossons, 29, accounts for 40% of the company's £6m annual sales. Moorcroft's chairman, Hugh Edwards, called Ms Bossons, who started as a pottery painter at rivals Wedgwood, "a phenomenon who has helped us in a difficult economic environment". Mr Edwards, whose firm employed only four designers between 1897 and 1993, said: "It's not a case of saying our other designers are no good. They are extremely good, but Emma is unbelievable." **Martin Wainwright**

Dumfries

Britain's most pleasurable road revealed

In a country where traffic jams and gridlock are becoming the norm, it is increasingly difficult to indulge in the joy of the open road. But a panel of racing drivers and motoring journalists has named the A708 from Moffat to Selkirk as the best place to experience the joy of driving free from the irritation of fellow motorists. The remote road takes in St Mary's Loch and the rolling Scottish lowlands as it snakes 10 miles through Dumfries and Galloway. Motoring pleasure can also be found in Wales, on the A481 from Bwlth Wells to Radnor, which came second on the list. **Gerard Seenan**



Weston-super-Mare

Bones may solve mystery of 1972 migrant tragedy

Human bones found on a beach may belong to an immigrant who drowned while trying to reach Wales more than 30 years ago. Parts of a skeleton that were discovered by a dog walker at Sand Bay near Weston-super-Mare are to be examined by pathologists today. Up to three people of Asian origin are thought to have drowned in 1972 after paying to be smuggled into the country. Four people were dropped into a dinghy from a motorboat and tried to row ashore, but the craft overturned. One survived and the body of a second was found, but the fate of the other two has remained a mystery. **Steven Morris**

East Lothian

Power plant transformed into head-turning art

For the 16.5 million travellers who make their way from Edinburgh to London down the east coast each year, Torness nuclear power station is an unmissable, if unremarkable, building. But the East Lothian power plant is about to become one of the most spectacular art installations in Britain. Ricky Demarco, a Scottish arts impresario, is planning to project art on to the huge structure. The first piece will be a six-minute film by the artist Ken McMullen, *Lumen De Lumine*, exploring the relationship between science and art. The film will run on continuous loop for a year. **Gerard Seenan**

Cornwall

L-plates to help identify Celtic language novices

The revival of the Cornish language is gathering pace, but newcomers to the ancient Celtic tongue have always had a problem – finding others to practise with. Now Cornishman Robbie Wright has come up with a novel way of making sure students recognise each other on the street and stop for a chat. He has designed learner plates, an L superimposed on a Cornish flag badge. Mr Wright, 43, said: "Learners will be able to recognise fellow speakers." It is thought that several hundred people speak Cornish reasonably fluently and a few thousand have some knowledge of it. **Steven Morris**

Dales on rails



The daily railcar service that opens today restoring the link between the Wensleydale railway and the East Coast main line for the first time in 50 years

Darlington

Forget holes in one. Golfer hits round in one

The shortest round in the history of golf ended at the weekend when a charity player's opening shot scored a hole in one – at the 18th and final green. Peter Barron skewed the ball so badly it flew 150 metres in a huge loop, over several trees and spectators and into the hole where it – and other players' balls – had not been expected for at least an hour. Mr Barron, 43, the editor of the *Northern Echo*, was given a round of applause at the Blackwell Grange golf club in Darlington. He said: "I am so bad at golf that I will never get a real hole in one so I will settle for this happily." **Martin Wainwright**

"UNMISSABLE"

JAMES KING - RADIO ONE

"KEIRA KNIGHTLEY IS
BREATH-TAKINGLY BRILLIANT"

CHRIS TOOKEY - DAILY MAIL

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National

Culture clash Sir Nicholas Serota on his radical vision for British art



Taking the Tate into the future

Charlotte Higgins
Arts correspondent

Approached by a narrow, dimly lit corridor, the room is dramatically dark. It would be black except for the 13 paintings, which, each illuminated by a single bright beam, seem to throw out their own rich gleam of turquoise, fuchsia, or gold. The room is lined – floor, ceiling, walls – in an elaborately knotted walnut panelling. One end of the room curves gently outwards, like the apse of a cathedral. This is the extraordinary new Chris Ofili installation, The Upper Room, in Tate Britain.

Giving the Guardian an exclusive preview of the gallery's new rehang, Sir Nicholas Serota, director of the Tate, said: "The question is, will the visitors ever let us take it down?"

Loosely based on The Last Supper, but depicting monkeys in place of apostles, the works feature Ofili's trademark elephant dung. The panelled room has been specially created by the architect David Adjaye.

The Upper Room is not just a major new acquisition by the Tate, but key to Sir Nicholas's vision for his remaining years at the helm of Britain's most significant arts institution, which he revealed to the Guardian.

He plans a radical unseating of painting and sculpture from their positions as the "king and queen" of art. In addition, he aims to create a Tate that "does not appear monocultural" but reflects a "broader British society, in all its richness". His ambition also includes representing the full depth of contemporary life, such as club culture.

New generation

"One of the most important things that has been happening in British art over the past 25 years is the way it has been steadily infused by artists who were perhaps not born here, but are working here, or perhaps who are second generation – such as Mona Hatoum, Steve McQueen, Chris Ofili and Veronica Ryan," he said.

His directorship of the Tate has been a key part of British cultural life since he



Sir Nicholas Serota, who has a contract to direct the Tate for four more years, prepares to open the rehang of Tate Britain, which includes Chris Ofili's extraordinary new Upper Room, above, as well as classics such as Jacob Epstein's Jacob and the Angel, top
Photographs: Dan Chung

took the job in 1988, presiding over the opening of Tates Liverpool and St Ives and masterminding the creation of Tate Modern. The undisputed titan of British art, to many he "is" the Tate.

Sir Nicholas, 59, has a contract for another four years. He said he wanted to stay on for "as long as I am really contributing", and not "beyond my welcome", but did not rule out continuing after 2009. "The Tate is good, not excellent. There is still much to do," he said.

The Tate Britain rehang sees a new focus on immigrant artists of an earlier generation, including a room devoted to the largely forgotten FN Souza, an Indian-born artist who died in 2002.

In a neighbouring gallery a work by the artist John Latham involves a collection of live piranhas. They symbolise the art world and political establishment, according to the artist, and are trapped in a tank with one of his essays, which they are forced to "read".

Sir Nicholas told the Guardian that in the future the Tate should be dramatically recast to integrate "graphics, film, photography and performance. Visual culture is so much more complex than painting or sculpture.

"The big idea," he said, "is that the old hierarchies between painting and sculpture and other forms of expression have evaporated.

"Artists are reflecting on the culture around them – club culture, or whatever it is – and the institution needs to reflect that in the way it shows, presents and buys art."

As for Tate Modern, he said, it should be leading the way with innovative displays and ideas, not trailing in the wake of Paris's Pompidou Centre and New York's Museum of Modern Art, whose collections of 20th-century art, he admitted, are fundamentally superior to the Tate's. Moma had shown a "loss of

"The old hierarchies have evaporated. Artists are reflecting on the culture around them and the Tate needs to reflect that"

nerve", he said, by ditching the innovative displays introduced at the millennium that fused painting and photography. It returned to a more traditional presentation after its recent redevelopment.

He admitted that Tate Modern's collection is so defective that the museum could never mount a chronological history of modern art as in Paris or New York.

Redevelopment

Next year, however, radical new displays in Tate Modern will focus on moments in art history – such as surrealism, or the minimalism and conceptualism of the 1960s – and chart their effects on artists working today.

He said that the Tate was actively collecting contemporary and modern art from Latin America, south Asia and China. "We are also buying from Africa. We are actively searching out places where there's energy."

The museum will soon start the process of redeveloping the unused space to the south of its Turbine Hall, which is planned to result in a 60% expansion by 2012.

He said that when discussing the expansion plans with a former arts minister, she had told him: "Don't be too greedy."

"Politicians lag a long way behind the public in their appreciation of the importance of art in this country," he said. "Notwithstanding the huge public interest in Tate there is still an innate conservatism that creeps out at the slightest excuse."

He added: "There is never a moment when you can say you've completed the task, but I'd like to see the moment when the visual arts are recognised as a very strong part of culture in this country."

The vision for the Tate, he said, included the idea that the museum in society should be "not a cathedral, but a meeting place, where you see and recognise other people in society; a place of debate and dialogue and exchange, not a place of worship".

guardian.co.uk/arts »

National

Family drama that keeps the audience right up to date

New Mike Leigh play keeps the setting domestic

Starring role on coffee table for the Guardian

Patrick Barkham

First it was whispered to be about the war in Iraq. Then a rumour suggested it would be set among Jewish settlers in Israel in 1948. Finally, one of the most eagerly awaited theatrical mysteries was solved over the weekend when the curtain rose on Mike Leigh's new play, revealing a family drama in a familiar domestic setting.

The preview of *Two Thousand Years*, Leigh's first foray into theatre for 12 years, was enthusiastically received at the National Theatre on Saturday night. With all 16,000 tickets for the entire 20-week run of the mystery play sold out, queues formed at 6am for 30 extra tickets.

The play zipped across the political terrain of Israel, Iraq, withdrawal from the Gaza Strip and even the floods in New Orleans, as Leigh, 62, perhaps proved why



Mike Leigh: his first foray into the theatre in 12 years looks at the strains of relationships in a London Jewish family

the first performance was suddenly postponed last Thursday: it was clear the author of *Abigail's Party* and *Secrets & Lies* was still writing it.

Set amidst the comfortable sofas and stripped pine of a middle-class north London living room, in typically naturalistic style Leigh's play looks at the strained relationships between three generations of a Jewish family.

Opening with mother Rachel (Caroline Gruber) reading the comment and analysis pages of the Guardian, the first scenes poke fun at the comfortable assumptions of the chattering classes. Moody, with-

drawn Josh (Ben Caplan), son of Rachel and smug Danny (Allan Corduner), is shown drawing the curtains and strapping up his arm. Just when you think he will fix himself up with heroin, he says a Jewish prayer instead.

His left-liberal parents are as shocked by their son's new-found religiosity as by any discovery of drug addiction. "I don't understand. It's like having a Martian in the house," says Danny. "How come an expensively educated, scientifically-minded undergraduate brought up in a secular household turns to God?" asks Grandpa Dave (John Burgess). His mother also despairs. "What is he going to eat? Will he want to go kosher?"

Leigh's script implies that the cosy liberalism of Danny and Rachel is based on a view of the world every bit as unquestioning and rigid as Josh's traditional Jewish faith. Danny rails against his son's "irrationality" while telling off his daughter Tammy for leaving her keys on the table. "It's bad luck," he snaps, repeatedly.

After the performance, Leigh briefly mingled with an appreciative audience. "It was one of the most brilliant pieces of work I have ever seen," enthused Nigel Shaps. "I'm Jewish and this nails Jewish family life like nothing that has ever been around in this country. It's so truthful. I couldn't imagine anyone who exists in a family not finding this moving and funny."

Some were left breathless at the play's up-to-the-minute script. "When did he decide he was going to stop writing it?" asked Susie Reay-Jones.

While many in the audience savoured the suspense of not having a clue what they had paid to see, others confessed a sense of anticlimax at a play that was slow to get going and domestic exchanges that sometimes seemed banal.

But the real star of the show sparked the opening line of the play and stimulated discussion at the end. It was there, stealing every scene with its method acting from the living room coffee table. A standing ovation for the Guardian please. The only remaining mystery of Leigh's play is: will it be Berliner-shaped by the end of the show tonight?



Crime scene examiners and armed police after the shooting in Ashton-under-Lyne Photograph: Andy Kelvin

Gunman shot dead by police

Martin Wainwright

An inquiry was launched yesterday after police shot dead a gunman who opened fire on a house in Greater Manchester after earlier smashing its windows and the owner's 4x4 pickup with a machete. Police later named the gunman as Craig King.

Horrified neighbours watched as the man used a rifle in a quiet terraced street in Ashton-under-Lyne, where armed police had arrived after an emergency call following the earlier attack.

Officers were interviewing Peter Bromley, 42, whose partner and her children were in the house during the first attack, when the man phoned to say: "I'm going to blow your fucking head off."

He appeared within minutes, fired through the window and was then fatally injured as officers returned fire. He died later on Saturday in Tameside hospital.

The shooting is the first time that Greater Manchester police have killed a civilian, and the Independent Police Complaints Commission began an inquiry last night. Among issues on the agenda was why the area around the £70,000 house in Crawford Street had not been cordoned off after the machete attack.

Investigators are also expected to question detectives about how much effort had been made to arrest the man after the machete attack, when his car registration number and suspected identity were given in 999 calls by neighbours, as well as one from the victims.

Mr Bromley had been drinking in a local pub before the first incident, watching the Premier League derby between Manchester United and City. An argument is said to have started involving the brother of Mr Bromley's partner, who moved in with him six months ago with her two children.

Marilyn Rider, a grandmother who has

lived in the street for 11 years, described the attacker as "a really burly type, quite fat and about six foot tall". After the machete attack, she ran across the road and took in the two children, Ben, 10, and 12-year-old Alex.

"They were terrified after the first incident and I brought them into my house to calm them down," she said. "I believe it was their mother's brother who turned up with the machete. We heard the sound of smashing glass and then he drove off."

"A number of people got his registration and phoned the police. While they were interviewing Pete the man phoned, But I don't think Pete or the police expected him to actually come back so quickly, if at all."

Another resident, Jean Fox, said: "This has always been a lovely family neighbourhood. Pete is a hard-working man who doesn't attract trouble, and this has been a terrible shock."

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National

BBC's new day dawns

Marr turns up the volume on restyled politics show

Simon Hoggart

Yesterday saw the first edition of Sunday AM, the new politics and arts show on BBC1 that replaces Breakfast With Frost. It has a new presenter, Andrew Marr, and a new set, which was much admired but which looked to me like a penthouse flat decorated by a Mike Leigh character, possibly Abigail. It was full of stuff, for no apparent reason.

Andrew Marr claimed to be very nervous. I offered the actors' traditional good luck cry of "break a leg" and he said: "I might do just that. I've got to walk on at the start. If I manage not to fall over, that'll be a triumph."

Well, it was never all that likely. Marr has been on television more often than most of us have had dinner, and he loves it. It's his arena, like Freddie Flintoff at Old Trafford. "We had a rehearsal the other day," said one of the team, "and Andy was prancing round the set like a little boy with a new toy."

He was also wearing a tie in incredibly bright yellow, brown, gold and pink stripes. This is the kind of tie that tells you something about a man, chiefly that he likes very loud ties.

One of the guests was our editor, Alan Rusbridger, who was helping out with the review of the day's papers, and hoping to plug the wondrous object you presently hold in your hands, the new

Berliner, combining the gravitas of the Economist with the colourful good humour of the Beano.

Everyone was taut with nerves but trying to hide it. "Andrew, I want you on the floor – now," said the editor, Barney Jones. It was four minutes to the start, which seemed to be running it a little fine. At 9.00 they ran a short film of him "arriving" in a tiny powder-blue car. This is in line with other newreaders who have very modest means of transport. Jon Snow has his bike. Huw Edwards will shortly be seen hitchhiking to Television Centre. "We're off, we're away!" shouts Jones.

After the news, a discussion of the papers with Rusbridger, and Ann Leslie of the Daily Mail. Jones stalks nervously and constantly round the gallery, occasionally barking an instruction down a mike into Marr's ear. "Alan Rusbridger has got his new Guardian under the table, he wants to show it." He can't, because Leslie is still talking about Saturday's celebrity weddings. Finally he is allowed to whisk it out.

“This is the kind of tie that tells you something about a man, chiefly that he likes very loud ties”



Andrew Marr, presenter of the BBC's new politics show, Sunday AM, questioning Gordon Brown about petrol prices yesterday Photograph: Dan Chung

Rusbridger: "It looks like that."

Leslie: "Oh, my God ..."

Which is one view.

Then on to the new US ambassador, Robert Tuttle, who reveals that George Bush is a "strong, resilient and visionary leader". The ambassador adds that he loves Britain, and has bought many of our antiques. The people in the gallery think this is funny, and the laughter indicates their growing relief.

Kevin Spacey talks about his work at the Old Vic, then the chancellor of the exchequer appears and provides the crucial lines about petrol prices and rationing – the key answers that will get the programme talked about on the news through the day. Mr Brown is wearing a bright pink tie. What's with these ties? Was there a power cut when they all got dressed?

Then over to John Major at the Oval, waiting for the penultimate day's play. He too is in a bright pink tie. Marr asks what the feeling in his bowels is. The feeling in his bowels is that England can do it. I begin to be glad that I haven't had breakfast. Marr leaves the autocue at one point, causing near panic upstairs in the "gallery", or control room. "He's off piste!" says someone, and there is huge relaxation when he gets back to the script.

Then John Williams plays out over the titles, and the gallery breaks up in laughter, applause and relief. "It went better than I could ever have hoped," says Jones, and a sort of mass hug-in ensues, followed by a fry-up, washed down with champagne.

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National

Education

Half of primary staff 'not able to teach science'

Half of all primary schoolteachers do not feel they understand basic science well enough to teach the subject, even at the elementary primary level, according to a survey published today. The research, carried out by the Wellcome Trust, Queen's University Belfast and St Mary's University College Belfast, involved questioning 300 primary schoolteachers across the UK. The survey also revealed that teachers who had taken part in professional development programmes in science were more confident in almost every aspect of teaching the subject. **Rebecca Smithers**

Health

250 clinics to tackle depression epidemic

Plans for a national network of 250 psychological treatment centres to provide therapy for 1 million people a year are being considered by ministers to tackle a national epidemic of depression and anxiety. A framework for making behavioural therapy freely available under the NHS will be set out today by Lord Layard, a Downing Street adviser who has convinced the prime minister that mental illness has become Britain's biggest social problem. He will call for an extra 10,000 therapists to be trained over the next 10 years to provide an alternative to pills. **John Carvel**

Environment

Protests over honorary degree for Clarkson

BBC presenter Jeremy Clarkson will be met by student protests today as he is awarded an honorary degree from Oxford Brookes University for his "contribution to learning and society". Clarkson, who has ridiculed cyclists and environmentalists and questioned global warming, is described by the university as an "exemplary role model for the university's students". A spokesman for Transport 2000 said the award "was like Inspector Clouseau being given detective of the year award by the head of Scotland Yard. He doesn't deserve it." Clarkson was not available for comment. **John Vidal**



Defence

Nato prepares for Afghan deployment of UK troops

John Reid will tomorrow meet his fellow Nato defence ministers in a Berlin hotel to prepare the ground for the biggest deployment of British troops since the invasion of Iraq. In public, the ministers are likely to play down the significance of their meeting; but privately, defence officials say it will be important in paving the way for the deployment of some 4,000 British troops in Afghanistan in May next year. Britain, which will also deploy Apache helicopters for the first time, has agreed to take charge of Nato's expanding role in a country facing more attacks from Taliban recruits. **Richard Norton-Taylor**

Society

Excluded black pupils need support, says study

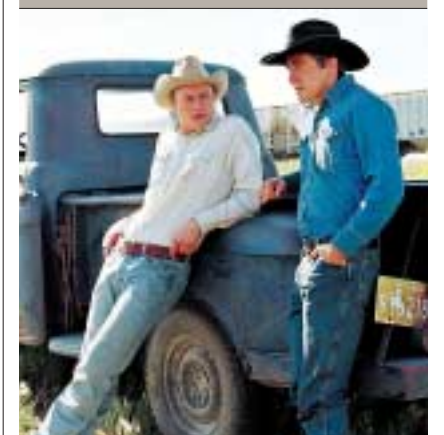
The Joseph Rowntree Foundation will call this week for more support for black pupils excluded from school. Its researchers interviewed expelled pupils aged 15-19 and found they were four times more likely than white pupils to be permanently excluded. In a report on Wednesday, the foundation will praise the work of community groups in helping the young people get back into education or work. But researchers found the groups received little support from the education service and said they should be funded. Report available from Wednesday at www.jrf.org.uk. **John Carvel**

Transport

Ministers asked to allow 60-tonne trucks on roads

The 60-tonne trucks that dominate the highways of the US and Australia could soon be seen on Britain's roads. The current limits for HGVs in the UK are 44 tonnes and 16 metres (62ft) in length. But an application has been submitted to the Department of Transport for larger trucks, known as road trains, to be permitted, and a report is being prepared for the transport minister Stephen Ladyman. The Road Haulage Association believes larger vehicles make commercial and environmental sense, but the pressure group Transport 2000 says they would be disastrous in villages and towns. **Sam Jones**

Gay western wins prize



Brokeback Mountain, Ang Lee's western set in 1970s Wyoming, has won the Golden Lion, the top prize at the Venice film festival. Critics described it as "an epic romance in which the protagonists simply happen to be men".

Lottery

One ticketholder picks up £5.4m lottery jackpot

One winner scooped Saturday's £5.4m Lottery jackpot, operator Camelot said. The winning numbers were 1, 34, 46, 24, 8, 27 and the bonus number was 30. The jackpot winner matched all six main numbers and claimed £5,476,246. Nine ticketholders matched five of the numbers and the bonus ball to win £187,222 each, while 510 tickets won £2,064 each by matching just five numbers. In the Thunderball prize draw, there were two winners of the £250,000 top prize. Numbers drawn were 21, 32, 17, 26, 27 and the Thunderball number was 6. **Press Association**

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National

CIA terror flights

Destination Cairo: human rights fears over CIA flights

Snatched suspects tell of torture

UN investigator to look at British role

Ian Cobain
Stephen Grey
Richard Norton-Taylor

It was only a matter of time before the CIA caught up with Saad Iqbal Madni.

A Pakistani Islamist and, allegedly, a close associate of Richard Reid, the shoe bomber, he turned up in Indonesia in November 2001, just as the Taliban regime was crumbling and members of al-Qaida were fleeing Afghanistan. Renting a room in a Jakarta boarding house, he told locals he had arrived to hand over an inheritance to his late father's second wife.

On January 9 2002, Iqbal was seized by Indonesian intelligence agents. Two days later, according to Indonesian officials, he was bundled aboard a Gulfstream V executive jet which had flown into a military airfield in the city. Then, without any extradition hearing or judicial process, he was flown to Cairo.

Iqbal, 24, had become the latest terrorism suspect to fall into a system known in US intelligence circles as "extraordinary rendition" – the apprehension of a suspect who is not placed on trial, or flown to Guantánamo, but taken to a country where torture is common.

These suspects are denied legal representation, and their detention is concealed from the International Committee of the Red Cross. The most common destination is Egypt, but there is evidence of detainees also being flown to Jordan, Morocco, Afghanistan, Uzbekistan and Syria.

Precise numbers are impossible to determine. A report on renditions published by New York University school of law and the New York City Bar Association suggests that around 150 people have been "rendered" in the last four years, but that is only an estimate. A handful have emerged from what has been labelled a secret gulag, and have given deeply disturbing accounts of horrific mistreatment.

Previous media reports have uncovered sketchy details of a British link to CIA abduction operations, but the full extent of the UK's support can now be revealed. Drawing on publicly available information from the US Federal Aviation Administration, the Guardian has compiled a database of flight records which shows the extent of British logistical support.

Aircraft involved in the operations have flown into the UK at least 210 times since 9/11, an average of one flight a week. The 26-strong fleet run by the CIA have used 19 British airports and RAF bases, including Heathrow, Gatwick, Birmingham, Luton, Bournemouth and Belfast. The favourite destination is Prestwick, which CIA aircraft have flown into and out from more than 75 times. Glasgow has seen 74 flights, and RAF Northolt 33.

The Gulfstream V on to which Iqbal was bundled and flown to Egypt, for example, left Cairo on January 15 and headed for Scotland. After a brief stopover at Prestwick, probably to refuel, it departed again for Washington. Iqbal was held in Cairo for two years before appearing in Guantánamo, where he told other detainees who have since been released that he was tortured by having electrodes placed on his knees. It also appears that his bladder was damaged during interrogation.

Violations

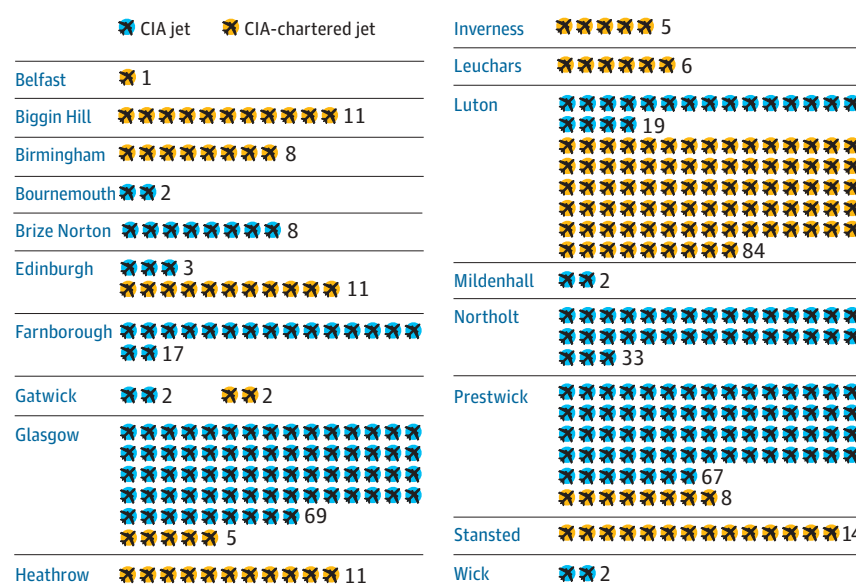
Human rights campaigners insist that these operations violate international law. Washington insists they do not. Nevertheless, the United Nations is seeking to examine Britain's role in the policy, as part of a wider inquiry into ways in which counter-terrorism operations around the world may breach basic human rights.

Martin Scheinin, a UN commission on human rights special rapporteur, has submitted a number of queries to the British government. His view about complicity in



Flying in the face of the law? The United States claims its 'rendition' policy of delivering seized suspects to countries believed to carry out torture is not a breach of international law. Human rights lawyers strongly disagree

How UK airports were used



renditions is clear: "When several states can, through cooperating, breach their obligations under international law simultaneously, if they are all involved in torture, they all bear their own responsibility. It is my intention to look at acts where more than one state is involved. It is too early to say what will happen with the UK."

Although the Foreign Office has denied any knowledge of the use of British airports during renditions, Prof Scheinin says: "It isn't unusual that governments deny involvement and try to keep it secret



Abu Zubaydah, above, was seized in Pakistan, but where he was taken remains a mystery

as long as possible." Some of the flights which the Guardian has examined were made during operations which clearly ended in the abduction of a terrorism suspect who was then tortured, such as Iqbal.

Other data points to the strong possibility that the CIA was using British airports during an abduction operation. On March 26 2002, the Gulfstream used in the abduction of Iqbal flew from North Carolina to Washington and on to Prestwick, where it remained overnight before flying to Dubai. Two days later, FBI officials and Pakistani police stormed a house in Faisalabad, where they arrested a number of al-Qaida suspects, including Abu Zubaydah, one of Osama bin Laden's senior aides.

Flight records do not show where the aircraft flew after Dubai, and where Zubaydah was taken remains a mystery. There have been rumours that he is being held in the far east, however, and the Gulfstream next appeared in Alaska before returning to Washington.

On other occasions the same aircraft has stopped off at Prestwick before and after flying people from Pakistan to Tashkent in Uzbekistan. Craig Murray, the former British ambassador in Tashkent, says he is aware of detainees being flown into the country on an executive jet, and believes they were probably tortured.

It is not clear whether any detainees are on board the aircraft when they land in the UK, or whether the CIA is using British airports purely for refuelling and other

logistical support. There is no suggestion that any of the UK airport authorities have colluded in any wrongdoing. The CIA's renditions programme, and its use of UK airports, has angered some human rights lawyers. Concern is also being expressed in a number of other European countries, where authorities have barred the agency from making unauthorised flights or have launched investigations into abductions.

Unauthorised flights

Last month Denmark announced that unauthorised CIA flights would not be allowed into the country's airspace, while in Austria, in January 2003, two fighters were scrambled to intercept a Hercules transport plane thought to be involved in the renditions operation which had not declared itself to be on a government mission. In Sweden, a parliamentary investigator into the abduction of two Egyptian men flown from Stockholm to Cairo in December 2001 concluded that CIA agents had broken the country's laws by subjecting the pair to "inhuman treatment". In Italy, a judge has issued warrants for the arrest of 19 CIA agents said to have been behind the kidnapping of Osama Mustafa Hassan Nasr, an Islamist cleric dragged into a van near his home in Milan in February 2003. He was flown to Egypt for interrogation, and later told relatives that he had been tortured with electric shocks.

The aircraft and their crews are the successors to Air America, the CIA-owned airline that flew covert missions during the Vietnam war. Many of the aircraft are operated by a company called Aero Contractors, which was founded by a former chief pilot of Air America, and is based in a remote corner of an airfield at Smithfield, North Carolina.

Most of the CIA's fleet, which includes executive jets, a Boeing 737 and a Hercules transport plane, is owned, at least on paper, by a network of seven other companies. Examination of records in the US shows these seven firms to be a series of shell companies with no premises, and the directors of the companies appear to be fictitious. Aero's company president, Norman Richardson, would not talk to the Guardian, although he has told one American journalist: "Most of the work we do is for the government. It's on the basis that we can't say anything about it." A former Aero Contractors pilot has confirmed to the New York Times that he had been recruited by the CIA, and that the agency ran the airline. He said the crews did not use the term extraordinary rendition: "We used to call them snatches."

British assistance for covert CIA kid-

napping operations may violate international law, according to some lawyers, while the CIA agents involved may also be breaking British domestic law. "In international law, states are required to prevent acts of torture, and not turn a blind eye to it," said Paul Green, a member of the Law Society's international human rights committee.

It remains illegal under US law for any American citizen to torture a foreigner. Critics of the rendition campaign argue that the CIA gets around this by practising "torture by proxy", taking detainees to countries where they know they will be tortured.

President George Bush has defended the renditions programme, saying: "We operate within the law and we send people to countries where they say they're not going to torture the people." Critics doubt whether such pledges are credible. The US State Department describes torture as being systemic in most of the countries. Even the CIA has described the "curtailment of human rights" in Uzbekistan as a concern. The CIA declined to comment.

Footnote

Extraordinary rendition

The US policy of taking moving suspects from one country to another without any court hearing or extradition process.

Uzbekistan

One destination for suspects abducted during rendition operations is Uzbekistan. Craig Murray, former British ambassador in Taskent, believes they were probably tortured.

Osama Mustafa Hassan Nasr

Nasr, also known as Abu Omar, is an Egyptian national who had been granted political asylum in Italy. CIA agents are wanted by the Italian authorities for abducting him in Milan.

Air America

Funded and controlled by the CIA, the airline flew covert operations at the height of the Vietnam war.

Stockholm

Ahmed Agiza and Muhammad Zery, asylum seekers convicted in absentia of membership of Islamist group. According to inquiry evidence last year, they were abducted by Swedish police and Americans. Both said they were later tortured in Egypt.



Ginger gene makes redheads more sensitive to the cold

Audrey Gillan

Not only are they more likely to burn when the mercury rises, but they also feel the most pain when it drops.

Researchers at Louisville University in Kentucky have discovered that people with ginger hair are more sensitive than most. A study released yesterday shows that the presence of a ginger gene means many redheads need extra doses of anaesthetic during surgery because they suffer pain more acutely.

Scientists compared the pain tolerance of 60 ginger-haired volunteers with 60 brunettes. The redheads began to feel



Vanessa Collingridge: cold-blooded

pain at around 6C (43F), unlike the volunteers with dark hair, who did not really begin to flinch until the temperature got down to freezing.

Researchers think that the ginger gene, known as MC1R, may cause the temperature-detecting gene to become over-activated, making redheads more sensitive to the cold. It is hoped that this research can be used to develop better pain-relieving drugs and anaesthetics.

Daniel Sessler, the director of the university's outcomes research institute and department of anaesthesiology, said the study had confirmed anecdotal evidence that redheads were more sensitive to certain types of pain.

"After a previous study we received more than 100 communications from redheads who claimed that anaesthesia often failed or that unusually high doses of local anaesthetics were required to achieve adequate analgesia," he said. "It suggested that the redhead gene may have some role in the pain pathway. That redheads are subject to sunburn and skin cancer must be linked to the difference in pain sensitivity."

Vanessa Collingridge, a red-headed television presenter and author, said: "I am like a reptile because I am so cold-blooded. I have caught hypothermia twice while filming in Scotland – and that was during the summer. Redheads are known

for having lower pain thresholds and my midwife even warned me when I was giving birth to my son Archie. I usually need a double dose of anaesthetic when I go to the dentist."

Simon Cheetham of Red and Proud, a website that claims to represent redheads, welcomed the research, but said it shattered the myth of the tough, ginger Scottish male.

"The stereotype of a Celt is a wild, kilted man with red hair who takes no notice of the temperature," he said. "In fact most redheads don't really like extremes of temperature."

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Teaching unions unite to call for review of school tests

Rebecca Smithers
Education editor

A powerful alliance of teaching unions will join forces today to press the government for an urgent review of "high-stakes" national tests for 11-year-olds in England, which they claim are failing pupils and damaging the progress of schools.

All six of the teachers' organisations, representing hundreds of thousands of heads and deputies, teachers and support staff, warn in a report that schools are increasingly "teaching to the test" and pupils are missing out by studying only a narrow range of subjects.

The unions urge ministers to carry out an independent review of the so-called key stage two national tests and the use of the results to compile performance tables. The compulsory tests in English, maths and science are taken by 11-year-olds in their final year at primary school in England.

The report highlights the central problems of the system, which include the narrowing of the curriculum. With many primary schools spending 70% of their time on English and maths, children are missing out on geography, history,

'[We] need to know how well schools are performing but we need a better system, one that doesn't fail schools and children alike'



science, music and other subjects. The report says: "A narrowing of the curriculum, and the possible anxiety experienced by children before and during the test period can lead to disaffection and disengagement from the process of education for a large number of pupils."

The unions complain that the tests increasingly dictate how schools teach, with at least a third of the spring term being used to prepare pupils for the tests rather than encourage them to learn.

Data relating to the test results are "too inconsistent and too crude", with a lack of consistency between the key stage two and three results (taken by 14-year-olds) making it difficult to gauge what support children need in their move up from primary to secondary school.

The call for a change comes from the Association of Teachers and Lecturers (ATL), the National Association of Schoolmasters/Union of Women Teachers, the National Union of Teachers, the Professional Association of Teachers, the National Association of Head Teachers and the Secondary Heads Association.

This year tests taken by seven-year-olds in England were changed to give a bigger role to teacher assessment, but the government has refused to make any changes to the testing regime for 11-year-olds.

The ATL general secretary, Mary Boustead, said: "Parents and government do need to know how well schools are performing, but we need a better system, one that doesn't fail schools and children alike."

A Department for Education and Skills spokesman said: "We remain committed to our system of national testing at the end of key stage two, which has contributed to raising educational standards in schools. We will not abandon a system which has served our children so well."

EducationGuardian.co.uk

Law

Judges ready to defy ministers over terror deportations

Scepticism expressed over 'no torture' deals

Government not trying to sway courts, says Falconer

Clare Dyer
Legal editor

Senior judges are preparing to face down what they see as ministerial pressure over the proposed deportation of foreign terror suspects under the government's controversial security measures in the wake of the London attacks.

The judges, who could ultimately decide on deportations, have told the Guardian that they will not rubber stamp decisions to deport suspects under the human rights deal struck with Jordan and sought with other countries such as Algeria. They say they will look at each case, studying the history and current situation in the particular country, before deciding on the risk to the individual.

The Guardian spoke to four of the 37 appeal court judges, whose views – given on condition of anonymity – represent wider judicial opinion. One judge said he had spoken to colleagues who took the same stance. The judges are adamant that they will not trim their judgments in response to ministerial comments appearing to blame the judiciary for hampering attempts to rid Britain of dangerous extremists.

"The judges won't buckle," said one. Another commented: "Judges do not need lessons on national security."

Only the fourth questioned the length to which judges could go in challenging agreements between governments. He added: "I'm not influenced by the fact that judges are effectively being told to toe the line. On the other hand, judges can't ignore the current situation and I think instinctively one is likely to be a bit tougher than one might have been three months ago."

Ministers have concluded a memorandum of understanding with Jordan, which has given assurances that no one deported there will face torture or inhuman treatment. They hope to strike similar deals with about 10 north African and Middle Eastern countries.

Last week Charles Clarke told the judges that they should respect the bilateral deals as genuine. "It cannot be right that government to government agreements are not respected," the home secretary said.

But one judge countered: "They [the government] are not going to get the judges to say 'there's an agreement, so everything's hunky dory'."

Agreements would be a factor in decid-



"The judges will not buckle. They do not need lessons on national security"

ing a case, but would not determine the final decision.

Lord Falconer insists that the government is not trying to influence the judges. "The debate that we are currently having is utterly open and inevitably involves a discussion of the role of the judiciary but does not involve the government seeking in any shape or form to put pressure on the judges," he told the Guardian.

The stumbling block to deporting foreign terror suspects and extremists is article 3 of the European convention on human rights, which guarantees protection against inhuman or degrading treatment or torture.

In 1996, the European court of human rights in Strasbourg ruled that Britain would breach article 3 if it sent Karamjit Singh Chahal, a Sikh militant, back to India because he would face a real risk of inhuman treatment by the authorities there.

The government opted out of article 5, the right to liberty, to lock up foreign terror suspects without trial. But the right not to be tortured or treated inhumanely is an absolute right from which no opting

out is allowed. The majority of the Strasbourg judges ruled in the Chahal case that the courts could not balance the state's interest in national security against the interests of the proposed deportee. Chahal was released after six years in detention.

Under the Human Rights Act, which became law in 2000, UK judges are obliged to take account of Strasbourg case law. To counter the Chahal ruling, ministers are considering bringing in primary legislation requiring the interests of the state to be balanced against the risk to the individual when deciding to deport foreign terror suspects.

But even under current law, Lord Falconer said, judges could still approve the deportation if the foreign government's assurances in the agreement were specific enough and there was independent monitoring afterwards.

However, one appeal court judge pointed out: "Certain countries practise torture absolutely routinely and it may not be altogether easy to credit a promise that they're going to stop". On monitoring, another said: "Whether that's going to work is going to vary from country to country. Some of these countries have conditions which are pretty unpredictable. We will have regard to all the evidence put before us, including the home office country information reports as well as reports by independent experts. Agreement between the UK government and the foreign government as to how they would behave towards certain people who are returned – that would be relevant."

"The government will have to produce some evidence that the agreement is actually worth the paper it's written on. Assurances from a foreign government may or may not be things to which you attach weight."

Writ large Porky pies at the DTI

Marcel Berlins

This is a story of cover-up, double dealing, maladministration, dishonesty, and deliberately issuing misleading information (also known as telling lies). The perpetrator was the Department of Trade and Industry, and the full facts have only now become public, in a report by Ann Abraham, the parliamentary ombudsman.

The story starts with a principle. Open justice includes the entitlement to know what's going on in our courts. So, it's possible for anyone to inspect the register of the claims that initiate cases in the courts. In the high court, for instance, you can look up who is suing whom, for what, and on what grounds; and there's enough information to understand the case.

Not so the register of claims brought before employment tribunals, which decide employees' allegations of unfair workplace treatment. That just listed the names of employee, employer and the kind of case – sex discrimination, unfair dismissal etc, but no further details. Another category referred to employees who alleged they had been victimised for being whistleblowers, drawing attention to some wrong or illegal practice by their employers.

The whistleblowers' charity Public Concern at Work wanted to know more about those cases, and, in 2000, took the DTI to the high court, asking the judge to rule that the register should provide more information. The judge agreed.

Here is where it became surreal. What is expected when you lose a case and the high court judge rules that you should do something, is to do it. But not so for the DTI. The direct result of the case in which the DTI was told to furnish more information is that the public today is getting no information at all. In effect, there is now no register open to the public. The DTI got the law changed.

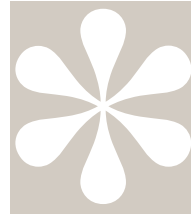
How the DTI achieved this was the subject of the ombudsman's scathing report, which included findings that the department had misled the courts, parliament and the public. A full house. The

DTI had appealed against the high court's decision, but admitted later it had no intention of going ahead with the appeal – it was a time-wasting device to enable them to sneak through a change in the law. They had given a bogus reason for their opposition to providing the information. They had reneged on a promise to consult the charity on their plans. And there was more (see www.pcaw.co.uk/news).

The upshot of all this misbehaviour is that the DTI now has to pay Public Concern at Work compensation. That, of course, comes out of taxpayers' money. And still the public is denied access to information it is entitled to have.

I find it astonishing that the man George Bush has nominated as chief justice of the US supreme court has never been a judge of that court. John Roberts was to be put forward to replace Sandra Day O'Connor on her retirement when the chief justice, William Rehnquist, died and, whizzo, within 24 hours Roberts went from potential most junior judge to the plum job. Shouldn't they have waited to see whether he was any good on the highest court? A bit of a gamble I'd say, but not unheard of. Both Earl Warren and Warren Burger had not been on the court before becoming its chief. Warren had not been a judge at all. President Eisenhower made him chief justice, expecting a conservative; Warren turned out to be a liberal.

Could it happen here? The position in Britain is complicated by the fact that the head of the judiciary – the lord chief justice – isn't the head of the highest court, the House of Lords (soon to be the supreme court). But in principle there's nothing to stop a relatively low-level judge, even a part-time one, becoming a chief justice. I'm sure the government, in its present mood, would be happy to see top judges appointed for their antipathy towards human rights laws. Fortunately, we are about to have a new judicial appointments commission, which will minimise ministers' influence.



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National

People

Jeff Randall, right, the BBC's high profile business editor, will step down before the end of the year to return to newspaper journalism. Appointed in March 2001 by the then director general Greg Dyke, Randall is thought to have become increasingly frustrated by the strictures of television news.

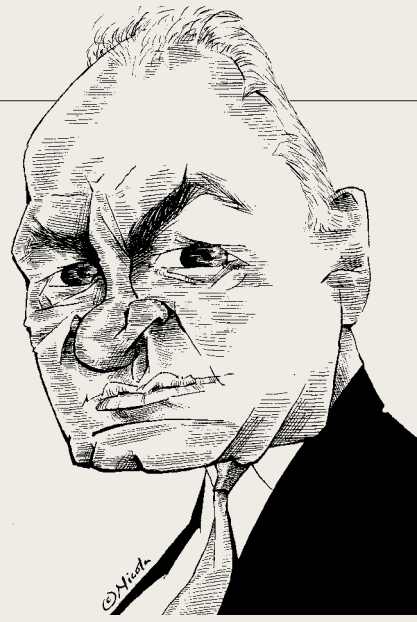
He is believed to be close to signing a contract worth around £160,000 a year to return to the Daily Telegraph – where he worked as a city correspondent between 1986 and 1988 – to conduct a weekly profile interview as well as penning a weekly column. Randall built his reputation as city editor on the Sunday Times between 1989 and 1995, and his move back to the Telegraph coincides with the announcement that

the current Sunday Times business editor, **Will Lewis**, is also joining the daily paper. Lewis will replace Neil Collins, who left earlier this month after 19 years as city editor to become a columnist at the Evening Standard. Randall will not totally sever his connections with the BBC, however, as another series of his consumer-focused Weekend Business, on Radio 5 Live, is scheduled.

A juror who sat in Michael Jackson's child abuse trial is taking legal action to extract himself from a deal to write get out of writing a book about the case. Ray Hultman claims he was talked into signing the book deal by the Californian publisher **Larry Garrison**. He is also seeking unspecified damages claiming mental

and emotional distress. The jury unanimously found Jackson not guilty in June. Hultman has since changed his view.

Google's new "chief internet evangelist" **Vinton Cerf** is tasked with dreaming up fresh ideas for the technology giant. Known as the father of the internet for his pioneering work in the 1970s, Cerf may begin by generating a way of charging for intellectual property online, something that has long frustrated him. "I hope we find a way through," he said last year. "The eBook has turned into a frustrating example." Meanwhile, Harry Potter author **JK Rowling** has developed her own solution by selling her books as audio downloads in an attempt to stamp out piracy. Her work will be available for



purchase on Apple's iTunes website, after Potter fans spotted bootleg versions on the internet.

First time authors rarely enjoy a plug from a veteran rival, but **Adam Jacot de Boinod's** debut book detailing peculiar foreign words has attracted gushing praise from the writer and actor **Stephen Fry**. "A book no well-stocked bookshelf, cistern-top or handbag should be without," enthuses Fry. "At last we know those Eskimo words for snow and how the Dutch render the sound of Rice Krispies." The pair are friends, and met when Jacot de Boinod was a researcher on Fry's television series, *QL*.

simon.goodley@guardian.co.uk

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Secret plan to put 60,000 jobcentre posts out to tender

David Hencke

Westminster correspondent

Plans to privatise tens of thousands of Whitehall staff in jobcentres are being proposed by the government, according to a leaked letter obtained by the Public and Commercial Services union.

The proposals would involve tendering for tasks such as assessing the suitability of people for jobs and helping lone parents and disabled people back to work.

The letter, from Jonathan Portes, director of work and welfare strategy at the Department for Work and Pensions, to Margaret Hodge, the minister for work, says that once offers have been received from the private and voluntary sector, the scheme could be extended to other jobcentre functions. It says: "We believe feasibility studies should be conducted to ascertain whether there might be scope for contesting or outsourcing benefit processing centres, fraud investigation services and both jobseeker and employer contact centres."

Altogether 60,000 staff – nearly half of the 130,000 employed by the department – could be transferred to the private and voluntary sectors. This would make it one

The plans to privatise jobcentre staff may be seen as a U-turn by the government



of the biggest privatisations in Whitehall – outstripping plans at the Ministry of Defence to privatise some 20,000 jobs. It would affect 10% of Whitehall's entire staff.

The government may face criticism because it campaigned against Tory proposals to privatise Jobcentre Plus, the agency which runs jobcentres, in the last general election.

After the election Gordon Brown, the chancellor, told the Amicus union conference in June that the government could row back on further privatisation of services and promised not to privatise Jobcentre Ltd. He made a similar commitment to the GMB conference in July.

David Blunkett, the work and pensions secretary, and Mrs Hodge have asked civil servants to look at the outsourcing of jobcentre work. They are not pleased that the chancellor had given such a public commitment at a trade union conference.

Mrs Hodge is keen to involve the voluntary sector, particularly in helping to get disabled people back to work. She says this is born out of a genuine desire to provide a better service and help people.

The Guardian understands that she has already started talks with charities about the role they could play.

Mark Serwotka, general secretary of the Public and Commercial Services union, said yesterday at the TUC: "The proposals will create yet more uncertainty and distrust among a workforce already battered by job cuts."

Mr Blunkett said in a statement yesterday: "There is no plan for the wholesale privatisation of Jobcentre Plus, nor will there be."

"From the inception of the New Deal programme, contestability has been a feature included in the operation of employment zones and in particular contracts for individual elements, such as computerisation."

International

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Gaza pullout

Israel hands settlements to Palestinians

Occupation not over, says Gaza leader

Fears over synagogues delayed troops' departure

Chris McGreal Abu Houli, Gaza

The Israeli military lowered the national flag over its headquarters in the Gaza Strip for the last time yesterday as the government declared an end to 38 years of military occupation when Israel withdrew from demolished Jewish settlements.

Palestinian leaders described the pullout as a "liberation" but boycotted the formal transfer ceremony in protest at continued Israeli controls over border crossings and other restrictions that they say maintain the occupation.

The final withdrawal began after a brief ceremony at the Gaza military headquarters, one of the few buildings left in what had been the largest settlement in the Gaza Strip, Neve Dekalim. The last troops were expected to leave overnight. "We are at the start of a new beginning and a historic opportunity for a better future for both peoples," the Israeli military commander in Gaza, Major General Dan Harel, told his departing troops.

Thousands of Palestinians gathered on roads leading to the settlements, ready to storm through the rubble once the Israeli forces had gone. A boy, 12, who got too close was seriously hurt by gunfire from one of the Israeli tanks and armoured vehicles still guarding the settlements.

Hundreds of Egyptian police moved into a militarised corridor just inside Gaza over the weekend to take responsibility for control of the border.

The chief Palestinian minister in Gaza, Mohammed Dahlan, said the withdrawal from territory expropriated after the strip was captured from Egypt in 1967 was a liberation. "It is the first time in Israeli history and Zionist practice that they have destroyed settlements in Palestinian territory," he said. "In terms of liberation it means a lot to us. They imprisoned 1.3 million Palestinians in Gaza for the sake of a few thousand settlers. Every Palestinian knows the horrible impact those settlers had on their lives."



Soldiers fold up the Israeli flag during an evacuation ceremony at the Jewish settlement of Atzmona Photograph: Gali Tibbon/AP

How the land lies



But he disputed Israeli claims that the occupation was at an end by saying Israel continued to control Gaza's air space and territorial waters, and was refusing to allow free movement to and from Egypt by maintaining Israeli border controls.

The Palestinian Authority is planning a public celebration rally inside the largest Gaza settlement block this morning. Hamas declared the withdrawal a victory for armed resistance over negotiation, and said it would rename the land on which the settlements once stood after the "martyrs" who died attacking Israel.

Israel's deputy prime minister, Shimon Peres, said the Palestinians had the chance to prove that they were able to govern themselves. "The Palestinians need to show that are capable of controlling Gaza. This is the first time in the history of the Palestinian people where they have been

given the opportunity to fully govern a defined territory," he said.

But the prime minister, Ariel Sharon, confirmed Palestinian fears that the Gaza pullout is intended to allow Israel to tighten its control over the occupied West Bank when he said he would continue expanding settlement blocks there even if it damaged relations with Washington. "I don't think they'll be too happy. But they are the major blocks and we must build," he said. "We don't have an agreement with the United States about this, but these areas are going to be part of Israel."

The timing of the Israeli departure from Gaza remained in doubt until hours before it began because of differences over the fate of 26 synagogues in the defunct settlements. The government originally planned to demolish them but religious leaders appealed for them to be preserved

on the grounds that Jews do not destroy synagogues, and that it might provide a pretext for other countries to do the same. Yesterday, the Israeli cabinet voted to hand over the buildings intact.

The foreign minister, Silvan Shalom, asked the PA to ensure they are not desecrated. "I hope the Palestinian Authority will come to its senses and not allow barbarism and vandalism to rule over the synagogues. If this does happen, the world will see what we're dealing with," he said.

But Mr Dahlan described the synagogues as a "trap" designed to embarrass the Palestinians. He said the PA no longer regarded them as holy sites "From the Israeli point of view they are not synagogues anymore because they have been emptied [of religious artefacts]," he said.

guardian.co.uk/israel

Hamas celebrates victory of the bomb as power of negotiation falters

Chris McGreal

The last Israeli troops rolling out of Gaza last night could not miss the flags flying from the roofs of Palestinian homes or their singular message: victory.

Posters on almost every block in Khan Yunis, the overcrowded town and refugee camp suddenly liberated from confinement behind the machine-gun posts of Gaza's largest settlement block, offer only one interpretation of the Israelis' departure.

"We are celebrating the victory of the bomb," declares a Hamas poster with a picture of an armed masked man superimposed to look as if he is crushing settler homes and Israeli soldiers with his feet. "The first Palestinian victory, the first Israeli defeat," says another.

The Israeli prime minister, Ariel Sharon, has painted Israel's removal of

Jewish settlers and the army's withdrawal from the Gaza Strip after 38 years as a bold move for peace, not a retreat under fire. But many Palestinians believe the deaths of nearly 100 soldiers and 48 settlers over the past five years were the most important factor in the decision.

"The Israelis didn't leave this area because of goodwill," the Hamas leader Mahmoud al-Zahar told the Guardian. "It wasn't a gift from Sharon to the Palestinian people. They left because they suffered too much."

It is the only conclusion that makes sense to men such as Diyab Hassan Ouda, who for decades watched the Israelis arrive, never leave. He fled to what was then the Egyptian territory of Gaza in 1948 as a 13-year-old refugee after the Israeli army claimed his village for the new Jewish state.

Israeli tanks rolled up to his doorstep again during the 1967 six-day war, beginning the occupation. After the soldiers came the Jewish settlers, claiming land in the name of God and defence.

"The Jews usually come and stay, and advance. Now they are the ones to leave," said Mr Ouda. "This is a victory for resistance. It made them leave. It's the first time the resistance has won. Gaza is the beginning of the road to the liberation of Jerusalem."

The Palestinian Authority is torn between wanting to claim the victory and persuading the people that the future lies with negotiations. It has tried to revive the nationalism embodied by Yasser Arafat and the PLO by appealing for people to fly only the national flag of red, black, white and green in celebration at the Israeli pullout. The authority even distributed 80,000 free flags.

But on the rooftops of Khan Yunis they are easily outnumbered by the

green banners of Hamas, a reflection of the Islamisation of Palestinian society and a widespread belief that Hamas led the fight to drive out the Israelis. The organisation has distributed thousands more flags for its supporters to plant in the rubble of the settlements and claim them as a victory for the bomb.

Khan Yunis's mayor, Osama Alfarra, a member of Arafat's Fatah, challenges the idea that only the past five years of killing forced out the Israelis: "I don't think this is the main cause. Our people over the generations have struggled against the occupation. I think the Palestinians and Israelis realised that no one would win this struggle."

"The Israelis have talked about leaving the Gaza Strip for a long time. It was a heavy burden on their shoulders. They realised neither side could win. We have to discover how we both win from their departure. Both of us will lose if the cycle of violence continues."

The cost of driving out the Israelis was high. Hundreds of civilians were killed by the army in Gaza in the five years after the second intifada broke out, and Khan Yunis was on the front-line. The victims included children at their school desks or bombed in their homes by Israeli aircraft. The killing left many Palestinians exhausted by conflict and craving peace on almost any terms. But it strengthened the determination of others to continue the fight.

Mr Ouda says that in his youth he supported Arafat and the PLO. "I was for Arafat. I was a nationalist. Now I am Hamas because of what Israel has done during the intifada. Hamas led the fight," he said. "Gaza was a beginning. You know how you hunt foxes? You dig them out of their holes. The fox is gone from Gaza to the West Bank. The resistance will dig him out of his hole there."



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Mickey Mao



The Middle Kingdom welcomes the Magical Kingdom as Mickey and Minnie arrive in Hong Kong for China's first, although not necessarily last, Disneyland page 25

Europe

Schröder in surprise comeback to close poll gap with Merkel

Likelihood of left-right 'grand coalition' grows

Germany in danger of drift into political instability

Luke Harding Berlin

Chancellor Gerhard Schröder is closing the gap on his conservative rival, Angela Merkel, according to the latest opinion polls, making it increasingly possible that the challenger could be forced into a "grand coalition" with the ruling Social Democrats (SPD).

Tony Blair made a controversial intervention last night. In a statement released by the SDP he described Mr Schröder as "prudent and at the same time a statesman with strong leadership qualities." British diplomats who had expected a Merkel victory are now bracing themselves for another possibility: that Germany, Europe's largest country and biggest economy, could be sliding towards months of political instability and drift.

With six days to go until Germans vote, Mrs Merkel's Christian Democratic party (CDU) is still ahead with 40.5%. But Mr Schröder's Social Democrats have gone up to 34.5% after an unexpected comeback in the final stages of the campaign.

Together, Germany's left parties now have 49.5% of the vote, compared with 47.7% for Mrs Merkel's coalition, according to the Emnid institute poll. The gap is enough to stop Mrs Merkel forming a centre-right government with the CDU's

Bavarian sister party, the CSU, and junior coalition partner the FDP.

She is still likely to become Germany's chancellor next week. But her initial lead in the polls started to ebb away following a row over her appointment of Paul Kirchhof as shadow finance minister. The SPD launched a brutally effective campaign against Mr Kirchhof, a former constitutional judge, portraying his plans for a 25% flat tax as unjust and a gift to the rich.

The FDP last night joined the critics of Mr Kirchhof's plans. FDP chairman Guido Westerwelle told a party rally that tax cuts would do not help reduce Germany's high unemployment rate.

The two main parties offer starkly different policies on taxation and reform of Germany's labour market, although on home affairs and the fight against terrorism they are in broad agreement

Increasingly jittery conservative politicians warned yesterday that a left-right coalition – last tried in Germany in the late 1960s with mixed results – would be a disaster. "Such a coalition would be bad for the economy, and for democracy and the parties," Christian Wulff, the CDU's influential minister president in the state of Lower Saxony, told the newspaper Welt am Sonntag. "It would strengthen the extreme left and the extreme right. We can't want that."

Until last week, there seemed little doubt that Mrs Merkel would romp home to become Germany's first woman chancellor, and the first to have grown up in the communist east. Mr Schröder, who came from behind to win Germany's last election in 2002, has none of Mrs Merkel's analytical rigour, but has again shown an instinct for attacking his enemy's weakest point.

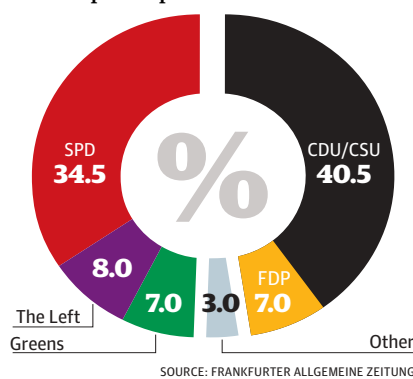
One leading SPD politician, Sigmar Gabriel, said yesterday the SPD could form an alliance with the Greens and the FDP, with Mr Schröder gaining a historic third term. Another possibility is an SPD-Green alliance with the new Left party, something Mr Schröder has ruled out.

Most experts instead expect the SPD to enter a "grand coalition" with Mrs Merkel, and for Peer Steinbrück, the SPD's recently defeated premier in North Rhine-Westphalia, to become her deputy. "I find him very credible. He's intelligent and competent," Ulrike Merten, an SPD MP, said yesterday. But she admitted: "A grand coalition would put us in a very difficult situation."

guardian.co.uk/germany

State of the parties

Latest opinion polls



12 migrants dead and 49 missing after boat discovered off Sicily

John Hooper Rome

More than 60 people were dead or missing yesterday after what was feared to be one of the Mediterranean's worst migration disasters. Revenue guards and carabinieri found 12 bodies on a beach and in shallow waters near Gela on the south coast of Sicily. Survivors who landed from a boat that they claimed had cast off from Libya said as many as 49 of their fellow passengers were missing.

The local coastguard commander, Raffaele Macaudo, said that some might have disappeared into the countryside. But he added: "Others could still be in the sea and we are continuing to look for them."

Early yesterday, passers-by had noticed an old fishing boat grounded on a sandbank less than 50 metres (160ft) from

land. An inflatable launch was ferrying people to the shore. The carabinieri arrested the two suspected traffickers alleged to have been operating the launch and later detained five others on charges of aiding and abetting illegal immigration.

Nine bodies were found on the beach and three in the water. But the cause of death was not immediately clear. The journey had left several of the mostly young survivors sick or exhausted, with one woman in a very serious condition.

Exposure, aggravated by hunger and thirst, is the most common cause of death among the thousands who set off every year from North Africa in inshore fishing vessels. Two other boats were spotted in Italian waters yesterday, each laden with around 150 people.

guardian.co.uk/italy

Drained but alive after sewer ride

Jon Henley Paris

A man was sucked down an open manhole during a downpour in Cannes last Friday and swept through the sewerage system for more than a mile before emerging on the other side of the town, shaken but unharmed.

André Messenger, a 56-year-old physical therapist, had just got off his motorbike when he slipped and fell down a manhole whose cover had been dislodged by rain that deluged the region last week.

The retired navy diver was swept off his feet and dragged along the tunnel

by a "raging torrent" of rainwater, the newspaper Nice Matin reported yesterday.

His first reaction was to pull his motorbike helmet back on and secure the straps, he told the paper. Then he "lay back, with my hands crossed on my stomach, as if I was on a water slide in an amusement park, and let myself go".

Bruised and scratched, he washed up against an iron grating on the beach of the luxurious Majestic hotel, to be found by a council worker who was unblocking storm drains.

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The riots return

Soldiers try to clear rubble-strewn streets after the worst rioting in a decade erupted in Belfast. Loyalists, furious over the rerouting of an Orange Order parade, used automatic weapons, blast bombs and bricks against army and police. Security forces responded by firing 450 baton rounds.

Photograph: Crispin Rodwell

International

Bush summons spirit of 9/11 to help repair his hurricane-damaged ratings

White House talks of reconstruction 'tsar'

Rescuers say flood toll may be lower than feared

Julian Borger Washington
Jamie Wilson

President George Bush yesterday marked the fourth anniversary of the September 11 attacks by flying to New Orleans in an effort to restore national unity after the political and physical devastation wrought by Hurricane Katrina.

Mr Bush observed a moment's silence on the White House lawn for the victims of the 2001 attacks before leaving for Louisiana where he was expected to stay overnight on the USS Iwo Jima, anchored near central New Orleans.

Yesterday, proclaimed as Patriot Day, provided a bridge between two disasters which could ultimately define the Bush presidency. Mr Bush sought to recall the nation's fighting spirit immediately after 9/11 – the peak of his popularity – as an antidote to the apparent confusion and bungling that characterised his administration's reaction to Katrina.

The president's third visit to the region in 10 days coincided with some rare good news. The army said it was pumping the floodwater out of New Orleans faster than expected and should be finished by next month. The first sweeps of abandoned neighbourhoods uncovered few bodies, suggesting that initial fears of up to 10,000 dead may have been exaggerated.

Among the living, the mood was still sour yesterday. At a makeshift refugee camp in a Baton Rouge civic centre, there was little sign that anyone was drawing the same September 11 parallels as the president. None of the 2,000 evacuees even paused to mark the moment, at 8.46am, when the first plane crashed into the World Trade Centre.

Alice Tobias, 32, said: "Right now this feels pretty much like a war zone. But it's kind of hard to think about 9/11 when we are going through our own destruction. They knew it was coming, everybody from the mayor to the president, but they did nothing."

A survey published by Newsweek found that only 38% of Americans think Mr Bush is doing a good job, his lowest rating since he took office in 2001, while 53% said they no longer trusted the pres-



The army says the water is being pumped out of New Orleans faster than expected Photograph: Tom Fox/Getty Images

ident to do make the right decisions in a foreign or domestic crisis. Time and the Associated Press also reported record lows in their polls.

With Democrats calling for an independent commission of inquiry, the post-mortems published in yesterday's US press found the federal authorities had been paralysed in the critical first days of the hurricane and the New Orleans flood, by red tape and lack of leadership.

Newsweek's cover described the debacle as a "national shame". The head-



In New York a memorial service marked the 9/11 anniversary but New Orleans was focused on its own 'war zone'

line on the front of Time magazine read "System failure".

Mr Bush was portrayed as being isolated in a "bubble" of loyal yes-men. After the hurricane hit on August 29, according to Time, it took Louisiana's panicked governor, Kathleen Blanco, hours to reach the president, who was holding a jokey photo-opportunity with Senator John McCain in Arizona and attending a country club roundtable to drum up support for his healthcare policy.

Administration officials promised yesterday a White House address to the nation, appealing for the spirit of unity that prevailed after the hijackers struck and echoing some of the rhetoric that helped galvanise Americans four years ago.

The administration plans a reconstruction effort costing at least \$200bn (£110m) under a "tsar" – perhaps Colin Powell, Rudy Giuliani or similarly unify-

ing national figure. A development corporation similar to the one overseeing the post-9/11 reconstruction of Lower Manhattan is also being considered.

In the short term, however, well-connected lobbyists appear to be in the driving seat. Joe Allbaugh, the former head of the Federal Emergency Management Agency (Fema) and now a private consultant, is helping win contracts for clients such as Halliburton (vice-president Dick Cheney's former company), which has a \$500m contract for repairs, and the Baton Rouge-based Shaw Group.

About 100 Britons remain unaccounted for, according to the Foreign Office.

● The US is bracing itself for Hurricane Ophelia, which meteorologists predicted would bring 80mph winds to the southern tip of the Carolinas by tomorrow.

guardian.co.uk/katrina

Mercenaries guard homes of the rich in New Orleans

Jamie Wilson New Orleans

Hundreds of mercenaries have descended on New Orleans to guard the property of the city's millionaires from looters.

The heavily armed men, employed by private military companies including Blackwater and ISI, are part of the militarisation of a city which had a reputation for being one of the most relaxed and easy-going in America.

After scenes of looting and lawlessness in the days immediately after Hurricane Katrina struck, New Orleans has turned into an armed camp, patrolled by thousands of local, state and federal law enforcement officers, as well as 70,000 national guard troops and active-duty soldiers, including red-capped paratroopers.

Blackwater, one of the fastest-growing private security firms in the world, which achieved global prominence last year when four of its men were killed and their bodies mutilated in the Iraqi city of Falluja, has set up camp in the back garden of a vast mansion in the wealthy Uptown district of the city.

David Reagan, 52, a semi-retired US army colonel from Huntsville, Alabama, who fought in the first Gulf war and is commander of Blackwater's operations in the city, refused to say how many men he had in New Orleans but indicated it was in the hundreds.

Asked if they had encountered many looters so far, Mr Reagan said that the sight of his heavily armed men – a pump action shotgun was propped against the wall near to where he was standing – was enough to put most people off.

Two Israeli mercenaries from ISI, another private military company, were guarding Audubon Place, a gated community. Wearing bulletproof vests, they were carrying M16 assault rifles.

Gill, 40, and Yovi, 42, who refused to give their surnames, said they were army veterans of the Israeli war in Lebanon, but had been living in Houston for 17 years. They had been hired by Jimmy Reiss, a descendant of an old New Orleans family who made his fortune selling electronic systems to shipbuilders. They had been flown by private jet to Baton Rouge, the capital of Louisiana, and then helicoptered to Audubon Place, they said.

"I spoke to one of the other owners on the telephone earlier in the week," Yovi said. "I told him how the water had stopped just at the back gate. God watches out for the rich people, I guess."

Italy

Low death rate among Chinese puzzles Milan

The Chinese have always had a reputation for longevity, but officials have found the Italian dolce vita is making them all but immortal. Only 26 of the 11,500 Chinese people living in Milan are recorded to have died between 2000 and 2004. Giulio Gallera, the Milan councillor responsible for the city's cemeteries, told the newspaper *Il Giornale* that the figures were "certainly singular". The paper said it was suspected that other deaths had been hushed up so that the deceased's papers could be used by people who were in Italy illegally. But, if so, where did the bodies go? **John Hooper, Rome**

Zimbabwe

Mugabe says he will step down in three years

Robert Mugabe has indicated for the first time that he will retire as president in 2008, when his current term expires. He will be 84 and "will want some rest", he told Britain's Five News, but said he would remain active in his ruling party, Zanu-PF, which will choose his successor. Mr Mugabe also boasted of his "special friendship" with Prince Charles, which Clarence House quickly denied. Before starting a state visit to Cuba yesterday Mr Mugabe admitted that poverty and hunger were increasing in Zimbabwe. He has been accused by Human Rights Watch of blocking aid. **Andrew Meldrum, Pretoria**

Saudi Arabia

Don't pay me lip-service, Saudi king tells subjects

Saudi Arabia's newly enthroned King Abdullah has told his citizens they should no longer kiss their monarch's hand because it is degrading and un-Islamic. "Kissing hands is alien to our values and morals and is not accepted by free and noble souls," he reportedly told the most recent of the thousands of Saudis who have come to his palace offering their loyalty. The small break with tradition is the first hint of change in this conservative and pious society, where the new king is regarded as a reformer from a royal family better known for its opulence and power. **Rory McCarthy, Beirut**

Rwanda

Belgian missionary denies terror charge

A Belgian missionary appeared before one of Rwanda's grassroots *gacaca* courts yesterday to deny allegations of inciting genocide. Guy Theunis, 60, who worked in Rwanda between 1970 and 1994, is accused of inciting mass murder by reprinting articles from a Hutu extremist newspaper, *Kangura*, in a magazine he edited. Mr Theunis, who is the first foreigner to appear before a *gacaca* court, said: "I am astonished to hear all these allegations levelled against me. I never republished articles from *Kangura*, but just translated as part of press reviews." **Jeevan Vasagar, Nairobi**

Spain

Basque child freed from solitary confinement

A woman prisoner from the armed Basque separatist group Eta abused her daughter's rights by refusing to let her play with non-Basque children, a Spanish court ruled. Under Spanish law the unnamed prisoner had been allowed to keep her child in a mothers' wing of Granada jail until her fourth birthday. The mother banned her from playing with other prison toddlers to "preserve her origins", *El Pais* reported. A court declared this "state of total isolation [was] damaging to the child". The child's father is also in jail. The girl, now four, has been handed to relatives. **Giles Tremlett, Madrid**

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International

Bob Geldof G2 page 10

3 months ago he declared Live 8 had achieved its aim. But what really happened next?



Dozens killed as Iraqi and US forces capture insurgent stronghold

Rebels escape through network of tunnels

British soldier dies in roadside bomb attack

Rory Carroll Baghdad
Michael Howard Irbil

Iraqi and American troops seized control of an insurgent stronghold in northern Iraq yesterday after militants fled leaving dozens dead and hundreds wounded.

Infantry backed by aircraft and tanks encountered little resistance when they entered the city of Tal Afar after a two-day offensive, although troops found entire districts had been abandoned by the civilian population in advance.

An American general said that many insurgents had escaped through a network of tunnels. "The terrorists had seen it coming [and prepared] tunnel complexes to be used as escape routes," Major General Rick Lynch told reporters in Baghdad.

The Iraqi government hailed what it said was an Iraqi-led operation that showed the growing confidence and capability of the country's fledgling army. It promised there would be fresh offensives against other insurgent strongholds in coming weeks. "We say to our people, we are coming," said Sadoun al-Dulaimi, the defence minister.

A joint US-Iraqi operation codenamed Operation Cyclone also started yesterday in Rutbah, a town near the Jordanian border, and further north soldiers closed the Rabiya border crossing with Syria, an alleged transit point for guerrillas.

The US military said more than 141 insurgents were killed and 211 suspects captured during the offensive in Tal Afar and its two-week build-up. "There's no areas they are controlling, they are either on the run or dead," said Major Robert Molinari, a US commander.

About 5,000 Iraqi troops and a 3,500-strong US force from the 3rd Armoured Cavalry Regiment encircled the city late last month. Sporadic resistance on Saturday claimed the lives of five Iraqi soldiers. But there was evidence that the Iraqi army's role was inflated and its leadership dogged by corruption, betrayal and sectarianism.

State television lauded the operation for giving Iraqis the lead, with Americans in support, but one source close to US commanders in Nineveh province said that US firepower was decisive and that

images of Iraqis searching houses were largely cosmetic.

More seriously, the source said a senior Iraqi commander was arrested on August 31 on suspicion of selling information and material to insurgents. Troops who raided his compound allegedly found 70 Iraqi army vehicles and \$70,000 (£38,000).

A senior commander from another brigade was reprimanded for expelling Kurds from his mainly Shia Arab unit, a blow to US efforts to create units that bridge ethnic and sectarian divides. Several Iraqi officers, who declined to be named, said they had heard reports of the two incidents. The defence ministry was unavailable for comment.

In a further sign of fragility a senior government official in Mosul, a volatile northern regional capital, said that only 3,000 of the 13,000-strong police force actually showed up for work. That contradicted US claims to have rebuilt the force since it collapsed last November during an insur-



Iraq's prime minister Ibrahim al-Jaafari said the fighting in Tal Afar was to restore the town 'to the national fold'

gent onslaught. Witnesses to the fighting in Tal Afar, a staging post for militants crossing the Syrian border, said US and Iraqi forces were fired on from a mosque and a hospital as well as from alleys in the city's Sunni districts. The Iraqi Red Crescent said between 5,000 and 7,000 families had fled, many heading for Abu Maria, 12 miles east of Tal Afar.

The prime minister, Ibrahim al-Jaafari, said the operation in Tal Afar was aimed at bringing the population back into the national fold before a referendum on a draft constitution next month. "The [insurgents] want to deny the citizens of Tal Afar their future in a democratic and peaceful Iraq. We want to guarantee those rights," he said. But the city's Sunni mayor, Muhammad Rasheed, resigned at what he said was a sectarian purge.

In southern Iraq a roadside bomb struck a British army Land Rover near Basra, killing one British soldier and wounding three others. The Ministry of Defence withheld their identities until next-of-kin had been notified. The attack followed three bombings last week which killed two British soldiers, four American security guards and 16 Iraqi civilians.

guardian.co.uk/iraq

Artistic feet Mass strip in Lyon



An installation of naked people organised at the harbour as part of the Biennale de Lyon modern art event Photograph: Jean-Philippe Ksiazek/AFP/Getty Images

Blair to ask UN for crackdown on incitement

Ewen MacAskill
Diplomatic editor

The United Nations security council is set to adopt on Wednesday a British-sponsored resolution for a worldwide crackdown on incitement to terrorism. Tony Blair, who proposed the move after the London bombings, is to press the case in person during a three-day summit at the UN headquarters in New York.

The UK plans to act unilaterally against British-based advocates of violence but wants such measures to be adopted worldwide. A source close to negotiations said there was almost no opposition on the 15-member security council.

After the attacks on London, the British government condemned Islamists supportive of violence and expressed concern about the impact of religious schools in Pakistan. The resolution would place an obligation on all governments to adopt laws that prohibit incitement, deny a safe haven to offenders and "counter violent extremist ideologies, including steps to prevent the subversion of educational, cultural, and religious institutions by terrorists and their supporters".

Mr Blair is to discuss the issue on Wednesday with other members of the security council, including the US, Russian and Chinese presidents, George Bush, Vladimir Putin and Hu Jintao, and Dominique de Villepin, the French prime minister. They represent the five permanent members of the council. The three-day summit is being billed as the largest ever gathering of world leaders.

Ambassadors from more than dozen key countries also met yesterday to try to break the deadlock on plans for UN reform but appeared to make little progress.

Letters, page 35



In G2 Emma Brockes talks to Oona King Page 14

MATHEMATICS: PAPER THREE

Leave blank

- A teacher in London buys a spacious semi with a lovely, big landscaped garden. True or false?

(10 marks)

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LEGAL NOTICE

In the High Court of Justice (Chancery Division)
COMPANIES COURT NO 5778 OF 2005

In the Matter of **UIA (INSURANCE) LIMITED**
and
In the Matter of **LIVERPOOL VICTORIA LIFE COMPANY LIMITED**
and

In the Matter of **PART VII OF THE FINANCIAL SERVICES AND MARKETS ACT 2000**

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that, on 1 September 2005, an Application was presented to Her Majesty's High Court of Justice by UIA (Insurance) Limited ("**UIA**") and Liverpool Victoria Life Company Limited ("**Liverpool Victoria**") pursuant to section 107(1) of the Financial Services and Markets Act 2000 ("**FSMA**") for an Order:

- under section 111 of **FSMA** sanctioning a scheme for the transfer to Liverpool Victoria of the entire long-term business (as defined in **FSMA**) of UIA (the "**Scheme**"); and
- making ancillary provision in connection with the Scheme pursuant to section 112 of **FSMA**.

A copy of a report on the terms of the Scheme prepared by an Independent Expert (in accordance with section 109 of **FSMA**) (the "**Scheme Report**") and a statement setting out the terms of the Scheme and containing a summary of the Scheme Report will be provided by UIA and Liverpool Victoria free of charge to any person who requests them before the making of an Order sanctioning the Scheme by contacting UIA or Liverpool Victoria on the relevant telephone number set out in the Schedule. Alternatively you can access these documents and a full copy of the Scheme until the making of an Order sanctioning the Scheme on the UIA website set out in the Schedule below.

The proposed transfer will result in the long-term business (as defined in **FSMA**) carried on by UIA being carried on by Liverpool Victoria. The proposed transfer will secure the continuation by or against Liverpool Victoria of any legal proceedings by or against UIA that relate to rights and obligations in respect of the transferred business. All claims being dealt with before the transfer by UIA will following the transfer be dealt with by Liverpool Victoria and all claims arising after the transfer will be dealt with by Liverpool Victoria.

The Application is directed to be heard before a Judge at the Companies Court, the Royal Courts of Justice, Strand, London, WC2A 2LL, England on 24 October 2005.

If you have any questions or concerns relating to the proposed changes, please contact UIA or Liverpool Victoria (as appropriate) using the appropriate telephone number or appropriate address set out in the Schedule.

Any person who believes that he or she will be adversely affected by the Scheme is entitled to attend (in person or by legal representative with advocacy rights) and be heard by the High Court at the hearing of the Application. Any person who intends so to appear is requested to notify Herbert Smith LLP, the solicitors acting for UIA, as named below, as soon as possible and ideally before 17 October 2005 of such intention and of the reasons therefor.

Herbert Smith LLP of Exchange House, Primrose Street, London, EC2A 2HS (Ref. 5648/3797), Solicitors for UIA.

THE SCHEDULE

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International

Japan's prime minister on course for unexpected landslide victory

Ruthless drive to privatise post office pays off

Koizumi still insists he will stand down next year

Justin McCurry Tokyo

The Japanese prime minister, Junichiro Koizumi, was on course for a landslide election victory yesterday, a result that would give him the popular mandate he sought to privatise the country's post office and continue with his reforms.

An exit poll conducted by the public broadcaster NHK indicated that Mr Koizumi's Liberal Democratic party would win between 285 and 325 seats in the 480-seat lower house.

As the count continued, Mr Koizumi said: "The old LDP has been destroyed, and a new party has emerged." But he still planned to step down as prime minister next September at the end of his term as president of the LDP.

He called the election on August 8 after members of his own party voted down a series of bills that would break up Japan Post and turn over its 330 trillion yen (£1.8 trillion) in savings and other assets to the private sector.

His decision to publicly challenge his erstwhile LDP colleagues was interpreted by some as tantamount to political suicide, and early on there was even talk of an LDP defeat after 50 years of almost uninterrupted rule.

But in the weeks that followed he convinced voters of the need for post office privatisation, the centrepiece of his reform programme, while skirting other major issues such as Japan's involvement in Iraq and the need for welfare reform.

With the official result not expected



Junichiro Koizumi: election confirms his reputation as a master tactician

until today, NHK predicted 84-127 seats for the Democratic party, the main opposition, against its current 175.

As the count got under way yesterday, Shinzo Abe, the LDP's acting secretary general, said his party would continue to govern with its coalition partner, New Komeito, even after a landslide victory.

"We made the issue at stake in these elections very clear: whether Japan should go ahead with structural reforms, or stop them," Mr Abe said. "As a result, we've gained the support of a wide section of the population."

If the preliminary results prove correct the LDP, which went into the campaign with 249 seats, will record its biggest-ever election victory in the powerful lower house.

Commentators say a win on such a scale would seal Mr Koizumi's reputation as a master political tactician.

"It all went according to Koizumi's strategy," Jiro Yamaguchi, a politics professor at Hokkaido University, told Reuters. "A big avalanche has occurred. The Democrats will have a very hard time, as they would have to write from scratch a strategy to counter the LDP."

It was a dramatic start to one of the bitterest elections in Japan's postwar history. The prime minister immediately expelled 37 LDP colleagues who opposed postal reform, forcing them to run as independents or form new parties. He then dispatched a handpicked group of new candidates, many of them young and with little experience of politics, to stand against the rebels.

An hour before the polls closed, voter turnout stood at 55.5%, but the final figure was expected to comfortably exceed the 59.9% recorded at the previous election, in 2003, the lowest since 1947.

Leader comment, page 34 >>
guardian.co.uk/japan >>

World briefing Latter-day samurai could transform politics

Simon Tisdall

Junichiro Koizumi is the sudoku puzzle of Japanese politics. Nothing seems to add up. But somehow it all works out in the end. He is portrayed as a maverick loner. But yesterday's landslide election victory puts him in line to become one of Japan's longest-serving post-war prime ministers. He is treated like a pop idol, nicknamed the Lion King. Yet his abstemious lifestyle more resembles a latter-day samurai.

After taking office in 2001, Mr Koizumi failed to deliver political reform. But the snap poll, called after privatisation plans were thwarted by ruling Liberal Democratic party rebels, has won him an unprecedented reformist mandate. In British terms, it is his Clause IV moment. And it could permanently change Japanese politics.

"Koizumi is an impenetrable character," said Christopher Hughes of the University of Warwick. "But fundamentally he is a political reformer interested in attacking the vested interests within his own party and shutting down pork barrel politics."

"He's serious enough about it to risk sacrificing his political life. A bit of a samurai, perhaps, but more like *tokkotia* – literally meaning 'special attack force', ready to go down in flames. That makes him a very unusual politician," he said.

Mr Koizumi is now expected to accelerate plans to reduce "big government", expand free-market policies and improve pension and healthcare provision for an ageing, increasingly urbanised population. Potentially deeply divisive in terms of Japan's post-war social compact, that could

split the LDP ideologically and bring a realignment of political forces.

But by steadily accumulating executive power, Mr Koizumi has the tools for the job, said Machidori Satoshi of Kyoto University in the journal *Japan Echo*. Like Tony Blair, he is known as the "presidential prime minister".

Mr Koizumi's re-election will make waves abroad, too. China and South Korea will not welcome his success after rising tensions during his tenure. "He is not really a nationalist. But he does want Japan to be treated as a big power," Mr Hughes said. "He's not interested in being anti-Chinese. But I think he will probably visit the Yasukuni shrine again." Previous visits to the shrine to Japanese war dead provoked furious protests from Beijing.

But Washington, which wants Japan to play a wider regional security role, will be pleased by the result. Mr Koizumi publicly supported George Bush's re-election bid last year and sent non-combat troops to Iraq.

"Koizumi supports both a constitutional revision that would turn Japan into a 'normal' military power and a new law allowing for collective self-defence, meaning Japan can help others like the US or Taiwan," Dr Hughes said. That is potentially explosive, at home and abroad.

Yet paradoxical to the last, Mr Koizumi may be out of office next year, when his LDP presidency expires. He could change the rules but has so far insisted he will not – another among the innumerable puzzles in the Koizumi conundrum.

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International

China Communist cadres share centre stage with Mickey and Minnie as long-awaited £1bn theme park opens

Mouse Zedong? Disney opens its gates in Hong Kong

Jonathan Watts
Hong Kong

The Communist heirs of Mao Zedong and the capitalist successors of Walt Disney will share the stage in Hong Kong today with a near £1bn monument to globalisation: China's first Disneyland.

The meeting of the world's biggest Communist party and the planet's best-known entertainment corporation would have been unthinkable to their founders. Walt Disney was a fervent anti-communist; Mao launched deadly purges of rightists and blocked Hollywood films.

But this morning, after a build-up dogged by controversy over two-hour-long waits for rides, a sell-out crowd of more than 18,000 is expected to flood in for the inauguration, the first of an annual influx of 5.6 million people into this 310-acre (125-hectare) fantasyland built around a replica of small-town America at the end of the 19th century.

The head of those walking through Main Street USA will be China's vice-president Zeng Qinghong, joining a cast including Mickey, Goofy, the Disney chief executive, Michael Eisner, and Hong Kong's leader, Donald Tsang, at a ribbon-cutting ceremony that highlights the hybrid nature of modern China, where the desire to make money is now the dominant ideology.

Often condemned as a vehicle for US cultural imperialism, Disney is now being embraced for the cash it can bring in. The park's economic spin-off is put at HK\$14.8bn (£1.0bn) over four decades.

Disney has had to make only modest concessions to local customs. A *feng shui* master ensured that Mickey's magical kingdom satisfied traditional views of harmony with nature. The opening date was chosen in line with the Chinese zodiac. The Disneyland Hotel has no fourth floor because the pronunciation of this number sounds like the word for death, and its ballroom is the lucky size of 888 square metres.

But the biggest cultural adjustment has been the menu. Unlike its parks in Tokyo and Paris, Disneyland has diluted the American flavour by allowing a single Chinese restaurant, though it still faces problems over dining habits. Environmentalists stopped Disney hotels from serving shark fin soup at their banquets. Disney also seems to have misjudged the willingness of Asian customers to embrace the fast-food lifestyle of the US. At a rehearsal, organisers were shocked to find that Chinese guests took at least an hour for lunch. To avoid long queues dozens of tables were added.

Criticism

Although it has been transplanted on to largely rural Lantau island, 30 minutes from the city centre, the park relies on the Disney formula of familiar characters, hi-tech attractions and standards of service that have prompted criticism that staff are being treated inhumanely because they are not allowed to drink water in public.

Among the most bizarre last-minute preparations was the inculturation of Disney's values. Doris, Twinky and Edmund – Disney's customer service staff – said they had been sent around the park to practise smiling and waving. "Our supervisors showed us how to do it properly," beamed Doris, dressed in a check-patterned skirt, straw boater and one oversized, four-finger Mickey glove. "If we wave at people with this glove on, it makes them feel happier than if we wave with just our bare hands."

Even before the opening, tens of thousands of curious visitors have flooded in on the Disney light railway. Josh and Helen Leung said: "We only came because so much of our tax money has been spent on this place. If it can attract lots of tourists from the mainland, it will be worth it. Business is business," said Mr Leung. But his wife bashfully admitted that she had caught Disney fever.

Some sightseers from the mainland even compared the park favourably to the Great Wall and the Forbidden City. Zhao Shiyong, a 25-year-old arts teacher



Minnie Mouse dishes out the Disney treatment to a young visitor getting a preview of Disneyland Hong Kong, which opens today Photograph: Matt Strohane/EPA

from Heilongjiang in north-east China, had come even though she did not have a ticket. It was her first trip outside the mainland. "I've never seen anything like this before. This is the best. Everything is just perfect. I'm sure it will be a huge hit."

Disney's target market is the mainland, from which two-thirds of the visitors are predicted to come. Travel agents in Beijing and Shanghai say demand has been modest. The main obstacle is price. Although the HK\$350 (£25) ticket is cheaper than Disney's 10 other theme parks, it is still prohibitive for many in China, where the average wage is less than £70 a month. But interest is strong. "We came by bus from Guangzhou to take a look because we love Disney," said Coco Leung, 21, who had spent £10 on the trip just to see the

gates. "It's incredibly expensive, but ... I will definitely come back."

That is the good news for the owners, who see the park as part of a big push into China. For the Hong Kong government, which has a controlling stake, the park could lure more mainland visitors. That would have been unimaginable 30 years ago, when the border was closed. Now Hong Kong opens its arms. Mainland visitors number 12 million.

Environment

But success is far from assured. "I'm not convinced there is a Disney mania in Hong Kong," said Lui Tailok, sociology professor at the Chinese University of Hong Kong. "People under 35 are more familiar with Japanese animations and manga than Disney. For us Winnie the Pooh is an alien."

Opposition groups who have accused Disney of restricting union rights and lacking environmental awareness held a protest concert yesterday. "We want people to know that Disney is no dream-world. It brings many problems for our environment, labour relations, economy and culture," said Rex Zhang of Disney-hunter, a student organisation.

But the authorities in Beijing seem to have more mixed feelings about a Disney-led US cultural invasion. Although China has tightened restrictions of foreign ownership of domestic media and releases of overseas films, its measures have failed to stem a flood of pirate DVDs of Hollywood films.

Francis Lui, professor of economics at Hong Kong University of Science and Technology, says the government may now have more sympathy with the old-

fashioned values depicted in Disney's classic films: "Ideology is totally unimportant in China now. All that matters is business. And Disney is no threat to the Communist party. Both are very conservative in their outlook."

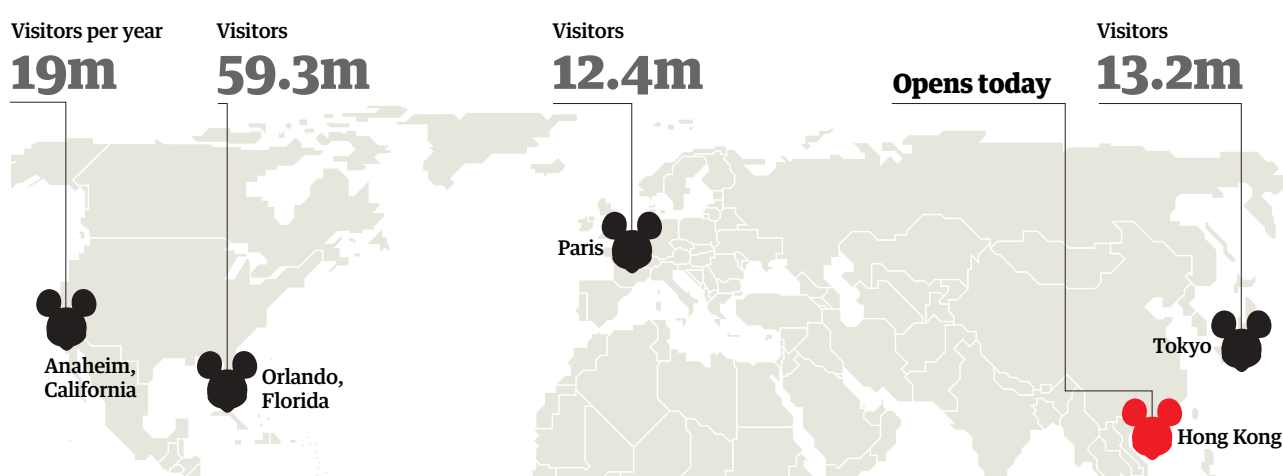
Disney has already set aside enough land to double in size. If it proves successful, many analysts predict a Disneyland for Shanghai in 2012. Whether Mao or Walt will emerge as the greater power is still to be seen. But in Disney's new Asian territory, there is little doubt who is boss. As the last visitors drifted home last night, loudspeakers piped out a tune now familiar across the world: "Who's the leader of the club that's made for you and me? M-I-C K-E-Y M-O-U-S-E."

guardian.co.uk/film

At a glance

- Six years of planning and almost £1bn in building costs
- 125 hectares developed, with room to double in size (compared with 180 hectares in Tokyo)
- Government officials say it will create 18,000 jobs in the short term, and about HK\$14.8bn (£1.0bn) in economic benefits over 40 years
- Expected to have 5.6 million visitors in its first year, two-thirds from China and south-east Asia
- Ticket price, HK\$350 (£25), is nearly two weeks' wages for the average mainland Chinese family

Walt's world



Financial

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EU may force Sky to sell Premier League rights to rivals

Proposals would break monopoly on live games

Football chiefs accused of rowing back on 2003 deal

Dan Milmo and Jane Martinson

Broadcasters who win the rights to televise live Premier League football could be forced to sell some games to rivals under proposals drawn up by media regulator Ofcom.

The plans, if adopted by the European Commission, which is investigating the sale of Premiership TV rights, would end the 13-year monopoly of satellite group BSkyB.

The forthcoming auction of rights from the start of the 2007 season could see the most radical changes to domestic football coverage since the league's inception in 1992. An existing idea from the regulators could see individual broadcasters limited to 50% of the live games put up for sale, an idea that has been strongly resisted by the Premiership. The additional constraint means the winners of the rights to televise Premiership games 2007-2010 would have to sub-license the games on a "fair and non-discriminatory" basis. In practice, a broadcaster such as cable company Telewest would be able to approach a winner of the rights and demand what amounts to a secondary auction.

If adopted by the EC, the notion of exclusivity would be eradicated from Premier League coverage and other broadcasters (from free-to-air operations such as Freeview to platforms such as Home Choice) would be allowed to carry premium content – a key aim of the "Lisbon Agenda" set five years ago – if they are able to pay for them.

The proposals come amid escalating tension between the commission, which is determined to break up Sky's monopoly, and the league. In a letter to the commission sent late on Thursday night, the league is understood to have opposed the idea of a 50% cap as it believes that football clubs make more money from enjoying an "exclusivity premium". TV rights are the main source of income for Premiership clubs, many of whom would face hardship if their income was to fall.

Commission officials have accused the league of taking a "step backwards" from an agreement made at the end of 2003, when the last three-year deal was agreed. A spokesman for the European competition commission confirmed that it would begin legal proceedings against the league "in the next few weeks". This so-called statement of objections, which in theory can lead to fines of up to a tenth of turnover, will accuse the league of breaking competition laws. "We remain determined that the rights for 2007 onwards be sold in a manner which complies with the competition rules, and in particular to the terms and conditions outlined in the provisional agreement reached between the FAPL [the league] and the commission in December 2003" said the EU official.

Officials are furious that the league has not addressed EC concerns about the way

live TV rights are sold. They have also accused the league of "dragging their feet" with last week's letter missing a self-imposed deadline. "It's just another manifestation of them taking the piss," said one source close to the commission.

The EC made its feelings known in a letter to the Premier League in July, in which it made clear that it would be adhering to an agreement reached at the end of 2003. That deal read: "The Premier League has agreed that after 2006 the tendering procedures for TV rights will ensure that there are at least two television broadcasters of live Premier League matches: the Premier League will create balanced packages of matches showcasing the Premier League as a whole, and no one broadcaster will be allowed to buy all of the packages."

Any attempt by the Premier League to present the EC with a "fait accompli" by starting the auction process before it is agreed would also be "strongly resisted".

The commission wants to hold the Premiership to the earlier agreement that it would "examine, jointly with the com-

"The rights for 2007 onwards will be sold in a manner which complies with competition rules"

EU commission official

mission, the way in which the auctions are conducted to ensure that they do not exclude potential competitors."

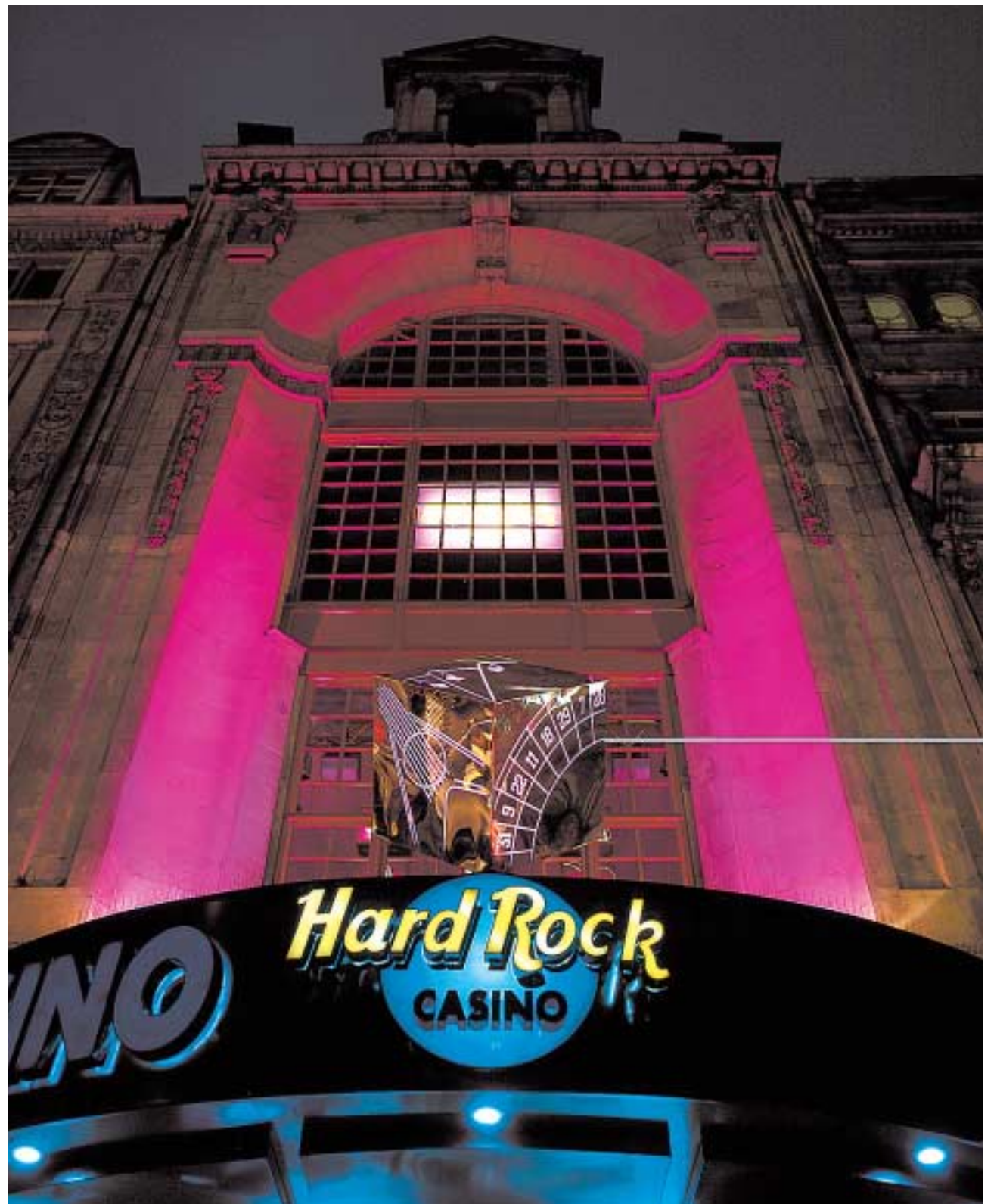
The increasingly acrimonious spat is reminiscent of the protracted wranglings last time the three-year rights came up for grabs. The EC started legal proceedings in 2002 by filing a statement of objections. At the time, Brussels regulators were also furious that the league agreed a new contract with BSkyB before ironing out an EC-approved deal.

Perhaps significantly, Sky agreed to sub-license up to eight "top quality Premier League matches" each season to another broadcaster in order to win European approval. The EC trumpeted this pledge as meaning "that for the first time in the history of the Premier League free to air television will have a realistic opportunity to show live Premier League matches". Such hopes were dashed however when no rival broadcaster met the asking price set by Sky.

This time round, the EC has asked Ofcom to research the market. Its consumer research – which shows dissatisfaction among fans and frustration that too few games are shown on too few broadcasting platforms – has privately been criticised by the league.

Several potential rivals to Sky have declared an interest in bidding for the rights, if the terms are right. These include cable companies NTL and Telewest and ITV, Channel 4, Five and Setanta and several private equity groups. Last week, Charles Allen, the chief executive of ITV, said eight games were not enough.

Murdoch aims to win net race, page28 >>
[MediaGuardian.co.uk >>](http://MediaGuardian.co.uk)



A casino in Rank's Hard Rock chain. Shareholders are frustrated by performance at the group's core gaming divisions

Investors press Rank to make changes

Simon Bowers and Jill Treanor

Rank is facing demands from large investors to make sweeping changes to its business after a year of protracted disposal talks and widespread under-performance across the leisure conglomerate.

Some shareholders are agitating for a speedy break-up of the business to unlock shareholder value. Others would like to see changes at senior management level, possibly including the removal of the chief executive, Mike Smith.

They are furious that performance at the group's core gaming divisions – Grosvenor casinos and Mecca bingo – appear to lag behind rival Gala. They are also frustrated by Mr Smith's inability to find a buyer for Deluxe Film, the group's film processing business, and Deluxe Media, which makes DVDs and VHS tapes.

Earlier this month the group announced flat operating profits for the first half of 2005 and Mr Smith warned there was no recovery in sight this year despite a range of bingo and casino deregulation coming into force in October.

Amid persistent reports that private equity houses are circling Rank, impatient

shareholders are frustrated that the group's share price has underperformed in the last 18 months. Some are thought to believe that the only way a recovery can be instigated is to oust the chief executive, while others are looking to him for reassurances that every possible avenue to achieve growth is being pursued.



In the empire

Grosvenor Casinos, including Les Ambassadeurs on Mayfair
Mecca Bingo
Blue Square Online bookmakers
Hard Rock Cafe
Deluxe Film and DVD business
Universal Hotels Rank has 25% stake
Outdoor World caravan parks

Fidelity, the largest institutional shareholder with a 12% stake, is thought to be among the investors frustrated by the performance. Fidelity declined to comment.

The investment fund is thought to have bought its shares in the group at prices between 300p and 330p. The shares were as low as 250p in May but have come back to close above 290p at the end of last week.

Since his appointment six years ago, Mr Smith has attempted to sharpen Rank's focus on UK gaming, disposing of Butlins holiday camp, Pinewood film studios, Odeon Cinemas and Tom Cobleigh pubs. But his vision of a group focused on a range of gambling businesses suffered a setback three years ago when it lost the race to acquire Coral, Britain's third-largest bookmaker.

Mr Smith has also been unable to find a buyer for the final part of what was the Rank film empire through the sale of Deluxe. After unsuccessful attempts, the business was again put up for sale in November last year. Mr Smith concedes the process is taking longer than expected, but is "pretty hopeful" a deal can be struck on Deluxe Media this year. Deluxe Film is proving more complicated. Rank declined to comment last night.

Reaching for a profit >>>



How easy is it to make a killing on the stock market? The Guardian's Nils Pratley will invest £10,000 in shares in the hopes of making money for charity
The Speculator, page 30

Brown urges more oil production to cut petrol prices

Ashley Seager

Gordon Brown yesterday urged Opec, the group of oil producing countries, to increase supplies in an effort to reduce petrol prices, which have reached £1 a litre at the pumps. The chancellor, speaking at the weekend, also left open the possibility of cutting fuel duty in his November pre-budget report if necessary.

The move comes as the country faces the possibility of fuel blockades this week, in a repeat of protests five years ago against the level of tax on fuel. Two groups have threatened action. The Fuel Lobby, which organised the disruption in

2000, said it planned protests during the week but did not want to disrupt supplies this time round. "We want peaceful protests. We are going to maintain a presence, but we will not be stopping supplies going in or out," said a spokesman.

The South Wales hauliers' association said it planned to block the M4 motorway between Wales and London in protest. In some parts of the country petrol costs more than £1 a litre although the national average is around 97p. But the chancellor yesterday laid the blame squarely at the feet of Opec, which pumps around one third of the world's oil.

"Oil prices are out of the control of individual countries. You have got a cartel

which has limited production in the past and has been slow to respond to the increase in demand," he told BBC's Sunday AM programme. "I am aware of the challenge the hauliers face, I am aware, particularly, of the problems low-income families face with petrol prices rising," Mr Brown said. "But this is a global problem which requires a global solution."

He will use a speech to the TUC tomorrow to emphasise that the world faces strongly growing demand for oil over the coming decades, in particular from countries such as China, whose insatiable demand has been a key reason that prices have risen from \$30 a barrel in spring last year to around \$65 a barrel on

Friday. "Oil demand is likely to rise 50% by 2020. That's why we are keen to see a sustainable solution to this which requires much greater energy efficiency and the use of new fuels and technologies," said a Treasury source.

The chancellor denied that the Treasury is enjoying a huge inflow of funds because of the higher oil price. "It is effectively neutral. We have additional revenue from corporation tax on the oil companies but other companies will see their profits reduced so there is no huge revenue effect," he said. Mr Brown said there were concerns that inflation could rise but praised the Bank of England for helping keep inflation under control.

Financial

News 24 MediaGuardian, page 5
Helen Boaden on reliability, rumours
– and the channel's rivalry with Sky



Regulator questions insurers over Katrina's ongoing impact

Lloyd's warned it faces risk of credit downgrade

Mounting uncertainty over industry's final bill

Jill Treanor

The Financial Services Authority is asking insurers for information about the impact of Hurricane Katrina on their business amid mounting uncertainty about the size of the bill faced by the industry to clean up the devastation.

Estimates for total insured losses range from \$25bn (£13.5bn) to \$60bn, making it the costliest insured natural disaster in history. But assessing the financial damage caused by the violent storm two weeks ago is proving difficult and provoking some concern among the ratings agencies which provide crucial assessments of insurers' credit-worthiness.

Lloyd's of London, the City's major insurance market, was warned over the weekend by ratings agency Standard & Poor's that it risked a downgrade to its credit-worthiness because the potential losses of the 62 syndicates which make up its market are unknown.

Lloyd's has demanded that the syndicates – which sell insurance for losses caused by the hurricane for things such as damage to oil rigs, ships, property and business disruption – make estimates of their exposure to Katrina's devastation by today. Lloyd's is not expecting to be able to give a first estimate for some time.

The FSA admitted it had been in touch with the insurance industry as part of its normal supervisory work. As well as the financial regulator, insurers pay particular attention to the demands of the rating agencies whose measures of their credit-worthiness are crucial to their ability to win business.

Lloyd's was one of 10 major insurers affected by the decision by S&P to react to the uncertainty about the scale of the industry's losses.

Insurers are finding it difficult to make accurate projections as they have not been able to send loss adjusters to the region because of the disaster's ongoing scale.



'We have never seen a hurricane loss with this extended amount of suffering' – Lloyd's of London, left

In addition, the amount of water that flooded New Orleans and the surrounding area is unusual. "This is a loss that is still ongoing. That is unusual for a hurricane. Usually you get short, sharp damage," said Julian James, head of worldwide markets at Lloyd's of London.

"I can't over-state the uncertainty and complexity about this loss. We have never seen a hurricane loss that involves this extended amount of human suffering," Mr James said.

S&P warned Lloyd's of a possible downgrade because of the "uncertainty of the scale of the impact of Hurricane Katrina on Lloyd's, the specialisations of which in-

clude the insurance and reinsurance of offshore energy installations, property damage and business interruption".

However, S&P has made it clear to Lloyd's that it does not have concerns about the underlying solvency of the market. Any downgrade to its A rating is likely to be only one notch – the smallest increment possible.

Lloyd's pointed out that S&P had to place it on negative creditwatch – the rating agency's possible precursor to a downgrade – because it was not in a position to update the agency on the financial impact on the market.

That will only happen when it has time to assess the projections it receives from the syndicates by the end of today.

But Lloyd's is confident S&P will not proceed with any downgrade. "Lloyd's models this type of catastrophe to ensure the market can withstand it, and is well-equipped to handle this type of event," a spokeswoman for Lloyd's said.

Fresh estimates about the potential losses caused by Hurricane Katrina may emerge in the coming days from Monte Carlo where the world's major insurers and reinsurers, which provide insurance to the insurers, are getting together for their annual meeting.

The threat of downgrades – and actual downgrades – by rating agencies as a result of Katrina has already had an impact.

Alea is trying to find a buyer after the rating on its debt was downgraded while Lloyd's insurer Goshawk was warned that one of its subsidiaries risked being downgraded because of its exposure to Katrina losses. Goshawk said it was considering fresh capital to maintain the rating.

700 Gate Gourmet workers ask for redundancy

David Hencke
Westminster correspondent

Nearly 700 workers at the troubled catering company Gate Gourmet have asked to leave the firm and take enhanced redundancy money – worth between £6,000 and £12,000 each.

Tony Woodley, general secretary of the Transport and General Workers' Union, revealed the offer to staff ahead of critical talks with management today. The company is in the centre of a long-standing dispute over the supply of packaged meals to British Airways which brought flights from Heathrow to a standstill last month.

Under a deal with the union, the management wrote to its 1,400 existing staff and the 660 strikers asking whether they would accept enhanced redundancy terms to leave the firm. The company is offering 2.5 times the minimum statutory rate. Some 300 of the 660 workers who were sacked by Gate Gourmet have opted

to leave and take the money. The remainder of the 700 who have asked for redundancy are currently employed by the company.

Gate Gourmet was seeking nearly 700 redundancies because British Airways had cut back the value of its contract. The fact that 700 people want to leave does not solve the dispute – since the company has made it clear it does not want to take back the ringleaders, nor does it want to lose its best staff under the deal. This will be raised at talks today.

The company is still under pressure from BA, which offered more cash to continue the contract provided the US-owned company solved its labour problems. According to the union, BA is paying about £2m a week to keep the business going and provide its customers with hot meals.

The union is pressing Alan Johnson, the trade and industry secretary, to look at changing the employment laws to allow secondary picketing of employers tied up in the same dispute.

Space monitor firm to float

Heather Tomlinson

A US medical equipment company whose monitoring technology was first used to check the early astronauts is planning to join the London stock market. Spacelabs, based in Washington state, will be valued at more than \$200m (£110m) when it floats within the next two months, and is expected to be the first of a number of such medical companies looking to raise money in London.

The company manufactures the equipment that monitors patients in intensive care. It also makes machines that monitor premature babies in their cots, and sells the machines that deliver anaesthetic and check blood pressure. Spacelabs designed the first systems to monitor astronauts in space in 1958. It also sold the first intensive care unit monitors.

The company has had a succession of different owners in recent years. Last year GE sold the company to X-ray machine maker OSI Systems for \$57m.



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Financial

Murdoch desperate to catch up in the internet race

News Corp summit heralds cyberspace push

Tycoon seeking to create an 'entertainment Google'

David Teather Carmel
Jane Martinson

It seemed an ordinary weekend in Carmel, a sleepy seaside town on California's coast – a 30-minute hop in a twin-engine plane from San Francisco. The weather was sunny. Tourists ambled along quiet shopping streets. Doris Day lives a reclusive life here and Clint Eastwood was once mayor – probably Carmel's biggest claim to fame.

However, a short distance from town, at a plush 400-acre resort inside a gated community in the Santa Lucia mountains, it was anything but business as usual.

Rupert Murdoch, the chairman and chief executive of News Corporation, had gathered his leading lieutenants for two days of private discussions on what he has described as the company's highest priority: how to grapple with the threat and opportunity of the internet to the media empire he has spent a lifetime building.

News Corp owns a clutch of media assets – including the Times, the Sun, the New York Post, Twentieth Century Fox and Fox Broadcasting – that are the envy of his peers. He wants to enjoy a similarly powerful position in cyberspace.

Forty-five of his senior executives, including Les Hinton, head of News International, and Rebekah Wade, editor of the Sun, are understood to have arrived for a reception on Thursday night before getting down to business on Friday. On the agenda was how to turn News Corp's web properties into a hub for entertainment-related content. One News Corp insider called the strategy an attempt to create an "entertainment Google" – a one-stop shop for all those looking for computer games, movies, music or chat online.

Publicly, executives admit that there could be some way to go. Peter Chernin, News Corp's second-in-command, told the New York Times that, in cyberspace terms, "we're a scrappy entrepreneurial company at the beginning of something".

But if the past nine months are anything to go by, the company is racing to catch up

with competitors. "They are aggressively buying their way into an internet strategy from nowhere," said Rich Greenfield, an analyst at Fulcrum Global Partners.

This weekend's summit is the second on the subject that Murdoch has called this year, following a meeting in New York in February. The first appears to have had a galvanising effect. In July, the company formed an internet unit, Fox Interactive Media, run by a former Foxsports.com executive, Ross Levinsohn, to oversee its website interests. Days later, the firm agreed to pay \$580m (£315m) for InterMix Media, a company with more than 30 websites led by MySpace.com, the fifth most popular site on the internet.

Then, last week, News Corp reached a \$650m deal to buy IGN Entertainment, which runs sites such as GameSpy.com for video game fans. It also bought Scout.com, which owns about 200 niche sports websites. Murdoch has said publicly that the company is in talks to acquire a search engine, thought to be Binkx.

The quick succession of deals gives News Corp 70 million unique users and 12bn monthly page views. That catapults it into the fourth-largest internet firm in the world by page impressions, behind Yahoo, Time Warner and MSN, according to the investment bank Merrill Lynch.

It is of little surprise that Murdoch is approaching the internet with new-found urgency. Advertising dollars are rapidly migrating online. Jupiter Research recently forecast that the online advertising market would reach \$18.9bn by 2010, compared with \$9.3bn at the end of 2004, at the expense of traditional media. The adoption of broadband means that consumer habits are fast changing, especially among the young.

"I think it is an understandable and pretty predictable course for him to take," said Michael Wolff, the writer and media commentator. "Murdoch is a nervous guy. The idea that he might be missing out on something is awfully painful. But he is just dipping his toes in. Why buy these? Partly because he can afford them. He's not making big bets here."

Murdoch appears to have spent more than a decade trying to figure out how to exploit the online world, and has had more than one false start.

News Corp acquired one of the earliest internet service providers, Delphi, in 1993 and entered a joint venture with the tele-



Rupert Murdoch chats with aides at his Carmel summit Photograph: Julie Plascencia

The CV

Ross Levinsohn

Age 42

Career Head of interactive media business of Fox Sports. Involved with News Corp's earlier attempt to create a division overseeing the firm's internet interests, News Digital Media, where he was responsible for marketing, business strategy and development and delivering traffic to the websites.

Joined News Corp in 2000 from AltaVista, where he oversaw content. Spent three years at CBS Sportsline as vice-president of programming and seven years at HBO as director of production and marketing, developing licensing, merchandising and new media opportunities.

com firm MCI, hatching grand plans to launch a service called iGuide that would combine access, a daily online newspaper and guide to the web as well as content from other parts of News Corp. When MCI pulled out ahead of its launch, Murdoch lost his nerve and the idea was ditched.

After that early experience, he avoided large investments in the late 1990s, drawing derision from rivals – but avoiding the vast losses some of them suffered.

Now, the News Corp boss has spoken of his intent to build a network that will "redefine the portal". In an April speech to American newspaper editors he said: "We have to refashion what our web presence is. It can't just be what it too often is today: a bland repurposing of our print content. The challenge for us is to create an internet presence compelling enough for users to make us their home page."

He went on to pursue two themes – the provision of deeply local and personalised news and the creation of "virtual communities" linking coverage to blogs and opening up sites to feedback.

Suddenly, some of the deals begin to make sense. Scout.com, which will be integrated with Fox sports sites, offers highly local and niche content, including college sports. MySpace.com is the largest social networking site where young people post home pages and blogs and meet the like-minded. The challenge will be stitching together existing News Corp content with the new sites and capabilities.

Although led directly by Mr Levinsohn out of Los Angeles, the 73-year-old chairman has been spending much of his own time working out how this can be done.

Still, even if the web has matured, it doesn't mean that the current round of hasty acquisitions won't be regretted in leisure – as many earlier ones were. After the \$580m InterMix deal, Murdoch said there wouldn't be any more acquisitions of that scale. News Corp then agreed to pay \$650m for IGN, which lost \$14.3m last year. Temptation can be a terrible thing.

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Reports & indicators

Reports

Today Interims AT Communications Group, Bovis Homes, Candover Investments, Catlin Group, Enterprise, Fort Ports, Group 4 Securicor, Hiscox, Inter-serve, Johnson Service, Just Car Clinics, Provident Financial, Roxboro, Ulster TV, Walker Greenbank, Whatman. **Finals** Aero Inventory, African Rainbow Minerals. **AGMs** London Clubs International, Ventura. **EGMs** London Clubs International, Wyevale Garden Centres. **Trading statement** AB Foods.

Tuesday Interims Adamind, Antofagasta, Bloomsbury, Chime Communications, Cobham, Corac, Cornwell Manage-

Tourist Rates

	Buy	Sell
Australia Dollars	2.28	2.53
Barbados Dollars	3.40	3.85
Brazil Real	4.28	(mid price)
Canada Dollars	2.08	2.30
Cyprus Pounds	0.81	0.89
Denmark Kroner	10.60	11.73
Egypt Pounds	9.51	11.63
Eurozone Euro	1.41	1.56
Hong Kong Dollars	13.72	15.21
India Rupee	80.63	(mid price)
Israel Shekels	7.77	8.92
Jamaica Jamaican	115.07	(mid price)
Japan Yen	196.14	217.94
Malaysia Ringgit	6.56	7.61
Malta Liri	0.61	0.68
New Zealand Dollars	2.48	2.78
Norway Kroner	11.07	12.20
Pakistan Pak Rupee	109.95	(mid price)
Singapore Dollar	2.96	3.29
South Africa Rand	11.07	12.18
Sweden Kroner	13.14	14.68
Switzerland Francs	2.19	2.43
Thailand Baht	69.22	82.76
Turkey Lira	2.35	2.74
United States Dollars	1.75	1.95

ment Consultants, French Connection, Friends Provident, Grafton Group, Kiln, Laird Group, Mayborn Group, Spectris, Wood Group. **Finals** Glisten, Interior Services Group, Macro 4, Provalis, Redrow, System C Healthcare. **AGMs** 3D Worldwide, Alltracel Pharmaceutical. **EGMs** NMBZ Holdings.

Trading statement Daily Mail & General Trust.

Wednesday Interims Bristol & London, Genetix, Incisive Media, Independent News & Media, Provident Financial, SDL, SIG, Tullow Oil, Xaar. **Finals** Caffè Nero. **AGMs** None scheduled. **EGMs** None scheduled.

Mining update Montericco Metals.

Thursday Interims Abbot Group, Aggreko, Brandon Hire, Centrica, Dignity, Foseco, Goshawk, Huntleigh Technology, Kingfisher, Maclellan, Microgen, Next, Omega Intl, Premier Oil, RPS Group, Ukrproduct Group, Unite Group, Wilmington. **Finals** Kier Group, Quadratics Group, Quayle Munro. **AGMs** NWD Group. **EGMs** eircom.

Friday Interims AutoLogic Holdings, Biocompatibles International, Isotron, Moneybox. **Finals** Brooks McDonalds, PM Group, Vebnet Holdings. **AGMs** None scheduled. **EGMs** None scheduled.

Indicators

Today UK Office of the Deputy Prime Minister house price survey (July). **UK PPI** (Aug).

Tuesday UK Consumer Price Index (Aug).

Wednesday UK Labour market report.

Thursday UK Retail sales (Aug).

Friday UK No data scheduled.

Economics

How America rides the storms



Larry Elliott
Economics editor

This day four years ago the dust was still settling on Lower Manhattan. The twin towers of the World Trade Centre had been reduced to rubble and the United States was in shock. Rightly, there were fears for the health not just of the US economy but also that of the rest of the world.

The terrorists had chosen their moment and their target well. Following the raging stock market boom of Bill Clinton's second term, the dotcom bubble had been well and truly burst. On September 10 2001 there was already the sense that Wall Street was suffering from the sort of hangover you get after a party that has been allowed to go on way too long. Two days later, it was appropriate to speculate whether the global economy would recover from this attack on its pulsing heart. And yet it did recover.

To be sure, Wall Street was closed for the rest of the week and, on reopening, fell through the floor. But there was no total meltdown. To be sure, the economy went into recession, but this was no repeat of the early 1930s. Indeed, the notable thing about the recession was just how short and shallow it proved to be.

All this needs to be borne in mind when contemplating the impact of Hurricane Katrina. The US economy is constantly being written off and constantly defies the sceptics with its ability to bounce back from just about anything that is thrown at it. Economic policy certainly plays its part in keeping the show on the road, and it was clear last week that no expense will be spared in the reconstruction effort for New Orleans and the rest of the Gulf coast. This is a time when America's cavalier approach to budget deficits is a definite advantage, and just as Congress voted money for the war in Iraq so it will approve the \$50bn (£27bn) requested for the southern states.

There's more to it than that, though. The evidence shows that US companies tend to be better managed than those in the rest of the world (and considerably better managed on average than those in the UK), while the sink-or-swim nature of the US welfare system leaves those down on their luck little option but to find a way to make ends meet.

Despite the rudimentary social safety net and the pockets of poverty, the default mode for the country is one of optimism. Setbacks are dealt with. People generally expect life to be better next year than it is this year.

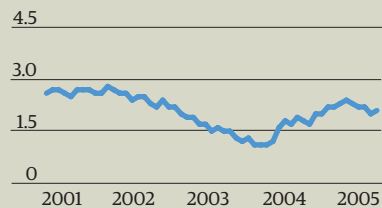
Bumpy

So in the medium term there is good reason to be upbeat about the US. The water will be pumped out of New Orleans, the city will be rebuilt and consumers will return to the shops. This is not the moment when we witness the final collapse of the American economy, even though there are plenty of people on this side of the Atlantic who would dearly love that to be the case.

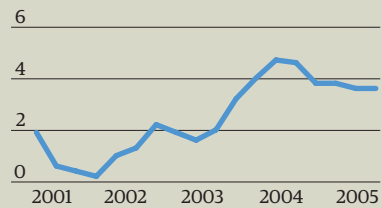
Positive trends



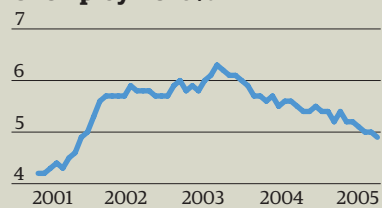
Core inflation %



GDP %



Unemployment %



Since 9/11 the US economy has shown strong economic growth of over 2% fuelled in large part by a consumer boom. Unemployment has steadily fallen for the last two years. Inflation has also remained at low levels with higher oil and gas prices having little impact as yet.

In the long term, of course, it may be a different story if – as I wrote last week – the US, along with the rest of the world, runs smack up against environmental constraints. But do I see a return to the 20%+ unemployment of the Great Depression when I envisage America in four years' time? No, I do not.

What I do expect, however, is a pretty bumpy ride, not least because the US economy has been living on borrowed time ever since 9/11. What happened

was pretty straightforward: the Federal Reserve sanctioned a cheap money programme that encouraged consumers and businesses to borrow and spend.

One look at the housing market shows just how this injection of liquidity into the financial system has prompted a raging property boom. Sales of homes have been running at record levels this year and price inflation is around 13%. Alan Greenspan cured the hangover from the demise of all those worthless dotcoms by starting an equally raucous party in real estate. George Bush chipped in by cutting taxes and raising spending on defence. Before Katrina struck, Greenspan was already making warning noises about what would happen when the housing bubble bursts as, given the extent of the over-valuation of real estate, it will at some point.

So it will be fascinating to see whether in his last few months at the Fed he calls an end to the gradual tightening of monetary policy that has seen interest rates rise from 1% to 3.5%. The chances are that the Fed will now be far more wary about raising rates – although some commentators believe Greenspan will want to show his faith in the US economy by raising rates again later this month – but there will be none of the aggressive easing of policy that occurred after 9/11. Should there be a return to the so-called "Greenspan put" – the notion that the Fed would always act to prevent the stock market or the economy suffering too bad a knock – it would be a serious policy error.

Oil crisis

As the analysts at Capital Economics point out, 9/11 was a demand shock that could be confronted – at least in the short term – by cutting interest rates to boost confidence. Katrina is different. It is a supply shock, with the price of gasoline high for the very good reason that demand is strong and 10% of America's refining capacity has been knocked out.

What the Fed should be hoping for is what – so far – appears to have happened in the UK, with a gradual and modest tightening of policy leading to a soft landing in the housing market. A bit of belt-tightening from US consumers in

the face of dearer energy costs would be helpful in that it would prevent interest rates from going much higher. The risk is that Greenspan seeks to compensate consumers for the effects of Katrina by loosening policy, and thereby gives extra momentum to an over-heating housing market. That will inflate the boom, and the bigger the boom the bigger the bust.

Debt

The last thing US consumers need at present is to take on more debt: their balance sheets are already stretched. Goldman Sachs was right last week to suggest that the impact of Katrina on consumer spending could be transitory.

"A likely pause in Fed tightening and a massive reconstruction programme ramping in early 2006 should increase next year's growth. A \$10.5bn 'down payment' from Congress is already on its way and insurance claims are now estimated to approach \$30bn. The positive impact could be more than 1 percentage point for much of 2006, more than offsetting the 2005 hit."

The dangers, however, are twofold. First, there is a risk that supply shortages might persist, pushing up prices still further and perhaps leading to hoarding and rationing.

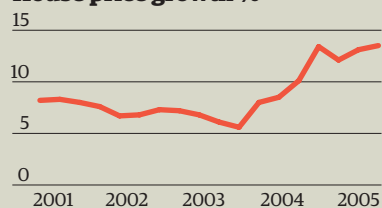
Oil prices could then spiral upwards, giving a real body blow to consumer confidence and jobs. As Goldman Sachs says in its research: "A localised regional tragedy could turn into a global issue accordingly."

The other risk is that Greenspan was already running out of road before Katrina. There are no more bubbles to be inflated once this one has been popped. A period of slower growth for the US is both necessary and inevitable.

Worrying indicators

The federal reserve chairman, Alan Greenspan, has recently warned that house prices are looking overvalued. Like the British, American households are failing to save. Record oil prices have had a big impact on the US motorist with prices rising by 45% since the start of the year.

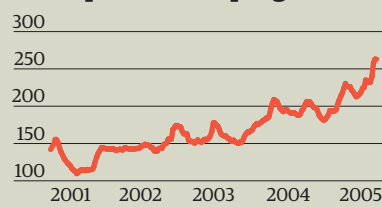
House price growth %



Savings ratio %



Petrol prices, cents per gallon



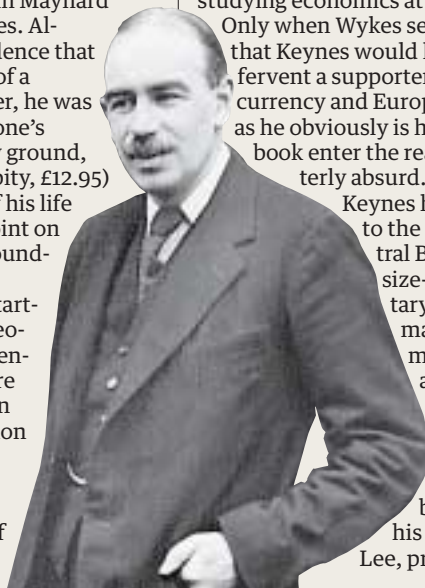
Keynes spin Cap doesn't quite fit

As a summer of cricket fever comes to an end, it is perhaps worth mentioning the book *Golden Ages at the Fenner's Margin*. As its subtitle makes clear, it is an investigation into cricket, economics, Cambridge and John Maynard Keynes by Adrian Wykes. Although there is no evidence that Keynes knew one end of a cricket bat from another, he was brought up within a stone's throw of the university ground, and the book (*Serendipity*, £12.95) is a fictional account of his life seen from a vantage point on the other side of the boundary rope.

Wykes has Keynes starting to formulate his theories as a schoolboy at Fenner's in the 1890s, before going on to consider, on the eve of the publication of his general theory, what the great man might have thought about the retirement of the cricketer Jack

Hobbs, born not far from Keynes but in much humbler surroundings. In its eccentric English way, the book is not without charm, especially if you happen to be a cricket-loving Keynesian studying economics at Cambridge.

Only when Wykes seeks to show that Keynes would have become as fervent a supporter of the single currency and European federalism as he obviously is himself does the book enter the realm of the utterly absurd. How would Keynes have responded to the European Central Bank, the one-size-fits-all monetary policy and the mass unemployment in Germany and France? The same way that Kevin Pieterse responds to a beamer fired at his head by Brett Lee, probably.



Can Mr Fixit plug the profits leak at B&Q?

The week ahead

Improvement plan to be unveiled at Kingfisher's ailing DIY chain

Julia Finch

It is three months since Ian Cheshire was brought in to fix the DIY chain, B&Q, and on Thursday, as the parent group, Kingfisher, posts half-year figures, his make-over plan will be revealed.

B&Q, with 24% of the UK market, was hit by a profit warning in April after first-quarter like-for-like sales fell by 8%. Many analysts believe that it is not just the consumer confidence downturn that has hit the 340-store chain. They fear that it is stuck in a rut, failing to innovate and address changing trends.

Full-year profit forecasts for Kingfisher have been cut from £694m less than 12 months ago to about £530m and

While B&Q's fortunes have been flagging in Britain, it has fared better in China, where it has now opened 40 stores



could fall further this week. Mr Cheshire's task must show how he can reinvigorate the DIY sheds and regain some of the ground lost to Homebase, which has found new momentum since its acquisition by GUS. He has already confirmed 400 head-office job losses, and store closures could be on the cards.

Analysts also want to see him promoting the stores' female appeal – on the grounds that women often make the key decisions on home improvement.

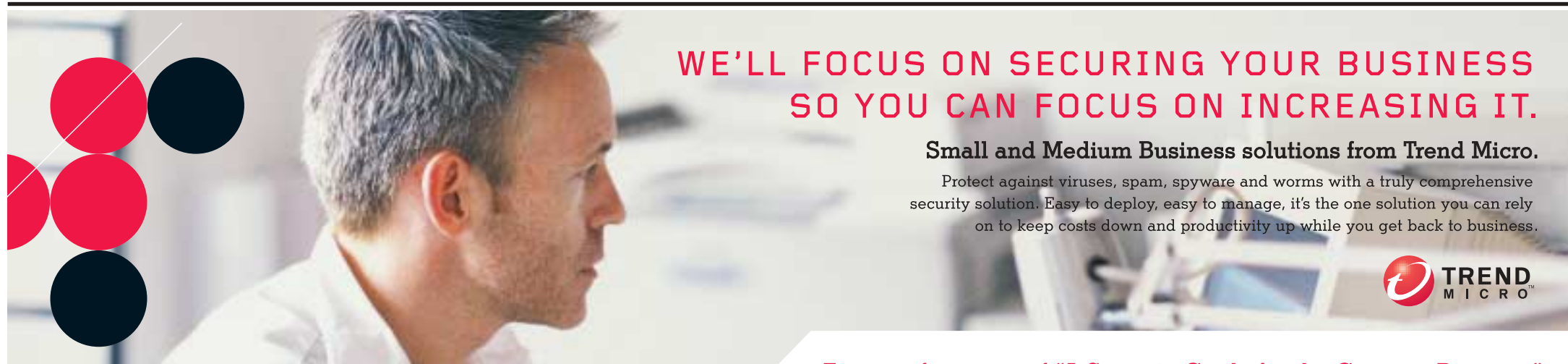
Shares have fallen from more than 310p in January to 246p last week. According to Morgan Stanley, B&Q is "clearly having a dreadful year". It adds: "Over the next 12 to 18 months, the key driver of the Kingfisher share price will be the extent of any recovery at B&Q."

Other retailers reporting this week include the struggling French Connection, and Next, where analysts will be watching for the extent of profit-margin deterioration and any worsening of the rate at which Next's new bigger stores are stealing sales from its smaller outlets.

However, a trading statement from Associated British Foods today is likely to show big demand for super-cheap chic at its Primark fashion chain, which recently acquired Littlewoods stores.

Friends Provident unveils interims on Tuesday, with profits expected to be ahead 33% after the consolidation of Lombard International. On Wednesday, Provident Financial will give an update on improvement plans for its Yes Car Credit alongside group interims. Yes Car's poor performance led to a profits warning in July.

Others reporting half-years this week include Centrica and the mining group, Antofagasta. On Friday, Centrica said its full-year profits would be hit by rising gas prices. There should be few surprises from Antofagasta. Housebuilders Bovis and Redrow and oil sector operators Wood Group, Premier Oil and Cairn Energy are also posting results.



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Markets

The Speculator Starting today: The Guardian takes on the market with £10,000



Nils Pratley

This is the deal. The Guardian has put up £10,000 in cash – real cash – to buy and sell shares. Responsibility for managing the money will be mine alone, and progress will be reported here each Monday, along with thoughts on what might be bought and sold next.

The idea will strike many as reckless. Newspapers have traditionally run a mile from this type of exercise for a good reason – they fear what could happen. Money could be lost, leaving readers unimpressed and rivals crowing.

Yes, that could happen here. Financial markets can be dangerous places, even for the wary. But the cautious approach to writing about shares also has drawbacks. It produces dull opinions that are so equivocal and unaccountable that they bear little relation to the day-to-day challenges facing anybody with money in the market.

So the aim here is twofold. First, it is to try to make a profit – it would be silly not to say so – and 50% of any profit would go to charity at the end of the year, with the rest reinvested. But equally importantly, it is to provide some insight into the mini-dramas that occur when real money is at stake.

There will be upsets and setbacks and, let's hope, some successes. But there is one cast-iron guarantee – it will have happened with real money on the line. There will be no false accounting. Trading records will be available for inspection for anybody inclined to check.

Note that the word "investment" has not appeared so far. It is worth repeating that this is not a traditional newspaper column offering investment advice. It is an exercise in speculation, and so will not mirror many people's ambition when they put money to work in the stock market.

For most people, it makes sense to buy and hold for years. That will not happen here. For a start, it would be impossible to sustain weekly interest in a portfolio that is adjusted, say, once every four months. By comparison, this column's portfolio will be unbalanced and frenetic and will take a few "short"

positions in shares. (In other words, bet that a price will fall.)

That is not to say that it will take mad punts. But it will accept a greater level of risk than most people would consider prudent. For the record, if it were my £10k, and not the Guardian's, it would go into my pension pot because the tax advantages are overwhelming.

Regular readers will have to learn to forgive such neon-lit health warnings. Experience suggests that a small minority of people persist in thinking that the words "buy" and "sell" carry special power when they are printed in newspapers. They do not. Even the best of our breed would admit that markets sometimes have made fools of them.

A larger minority of readers have a more worrying view of journalists' musings on share prices. Put bluntly, they think we are on the make. They suspect there is a hidden agenda to move prices artificially in order that the journalist might cash in. It is undeniable that there have been scandals. Indeed, partly because of them, the Press Complaints Commission has long applied a strong code of practice to financial journalists.

To avoid any suspicion of malpractice, three big constraints will apply here:

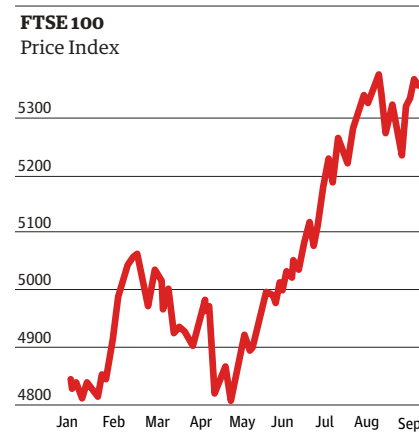
1. I will never have any economic interest in the portfolio or its constituents. The money belongs to the Guardian.
2. Small companies, where it is in practice easiest to move a price, are out of bounds. For this purpose, a small company is defined as any with a stock-market capitalisation of less than £200m at

Ones to watch

● Possible "long" positions:
Anglo American £14.45; Brambles 331p; Enterprise Inns 870p; Man Group £17.01; Prudential 519p; William Hill 597.5p; Wolseley £11.56; Colt Telecom 62.75p; Headlam 429.5p; SkyePharma 59p

● Possible "shorts":
Bradford & Bingley 325.75p; FirstGroup 319.75p; Smith & Nephew 536.5p

A rising trend?



We hope to gain some insight into the mini dramas that occur when real money is at stake

the time the trade is opened (though a profitable short position can be increased if the market value subsequently falls below that level).

3. The opening of any position must be signalled in advance. So, if I'm thinking of buying some ICI, I have to say so in a Monday column and I then have two weeks in which to do so.

It would be too strict to say that I am forced to buy the shares, because prices move. It's an opportunity to buy, but not an obligation. But if I do buy, then it will be reported in the next column.

Equally, it would be too onerous to say I have to announce in advance when a position might be closed – again, because prices move and timing is a critical part of the game. But, in practice, I would try to signal such an intention in advance. The closing of any position would be recorded in the next column.

A fuller version of these three readers' safeguards can be found on the Guardian's website.

The trades will be made through an

account with a leading spread-betting company. Spread betting, by its nature, is a high-risk approach but, within that framework, I will try to be reasonably conservative. Money management, risk control and stop-loss points will be critical and will be discussed regularly.

So what to buy and sell in the first week? There are reasons to distrust the market's current strength: uncertainty over the direction of interest rates; Hurricane Katrina's impact on the US economy. But I also see little point in fighting an established trend. So a sprinkling of buys of large-cap stocks currently performing well is essential. I'm thinking of the likes of Anglo American, Brambles, Enterprise Inns, Man Group, Prudential, William Hill and Wolseley.

A couple of more daring buys are needed to provide some spice. I suggest Colt Telecom, Headlam and SkyePharma. All look, from a pure chart point of view, as if they could break upwards. There will be plenty of discussion on charts and technical analysis – I'm a semi-believer – in future weeks.

If I open six or so "buy" positions this week, one or two balancing shorts would be appropriate. The candidates are Bradford & Bingley, FirstGroup and Smith & Nephew. All trades to be reported this time next week.

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Readers thinking about actively trading in the stock market should seek independent financial advice. Spread betting and contracts for difference are complex financial instruments that carry high risks and are not recommended for inexperienced investors. Specifically, their use can lead to an investor losing substantially more than their initial investment.

Nils Pratley welcomes feedback, but he cannot enter into discussions on specific investments and cannot offer investment advice. The Guardian's editorial code incorporates the editors' code overseen by the Press Complaints Commission: see www.pcc.org.uk

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Comment&Debate



Chris Patten

The Conservative party will continue to suffer electorally until it can exorcise the ghost of Thatcher's defenestration

They lost the plot - and only Ken Clarke can find it again

The Conservative party got an idea into its head in the 1990s. It was an idea that helped to wreck its prospects, delivering Britain into the hands of a Labour government shorn of principled strategic direction but rich in personal rivalry. The idea was to reverse the international posture it had first warmly embraced 30 years before when it had become a pro-European party.

The 1990s saw an upsurge in the manifestations and consequences of what we call globalisation. Money, goods, tourists and technology flatten borders. Prosperity and security – the things people care about most – can only be secured through international cooperation. Even an island nation-state such as Britain finds that its borders are porous when it comes to combating drugs, crime, environmental threats, illegal migration, epidemic disease, terrorism. It is difficult to conclude that the inviolate virtues of the nation-state constitute the basis of sensible domestic or international policies at the beginning of the 21st century.

Why did these arguments cut so little ice with Conservatives over the last dozen or so years? Why did Conservatives deny the logical outcome of the policies embraced under Margaret Thatcher: the erosion of state sovereignty and the building of a borderless world through free trade, open economics and competition? We have to return to the defenestration of Thatcher, for it is that act above all else that explains the dramatic disintegration of Conservatism as a credible electoral force, and until we Conservatives can exorcise it we shall continue to suffer electorally.

The removal of Thatcher, a prime minister in office, by a part of her own party in the House of Commons, did not seem at the time quite such a calamitous act of regicide as it has subsequently

appeared. But this was a leader with a difference. Thatcher had been the first party leader from the right of the party for as long as anyone could remember. Moreover, she had given the right the confidence to believe that their own prejudices and opinions ran with the grain of the nation's character and interests. She used a good deal of her political capital in the late 1980s, at Bruges and afterwards, to drag the party into a more critical posture on Europe. This issue helped to bring her down, but her fall left behind supporters for whom any mutiny over Europe was in effect a gesture of pious loyalty to her memory.

The election of John Major brought to No 10 the candidate who was thought to come closest to wearing her colours. Maybe he was. Major was prime minister for seven years; they were (at least from 1992 onwards) unhappy years for him and they ended with a terrible defeat after a period (latterly) of pretty successful economic management.

Major managed the Maastricht negotiations with great skill. But after the 1992 election campaign, when Europe was barely mentioned, it returned as an explosive issue. With a slim majority of 21, Conservative anti-Europeans, deploying all the sovereigntist arguments of the superstate and the loss of Britain's birthright, could achieve real and damaging leverage, and they did so straight away against the bill to ratify Maastricht. When the bill was put to the Commons, opponents seized on the Danish negative vote in their own referendum on the treaty to insist that parliamentary scrutiny should be delayed. Fatally they were heeded, and by the time parliamentary debate was resumed Britain had suffered the September humiliation of ejection from the exchange rate mechanism. It takes little encouragement for most of his cabinet colleagues at the time to denounce the then-chancellor Norman Lamont's handling of this and other issues. But I

doubt whether any Conservative chancellor would have been able to avoid the deluge, which swept away the government's reputation for competent economic management.

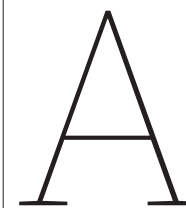
Black Wednesday's chaotic financial crisis emboldened the anti-Europeans, who made hay as the Maastricht legislation stumbled from one parliamentary crisis to another. Conservative rebels plotted with Labour whips to damage the government at every opportunity. With their own government in retreat, the rebels (including the party's future leader Iain Duncan Smith) continued in hot pursuit, hounding ministers and driving policy in an ever more Eurosceptic direction. The descent into shambles continued to the election and overwhelming defeat.

Several factors fuelled the journey downhill. The Conservative party in parliament is not on the whole terribly interested in policy, and it was probably a mistake to think that the majority could be saved for sanity by encouraging an open debate on Europe. The normal stabilising influence of the majority – the commonsense bottom of the party in parliament – was largely lost in the ERM disaster. Moreover, the newspapers that MPs and party activists read urged them on to ever-greater anti-European excess.

The Conservative party, both then and since, suffered from the consequences of democratisation in a contracting party. As membership has declined and got older, it has also increasingly reflected the views of the leader writers of the rightwing newspapers that these Conservatives read. By the mid- to late 1990s it was tough being a moderate pro-European Tory MP in any constituency, and wellnigh impossible for anyone with such declared views to get selected as a parliamentary candidate.

Things would not have got so bad, it has been said, if Major and his col-

leagues had been tougher with their critics. Such a course of action would not have been easy. Dissent was driven by the mad, the bad and those beyond ambition. It was not easy to manage. Major was always concerned lest he should push too hard and risk splitting the party like Peel. The trouble is that once you start bargaining with extremists, the slope opens up steeply in front of you. Major promoted his opponents, "the bastards" as he accurately called them; they behaved like even bigger bastards, leaking and plotting against him. He tossed out concessions on policy, until our posture on Europe turned into ineffective and even embarrassing parody-Thatcherism. And this is the real point. Conservative sceptics, anti-Europeans, obsessives have no idea what to put in place of the arrangements against which they rail, except the argument that we really know what is best for the rest of Europe but cannot quite describe it for the time being.



As a European commissioner I was responsible for relations with Norway, Switzerland and the rest. My conclusion was clear.

They enjoy all the enhanced sovereignty

that comes with staying at home while the decisions that intimately affect their own economic life are made by their neighbours in Brussels. We put a diplomatic gloss on it of course. But to enjoy our market they have to follow our rules: rules which they do not make or share in making. When we enlarged the European Union these outer-ring countries had to pay into the funds that we make available to help the poorer new members. I remember a Swiss negotiator telephoning me to plead that this subscription should be presented as a voluntary donation for development in the deprived parts of Europe, not an additional fee for access to a larger market. But we both knew the truth. De facto sovereignty or de jure?

There are also some Conservatives who really want us out of Europe altogether. They will continue to obstruct any efforts to drag the Conservative party back into a more sensible and comprehensible European posture. Theirs is a programme whose main achievement has been to exclude from all hope of the party leadership the man – Kenneth Clarke – most able to exercise it in a way likely to restore the party's fortunes. Others with similar views to his are driven to the outer fringes of Conservatism, to watch with dismay the continued infatuation of the party they love with a ruinous fantasy. Such a pity, not to understand the new plot.

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Others are driven to the outer fringes to watch with dismay the party's infatuation with a ruinous fantasy



ILLUSTRATION: TIM ELLIS

Bondage at 36,000 feet

Peter Preston

Ryanair has overtaken BA by making the ordeal of flying a selling point

Choice: more bums (3.26 million of them) on more seats in August even than BA. It's another triumph for Michael O'Leary, for rampant expansion – and for sheer, unadulterated, un-Irish nastiness. Welcome to MasochismAir.

Here we are again, waiting to check in with 102 people in front of us because the bus from the big city – 60 miles away – arrived five seconds before we did. Nothing's moving. A Croatian girl at the front has left her passport in the hotel (60 miles away). A Spanish boy thought that identity cards would get him on a plane to Stansted.

And the familiar business of the baggage rebalancing is already far advanced. Right down those two stretching, desultory queues, lads in trainers have their suitcases open on the floor, shuffling stuff back and forth. "Is it under 15 kilos now?" "No, still bloody 17.5." Piles of jeans and T-shirts are slyly decanted into a black garbage bag to be carried through below check-in sightlines – then stuffed

into hand luggage. The floor itself is strewn with mounds of crumpled cotton debris, as though Mandelson's China boycott has gone flops in a trice.

Occasionally, after glum altercations, company weight watchers dispatch cursing transgressors to queue at an overflow office and pay for their sins. When does a £40 ticket cost you double the money? When you're 10 kilos over a load. Expletives seldom deleted. So back to the crawl through security, and the sharp-elbowed rush when the boys with the black bags disregard any hope of an orderly boarding routine (as explained via a defective loudspeaker system). So to seats so closely packed you can hear the first squeaks of incipient pulmonary embolism starting four rows away.

Nasty? Of course. But insanely cheap some of the time (unless you're old, young, disabled or want to change your booking) and relatively efficient most of the time. MasochismAir takes you to places you never knew existed, destinations without reasonable alternatives. That's not the whole of its branding success, though.

For O'Leary doesn't play emerald super-yob by accident. He's just a "jumped-up Paddy" who "doesn't give a shite", because he says so. Worried about the environment? Then "sell your car and

walk". Worried about Europe's commissioners? They're "morons". Fill in the blanks after B and A "and you get bastards". His most unctuous ballad is called "Screw the share price, this is a fares war". He's honed Mr O'Nasty, the guy who liked to charge extra for wheelchairs.

One lurking strand of Ryanair's subliminal pitch, in short, seems to translate BO down that stretching queue into bloody ordeal. This isn't supposed to be a pleasant experience circa 1986, with welcome smiles and blond stewardesses handing out cocktails. This is a carefully constructed obstacle race. O'Leary's increasing operational shift from Stansted to Luton puts the airport of reality TV choice back at screen centre. I'm a nonentity, get me out of here.

And, of course, it works brilliantly, 3.26 million times over. Decades of airline marketing tried to make flying a wondrous experience, full of cosseted comfort and luxurious treats. The truth, though, was always grimly different. The ordeal was constant; it just wasn't made into a selling point.

Michael O'Leary has put that straight for ever. Bondage and humiliation still function at 36,000 feet. Ryanair prospers because indignity sells. There's the same retrospective glow from the standing and scrabbling as you get from kneel-

ing in front of a pile of jeans in Primark, Peckham, and finding a £5 pair that fit. I went, I fought, I endured – and now I have a bargain tale to tell. Call it victim consumerism: classless examination by indignity.

How does BA strike back? The good news, maybe, is that they've finally got the message, courtesy of Gate Gourmet, days of inaction and buckets of bile. On my last long-haul test a few days ago, check-in pushed a scrap of paper back over the desk along with my boarding pass. What's this? It was a voucher to spend \$20 (Canadian) on any airport meal before leaving, "because the in-flight food may not be up to our normal standards".

Good, old-style thinking, except that the only "meals" on offer before the departure gate were polythene-wrapped bagels at a bar. I notionally dined on two packets of peanuts, an apple and a Bloody Mary, and left the notional change. The cabin stewards – serving below-normal-standards cheese and biscuits – were surly all the way home. But the captain wasn't on message with his farewell "thank-yous" and "pleasant trips". On MasochismAir, we never forget we have no choice.

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Comment&Debate



Jackie Ashley

Labour has lost its way and faces political meltdown if it can't find a new direction for the post-Blair era

The danger is that Brown will be another Callaghan

Is Labour dying on its feet? As Tony Blair returns, briefly, from his latest tour of China and India, some of his ministers fear the party that took him to power is rotting away. Like a great galleon it sails on impressively enough, with its 356 MPs, its ministers, its rich backers. But below the waterline the picture is uglier. Membership has crashed, down by more than half since 1997 from more than 400,000 to just over 200,000. In that time it has managed to get through four general secretaries – the latest, Matt Carter, has just announced his resignation, one of a line who felt they weren't listened to. More than a million fewer people voted Labour in 2005 than in 2001. But, worse than all the figures, the party doesn't seem to know what to do with its third term. It has lost its identity.

The great danger for Gordon Brown, some leading figures in the party say, is not that he fails in the end to become prime minister, but that circumstances conspire to make him a second Jim Callaghan, struggling through the dog-days of a dying administration. By the time of the next election he'll face a new Tory leader, perhaps with a new big idea – the flat tax – that is anathema to Labour supporters but has a simplistic electoral appeal. So Brown could lose the election, and Labour find itself once again in the wilderness.

Of course, you can turn all this round and focus on the fact that Labour is still celebrating its third election victory. It has already survived eight years in power and is still functioning effectively while its only real opposition has become the media. But without a vibrant party, you have only a leader cult to rely on. And when people weary of that, the whole house of cards can collapse in an instant. We know Blair is leaving office. The question is: will there be much of a Labour party left to survive him?

His promise to return with renewed vigour to the domestic agenda so far looks hollow. He is off to the US again shortly, while G8 and EU business will preoccupy him until the end of the year. The woeful situation in Iraq, further troubles in Afghanistan and the continuing preoccupation with the threat from al-Qaida mean his attention will continue to be dragged away, week by week, from the mere governance of Britain.

He does have a domestic agenda, of course. It will feature heavily in his conference speech. It consists of more of the same in the public services – more city academies and foundation hospitals. The theme will be enabling and empowering the individual citizen rather than leaving it up to the state to provide. And, above all, there is “respect”, a subject close to the prime minister's heart, which brings with it more uniformed police officers, another look at the national curriculum and parenting orders.

Some measures may work better than others, but as several senior ministers point out, slapping parenting orders on families is not what they came into politics for. Nor is respect the core of Labour's purpose, compared to greater equality and help for people at the bottom. It is the sort of thing Margaret Thatcher and John Major banged on about during their years of political decline.

Foundation hospitals and city academies will never get Labour's heart pounding faster. There have been serious funding problems and disappointments over standards, fears of fundamentalist influence on teaching, and a notable lack of enthusiasm – or downright hostility over the role of the private sector and the market – in the party or in the unions. Ministers, both loyalist and not-very-loyalist, agree that this is too-thin gruel to keep the government occupied for the next two years, if that is the time Blair expects to stay.

None of this is likely to come to a head during the Labour conference. As one key New Labour player puts it, normal party politics remains suspended while the Tory leadership contest continues. In a sense, we have not really had proper party politics for more than a decade. After 1992, Labour was turned inwards as Blair and his followers transformed the party, while the Tories decayed in office. After 1997, the Conservatives were never able to give New Labour a serious run for its money. That was Blair's luck but not, perhaps, in the best interests of good government or Labour itself.

Does this matter much to the prime minister? One senior colleague speculates that when he leaves office, Blair will cut all his remaining ties with Labour anyway. He will return to the people he seems more comfortable with already: the tycoons, American property developers, Italian princes and media

magnates. He will make huge amounts of money and at best move in the same circles as the Clintons and the affable rock stars. And if Labour seemed to crumble without him, he could merely smile and ask: “Miss me now?”

It doesn't have to be this way. We are in the middle of an unreal hiatus in politics, partly because of the London bombings and partly because everyone is waiting to see what kind of Tory party emerges from the leadership race. But Labour cannot afford to drift. A quiet conference, which is what everyone predicts, would be a wasted week at the seaside and hasten Labour's demise.

The interesting stuff, I hope, will be on the fringes, because there are ministers working hard to forge a harder-edged, progressive agenda. David Miliband is touring the big cities to try to find ways to reconnect. He admits that the big enemy in modern politics is “a sense of powerlessness”. Harriet Harman is working on ideas for voter registration to end the class divide scarring our democracy, whereby the poor don't vote and so get brushed aside. Other ministers are talking about how to restore parliament to the heart of politics.

Meanwhile, the Brownite, centre-left Compass group has brought together academics and thinkers to draw up a manifesto for the next election, based on three themes: a sense of the good life, a new collectivism and a left political economy. The aim is to challenge not only Blair, but Brown too – there is widespread concern over his enthusiasm for market solutions. Brown himself, meanwhile, talks constantly of connecting Labour to its roots and is expending much energy trying to untangle the notion of Britishness and citizenship.

These initiatives prove Labour politicians are aware that if the years ahead bring nothing but more academies and police powers to combat terrorism, the party really will die. But what they need is leadership and focus, a new “story” that takes Labour into a second decade of power. Unless that story is developed sooner rather than later, Labour will remain on the critical list.

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Disarm the loyalists too

Jonathan Freedland

The Orange rampage in Belfast is a reminder that pressure and rewards have to be evenly spread

This was what the sceptics always said would happen. Paramilitaries, officially on ceasefire, would break their word – and unleash a wave of devastating violence. Armed to the teeth, these private armies would reach for the gun the moment they did not get their way. And all the promises made by the respectable political parties that stand alongside them would be exposed as worthless lies.

That's what critics of the Northern Ireland peace process always warned would happen. Except the menace they had in mind was the IRA and the republican movement. It was the Provos who had to be disarmed and disbanded, lest they return to their bloody ways.

What the sceptics did not bank on, what few people even mentioned, were the paramilitaries of loyalism. Rare was the cry for the Ulster Volunteer Force to decommission its weapons or for the Ulster Defence Association to declare that its war was over. And yet it was these men, backed by their allies in the Orange Order – not the IRA – who over the weekend turned parts of Belfast into what one loyalist politician described to me yesterday as “Beirut”.

And this was no mere street riot, no outbreak of simple stone-throwing and window-shattering. The loyalist hard-men trained machine guns on soldiers and police, sending some 700 bullets their way according to one estimate. Bricks and petrol bombs came in numbers too large to count. One eyewitness spoke of a mayhem unseen in 30 years.

The chief constable of Northern Ireland, Sir Hugh Orde, had no doubt who shared responsibility for this: he had seen men swathed in the sashes of the Orange Order attacking his officers. Some suspect not a random outbreak of discontent but a deliberate, strategic move by forces within unionism. Frustrated that Ian Paisley's replacement of David Trimble as the community's leading politician had not stemmed the flow of perceived concessions to republicans, they decided to take their fight to the streets.

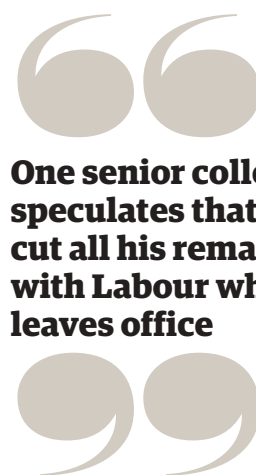
This should shake those who have long regarded republicans as the sole obstacle to peace in Northern Ireland. In the lead-up to the 1998 Good Friday agreement, and in the years since, unionists and their cheerleaders in Westminster and the British press have piled the political and moral pressure on the IRA and Sinn Féin, demanding that they change. Much of that pressure was deserved. But it was also lopsided – as this weekend's events have proved. Now we have seen, in the most lurid colours, that loyalists have guns too.

The double standard looks especially glaring given the IRA's July declaration that its armed campaign is over and that it will lay down its arms. As republicanism moves into a new phase, loyalism remains in the brutal past. Just yesterday a senior UVF source was quoted saying that, yes, his group would wind up its activities – but that it would never decommission its weapons.

And yet the answer to the weekend's violence is not simply to unload new pressure on loyalists and unionists. On the contrary, it seems one of the multiple causes of these disturbances is what David Ervine, leader of the loyalist Progressive Unionist party, calls a “sense of abandonment” among grassroots, working-class Protestants. Rightly or wrongly, he says, this community perceives a British government that bends over backwards for Sinn Féin – so that “whatever the republicans want, republicans get” – and does next to nothing for them.

The lesson is pretty clear: the search for peace in Northern Ireland needs to be more balanced. That means spreading the pressure over arms more evenly – to include loyalists – and ensuring the rewards for progress are seen to be spread more evenly, too, to include the very same people.

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One senior colleague speculates that Blair will cut all his remaining ties with Labour when he leaves office

Four years after 9/11

The war of unintended consequences

During the past century the United States has faced two brutal assaults. Within four years of the first, on December 7 1941, the US and its allies had mobilised, taken on and defeated two powerful enemies, Japan and Germany. Four years after the second, on September 11 2001, what real progress can the US and its allies honestly claim for the war on terror?

The answer, tragically and alarmingly, is that they have not made enough. Not only is terror very much still with us, it is also on the increase. Last year, the US state department reported 651 "significant terrorist attacks" around the world, three times the total for 2003 and the highest annual number since Washington began to collect such statistics two decades ago. Around a third of those attacks took place in Iraq, supposedly the central front of the war on terror, in some parts of which terrorist killings have now reached pandemic levels. Since April, more than 4,000 Iraqis have been killed by terrorists in Baghdad alone. But the killing is in no way confined to Iraq. No one in London needs any reminder of that. And Britain, like the US and many others, is wrestling to balance established liberties and ways of life with the danger that another 9/11, or another 7/7, may occur at any time.

The assault on America four years ago this week was in every way as infamous a deed as the one committed by Japan in 1941. Much of the response to it, however, was not just ineffective but counter-productive. Faced with 9/11, George Bush's initial response was briefly both brainy and belligerent. But the initial advantages were quickly squandered under pressure from the ideological right. By choosing to rid the world of evil – above all in Iraq – rather than to hunt down, take out and politically disable al-Qaida, Mr Bush set his country on a path which continues to dismay America's friends and to delight its enemies.

In effect, though, he also did Osama bin Laden's job for him. The war on terror, with its rhetoric of a battle between good and evil and its talk of a fight that will last for generations, depended for credibility upon the efficacy of American power and upon the accuracy of the US neocon prescription of a "democratic revolution" across the Middle East. In reality, both have proved to be wishful thinking – the real surprise being the limits of the US military effort. America has fought and occupied, but it has not shown that it can rebuild. The idea that Iraq would set off a domino democratic effect across the Middle East now seems even more

preposterous than ever – if Iraq is exporting anything to its neighbours, it is violence not democracy. Faced with a ruthless insurgency, American public opinion is faltering as the gulf on the ground between reality and objectives widens. Post-Katrina, the question is not whether the US will begin to withdraw – but when, how and, above all, with what damage.

Politically this may be inevitable and even desirable – but we will all live with the consequences. The most damning charge against the war on terror is that it has been a recruiting sergeant for the very forces it sought to destroy. As Mark Danner put it in the New York Times yesterday, Mr Bush's failure to focus on al-Qaida has created a global "al-Qaidism" of the kind that struck this country on July 7. Such al-Qaidism is not going to go away. If the earlier generation could produce a 9/11 in the face of American power, what will the next generation produce in the wake of the American weakness inseparable from an Iraq withdrawal? Bin Laden's organisation may have been damaged and disrupted since 2001, and his dreadful cause may in many places be in the hands of amateurs, but he could never have dreamed that the world four years after the twin towers would look so favourable to his objectives.

Japan's general election

A mandate and a monopoly

The Japanese prime minister, Junichiro Koizumi, has won a stunning victory in yesterday's general election. When Mr Koizumi called the election in August in an effort to outmanoeuvre internal opposition within the ruling Liberal Democrat party to his reform of the postal system, the predominant mood was that his gamble could fail. Following the opposition Democrat party's success in the earlier Tokyo elections, there might even have been the ultimate seismic change, with the Liberal Democrats losing control of a government they have dominated for half a century. In fact, the reverse happened. The LDP has a greatly increased majority, winning up to 60 more seats, and Mr Koizumi is master of the scene.

Although postwar Japan has all the trappings of a western democracy, in practice it has been

and remains a one-party system. Much has been made of the fact that Mr Koizumi is, in Japanese terms, a market reformer, but this has been greatly exaggerated. In practice, privatisation, for example, has been very limited and, apart from the postal system, barely featured at all in the election campaign. No doubt Mr Koizumi's victory will be greeted as a mandate for reform. But in reality it is not unreasonable to argue the reverse. Mr Koizumi's biggest single achievement yesterday was to revive the flagging popularity of the Liberal Democrats – and thus to entrench their monopoly of power once more.

Meanwhile the greatest single issue now facing Japan barely got a mention during the campaign. Mr Koizumi has presided over a slow but incremental shift in Japanese foreign pol-

icy towards a more nationalist position. He is on his way to amending the country's peace constitution. Japan is slowly but surely acquiring a more global military role, with troops presently deployed in Iraq. Japan is becoming a more intimate partner in US geo-military strategy, while Mr Koizumi has deliberately inflamed relations with China and South Korea by visiting the Yasukuni shrine to Japan's war dead four times since becoming prime minister in 2001. Japan has singularly failed to come to terms with its often barbaric behaviour towards its neighbours during the last war. In this context, far from being a reformer, Mr Koizumi represents a small but disturbing retreat into Japan's past. With China on the rise, Mr Koizumi's victory may be bad news for prospects of peace and stability in East Asia.

In praise of... The Proms

Let us first salute Robert Newman, since without him the past eight often wonderful weeks would never have happened. It was he who devised what became, in honour of his conductor, the Henry Wood Promenade Concerts, and now the BBC Proms, the last of which, accompanied by satellite events of huge exuberance in five cities, was staged under the brilliant lights of the Albert Hall on Saturday night.

Andreas Scholl sang Handel and Paul Lewis

played the scintillating piano part in Lambert's Rio Grande, so there was serious music before the flag waving and shanty singing began. But then the Last Night is as much an excuse for a party as a musical occasion, and this year the tub-thumping nationalism of the last hour was, mercifully, not quite what it used to be. Alongside the union flag there now wave flags from Europe to Australia, while this year's conductor, Paul Daniel, tried to wheedle us into be-

lieving that the dreams and aspirations for national greatness expressed in Land of Hope and Glory somehow applied to all nations, not one.

It's very much the BBC Proms nowadays, as the corporation incessantly reminds us, rather to the exclusion of Wood, let alone Newman. But they plan it, they stage it, they sustain it, they pay for it, they even put some (not enough) on TV. Let us not begrudge them their richly justified high proprietorial pride.

September 12 1914

The sure way to end the war

Mr Winston Churchill at the London Opera House tonight sounded a stirring call to the people to give the country such an army as under the shield of a successful navy will enable us to end the war in the way we hope and intend it shall be ended.

The packed and enthusiastic gathering he addressed had been brought together at the invitation of the National Liberal Club and the Constitutional Club acting together and the audience and the speakers were representative of all parties, all creeds, and all classes.

An hour before the speaking began

every seat in the theatre was filled and thousands of people unable to get even to the doors were directed to an overflow meeting at the Kingsway Hall.

The Marquis of Lincolnshire, who presided, said that during the whole of this great crisis the political sword had been returned to its scabbard and, at the invitation of the two leading political clubs of the Metropolis, the inhabitants of Greater London, representative of every class, were there to express their admiration of our gallant troops and those of our brave allies and to pledge themselves to reinforce them again and again and again (Cheers).

Mr Winston Churchill, who was received with loud cheers, moved: "That this meeting of the citizens of London profoundly believing that we are fighting in a just cause for the vindication of the rights of small states and the public law of Europe, pledges itself unswervingly to support the Prime Minister's appeal to the nation and all measures necessary for the prosecution of the war to a vicarious conclusion, whereby alone the lasting peace of Europe can be assured." (Cheers).

Mr Churchill said: "Gentlemen, these are serious times, and though

we are met here in an abode of diversion and of pleasure in time of peace, and although we wish and mean to erouse and encourage each other in every way, we are not here for the purpose of merriment of jollification, and I am quite sure I associate with me my two friends who are here tonight and my noble friend your chairman, when I say that we regard cheers with which you have received us as being offered to us only because they are meant for our soldiers in the field and our sailors on the sea. It is that sense we accept them and thank you for them."

Corrections and clarifications

● In a pictorial table of buildings in which the Guardian's architecture correspondent distinguished between those he would like to see preserved and those he would not mind being destroyed, page 3, September 7, we gave the wrong impression about his feelings for Richard Rogers' Lloyd's building in London. The caption described it as a building "not to save". In fact our architecture correspondent has made it clear on numerous occasions that he greatly admires it. It was also described in the caption as an example of postmodern architecture (which he does not generally like). It is an example of late modernism.

● In a note, page 4, G2, September 6, we referred to Sir Peter Maxwell Davies as "Master of the Queen's Music". That is correct. The holder of the office is no longer Master of the Queens Musick, contrary to the belief of the reader who raised the matter. The office carried the k in Musick from the time the post was created in 1626, in the reign of Charles I, until it was finally dropped during the tenure of Edward Elgar (from 1924 until his death in 1934). To put the matter beyond doubt, Sir Peter tells us that the k-less Music in his title is official.

● The BBC correspondent is Rageh Omaar, not Rageh Omagh (Birt is a beached grandee, says Bragg, September 8, page 9).

● In a report on the Man Booker prize shortlist (Vintage year for Booker ... but not McEwan, page 5, September 9) we said Monica Lewycka's comedy A Short History of Tractors in Ukrainian had fallen by the wayside. She is Marina Lewycka.

It is the policy of the Guardian to correct significant errors as soon as possible. Please quote the date and page number. Readers may contact the office of the readers' editor by telephoning +44 (0)20 7713 4736 between 11am and 5pm UK time Monday to Friday excluding public holidays. Mail to Readers' editor, The Guardian, 119 Farringdon Road, London EC1R 3ER, UK. Fax +44 (0)20 7239 9997. Email: reader@guardian.co.uk

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Country diary

Claxton, Norfolk

About once a week I go down to the marsh and face west towards Rockland to watch dusk fall. I have to be there at least two hours ahead of sunset to get the full transition from day to night. I'm sure I could market it as a type of therapy.

In the surrounding silence, the ears start to pick out ever fainter detail. Your eyes sharpen. The nervous system mellows and the heart acquires a slower rate.

I'm there ostensibly to watch birds perform their evening rituals before nightfall, but there's more to it than that. I think of it as a kind of ornithological fishing: waiting to see what the place lures from the imagination.

This time I was intrigued to see a fowler tucked beneath a bush doing much the same thing. He stood silently for an hour and I guessed we were getting much the same from it, except for the end goal. This isn't a condemnation, more a "How could you do it?"

Intermittently gunshots crashed out shattering the slowly accumulated atmosphere. He was after duck, but everything rose skywards in a chorus of alarm.

Gradually, the rooks and jackdaws boiled down on to Mulberry Carr, while the gulls, higher and untouched by panic, sailed over inexorably to the east. Nightfall smoothed down the mood and the geese resumed their honking comical parade to the broad where they rest the night.

At sunset, a band of deep magenta was cradled on the western horizon, though sunlight still shone in the upper sky. A plane with its carbon-laden trail was caught in this magnesium flare and became a glistening snail trail across the heavens.

Mark Cocker

Reply

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Letters and emails

The fight against poverty needs actions not words

Five years ago, the world's nations signed up to the UN millennium development goals, aimed at halving world poverty by 2015. This week, the same nations will meet in New York to review progress towards the goals (World summit on UN's future heads for chaos, September 10). This has been uneven at best. On current projections, many African countries will not get there until 2147.

Meeting the goals depends on the effective delivery of essential public services such as health, education, water and electricity. Privatisation of health-care has reduced services and increased prices, while privatisation of water and sanitation systems has seen charges soar out of reach of poorer families. As usual, it is the vulnerable who suffer most. Yet powerful financial institutions such as the World Bank and IMF continue to press for more private sector involvement, despite the well-documented disastrous impact of many of their schemes.

We call on all world leaders at this week's summit to commit to affordable public services that are accessible to all. A strong public sector offers efficient services to all of society and provides the building blocks for genuine poverty reduction. It is now time to abandon the failed privatisation model and put the public sector at the heart of efforts to meet the millennium development goals.

Dave Prentis
Unison

Louise Richards
War on Want

Paul Noon
Prospect

Hugh Lanning
PCS

● Perhaps Paul Valley (Letters, September 8) should take a look at the UN's latest

human development report, which describes progress toward the millennium development goals as "depressingly slow". Those who long to see real progress have a right to regard these "historical" meetings with a touch of scepticism. Valley states himself that the task is to make sure that what was promised is delivered. "This will require vigilance and continued pressure," he writes. Surely he should come down from his ivory tower and join the campaign.

Carol Hayton
Woking, Surrey

● Paul Valley's staunch defence of the G8's "historic" pronouncements at Gleneagles, juxtaposed with the launch of the latest UN human development report, concisely captures the problem. "If its commitments are translated into action," then at last we can believe the G8. If, if, if. But a child was dying every three seconds before Gleneagles and the rate hasn't slowed. What we have seen is the US government trying – with 750 proposed amendments – to water down an already mild "declaration" from the forthcoming millennium review summit in New York. Meanwhile, Africa gets poorer.

As Paul urges, NGOs will be "vigilant"; but why must it always be so? I'm optimistic enough to believe the mass mobilisation of UK citizens under the Make Poverty History banner really does signal an anger that such inequality prevails, with the 500 richest people having more wealth than the 400 million poorest.

All of us need to act. Yes, hold our governments to account; but also use the links we have – through schools, trade unions, campaigning organisations, professional associations – to support citizens in developing countries to strengthen their own democracies. And

then we must start to examine our own behaviours, because we are part of the problem. We can point the finger at the G8, but the G8 is also us.

Graham Bennett
One World Action

● I am afraid it is Paul Valley who "exaggerates to make a point" in his defence of the actions of the G8 at and since Gleneagles. For the past year there has been a barrage of rhetoric from political leaders on world poverty. The actions of the G8 remain woefully inadequate. Additional aid is not currently going to "come on stream rapidly" – it will be 2013 before the UK spends 0.7% of our national income on aid, 43 years after we first committed to doing so.

Leaked documents we have obtained since the G8 summit show that free-market economic conditions are being planned to remain attached to debt relief, and the G8 countries look unwilling



to come up with the money to pay for their debt announcement. Is it right to praise the G8 leaders for marginal positive moves while ignoring the negative impact of their overall policies? Or is it right to expose the truth of their actions, and put pressure on them to act differently? Valley seems more concerned to defend the status quo than to press for the real changes that are needed.

Tim Jones
World Development Movement

● Gordon Brown's scheme to raise billions to prevent children dying in the developing world (Report, September 9) sounds a wonderful gesture. However, it is again one of those unjoined-up policies that so characterises most western responses to the problems of this part of the world. While I wouldn't want to belittle any genuine attempt to save lives, what is the point of saving children from one mortal disease, only to confront them with those of poverty, famine and misery a few years later? Unless a new vision is promoted that rejects market-oriented dogmas there will be no saving of lives, nor will we see the really radical changes that are desperately required.

John Green
London

● The government's ambitious attempts to end child poverty are always going to be under threat while it tries to deliver social justice by stealth (Report, September 8). It is time for the government to come clean. It needs to explain why a fairer distribution of income will help us all and make us proud to live in a country that has no truck with the poverty that blights children's lives for ever.

Jonathan Stearn
End Child Poverty Campaign

The Conservatives should go for flat tax

David Walker (Analysis, September 5) illustrates the weakness of debate on flat tax. Most support seems to be ideological and sadly innumerate. Support from right of centre is based on presumed economic efficiency: that FT will increase tax take – after Laffer's celebrated curve – and accelerate growth, via incentives from a reduced tax rate. As policies to increase tax take seldom emanate from the right, those on the left of centre are convinced the objective of FT advocates is to cut the tax take, and therefore government spending on all the "essentials" – health, education and welfare.

In the event, the decision will be made by the political perception of the redistribution of the tax burden were FT introduced. This demands a transparent estimation of the percentage of tax paid by each income decile, before and after a shift to FT. If FT and the current tax regime are compared at the existing tax take, total tax and spending is taken out of the debate, allowing assessment of the distribution of tax burden on rich and poor. National insurance, corporate and inheritance tax must also be treated transparently. However, anti-growth and welfare preferences are entrenched in Britain and too many enjoy tax benefits they think others pay for. Conservatives should adopt the flat tax as a test of attitudes to tax at the next election in absence of other distinctive policies.

Dr Alister McFarquhar
Cambridge

● The perception of tax as having your money taken, rather than it being your contribution to your country, needs to change. Until it does, many of those less well off will still feel that withholding undeclared cash-in-hand income from the taxman is their chance to improve their lives. Meanwhile, many of the better off, especially large companies, will use tax havens or other tax dodges to prevent money going to the state. The use of tax havens, transfer pricing and bonuses in different currencies doesn't show a desire for low taxation, but a desire for no taxation. Taxation can't be simple if we use tax credits to safeguard those worse off. But it would be a lot simpler if the Treasury didn't have to come up with ways to legislate against tax dodges.

Nick Hipkin
Twickenham, Middx

● David Walker condemns flat-rate tax after allowances on the grounds that it would leave the government short of £50bn in revenue, but after he has chosen an allowance and rates (ie those of the Adam Smith Institute) suitable for proving his condemnation. Why not choose allowances that are appropriate and equitable, followed by a flat-rate percentage sufficient to secure adequate national income?

John Bowler
Cheltenham, Glos

Cricket conundrum

Roger Mosey makes the point (Letters, September 9), in reply to John Major's criticisms of the lack of BBC bids for cricket broadcasting rights, that national sports should be "listed". The 1996 Broadcasting Act saw test cricket "delisted". Now, who was the prime minister at the time?

Mick Chandler
Coventry

● People seem to be hoping and praying for rain, thus forcing a draw and an overall Ashes win for England. Now, I don't follow the game, but is that cricket?

Chris Parkins

London

● Although Trident has less total explosive power than past nuclear arsenals, its greater range and accuracy means that it represents proliferation (Letters, September 9). Nor is it "independent". The missiles are on loan from the US. If ever used, its targeting would be controlled by US satellite technology. John Reid should do his homework.

Dr Douglas Holdstock
Nuclear Hazards Group

● Is the new BBC/ITV service Freesat proposing to broadcast just in English (Report, September 8)? Aren't we missing a great opportunity to offer a selection of European public service TV and radio stations? Most countries in Europe already have multilingual satellite services as a matter of course.

Rene Wyndham
Lyme Regis, Dorset

● You report that "most of the consumers unable to receive Freeview live in rural areas". South Birmingham, Coventry and environs hardly constitute a rural area, but we aren't covered.

Pam Lunn
Kenilworth

● Airlines are still getting away with tax-free petrol. Is it too much to ask the government to fix a tax to take the place of the surcharge when the oil price comes down?

Michael Ellman
London

● So it's goodbye to sans serif. Does that mean we must say farewell to San Serif too – or might next April 1 bring a nostalgic visit for readers with long memories?

Don Tordoff
Northallerton, N Yorks

Life mimics art as Bush gets the blues about Hurricane Katrina

No need to claim prescience over floods for Bob Dylan in such songs as High Water (Letters, September 10). Knowing his deep respect for the blues, it's inconceivable that Dylan would have been unaware of the many blues relating to the catastrophic Mississippi floods of 1927, and especially High Water Everywhere, a profoundly compassionate two-part song by Charley Patton, who experienced the disaster at first hand.

In the 60s, artists like Patton were being rediscovered in folk-music circles and their records reissued, so Bob was probably also familiar with Blind Lemon Jefferson's Rising High Water Blues, or Barbecue Bob's Mississippi Heavy Water Blues, not to mention Bessie Smith's classic Back Water Blues. The anger and sense of abandonment felt by the poor black communities during the 1927 floods contributed to the discrediting of

the small-government ethos of the day, just as one hopes will happen now after Hurricane Katrina. Patton's words then are as fitting today: *Oh, Lordy, women and grown men down, / Oh, women and children sinking down, / Lord have mercy, I couldn't see nobody home, / and wasn't no one to be found.*

Giles Oakley
London

● Charley Patton's was just one of many songs recording the suffering caused by the 1927 floods. Then, as now, the victims were poor and black and the president (Hoover) was criticised for appalling incompetence. Evacuees were forced into segregated camps. Listen also to Memphis Minnie's When The Levee Breaks, and Sippie Wallace's The Flood Blues.

Paul Dennehy
Enfield, Middx

Open Door



Ian Mayes

The readers' editor on ... a mutual interest in accountability

The Guardian already does more than almost any other newspaper to foster what the editor calls an "open and responsive" relationship with its readers. In its new format, launched today, it will do even more. As the editor, Alan Rusbridger, says elsewhere in today's paper: "Because we don't have a proprietor or shareholders our main relationship is with the readers."

The Scott Trust, to whom I am answerable as readers' editor or independent ombudsman, is in fact the uncon-

ventional owner of both the Guardian and the Observer. It gives the papers a unique freedom. This special structure has enabled the Guardian to make the present radical changes in an astonishingly quick time. The editor reiterated in briefings last week that there will be no loss of editorial quality.

The trust, since my appointment in 1997, has strongly supported the principle that underlies the role of readers' editor – that a newspaper such as the Guardian, which by definition calls on others to be accountable for what they do, should also be accountable for its own journalistic activities.

More than 10,000 of you write to me in the course of a year, producing more than 1,500 entries in the daily corrections and clarifications column. It is an effective form of self-regulation, reducing litigation and probably also complaints to the Press Complaints Commission. A great many readers have come to see it as a positive expression of their relationship with their paper.

This interaction should be enhanced by various new features in the Berliner. Access to the digital edition, normally available only on subscription, is free for the next two weeks so that readers worldwide can see what the new design looks like, page by page. The Guardian's network of websites, Guardian Unlimited, attracts 600,000 unique

users (separate individuals) every day.

From tomorrow there will be a new Response column which will run from Tuesdays to Fridays on the letters page of the paper – in the spot occupied today and on Mondays in future, by my column. The Response column will provide, primarily for those who actually figure in the news, an opportunity to reply to a report or review at greater length (about 500 words) than the letters page would normally allow – a chance to speak from a more conspicuous place in the forum.

A temporary innovation on the website will be an editors' blog, giving the editor, his section editors and others (including me) an opportunity to keep you in touch with the inner workings of the paper and the reasoning behind some of its decisions during the period of acclimatisation.

With this step into the future the paper is not forgetting its past and the values of which it is the custodian and which have made the Guardian what it is. The advent of the Berliner coincides

With this step into the future the paper is not forgetting its past and the values which have made it what it is

with an exhibition, Hidden History, in the Newsroom, the Guardian archive and visitor centre which faces the main newspaper building across Farringdon Road. The exhibition lays out a selection of the material relating to the histories of the Guardian, the Observer and Guardian Unlimited, gathered during the short time since the archive was opened in June 2002 (www.guardian.co.uk/newsroom gives a brief account).

One of the items on view is a note from an assistant editor, Michael McNay, dated July 12 1987, to David Hillman, the designer responsible for the radical design introduced in 1988, which survived up to Saturday. The question was, should the paper retain its familiar masthead – the title across the top of the front page? The note from McNay to Hillman says: "The editor [Peter Preston] tells me that if we are having a root-and-branch redesign, he's happy to see it go." Preston grasped the nettle then. Rusbridger has done so this time, bidding a final goodbye to Hillman's influential title combining Garamond italic and Helvetica. You could not do that. Today's change is a whole-hearted step into the future. To what extent it succeeds, you will judge. I shall be here in the middle.

Ian Mayes is the president of the Organisation of News Ombudsmen.
reader@guardian.co.uk

Obituaries

Nathan Joseph

Founder of pioneering folk and blues label Transatlantic, and theatre agent of note

Nathan Joseph, who has died at the age of 66, played an important role both in the development of the British record industry and in British theatre. He founded and ran Transatlantic Records, one of the first fully independent British record labels, which had an enormous influence on the development of the British folk and blues scenes, and later changed direction to become a theatrical producer and agent.

Nat, as the folk world knew him, worked with everyone – from musicians such as Bert Jansch and the Dubliners, to comedians such as Billy Connolly and the playwright Arnold Wesker, whom he also represented. Wesker described him as “an agent who was a father, brother and uncle figure rolled into one, which made him also a special quality of friend. More, he was a thorough negotiator.”

Joseph was born in Birmingham. His father was a businessman, working in the metal industry, who had just started his own business when he died at the age of 47. His son was just nine. Nat would later take over the firm, and transform it into a modern waste treatment plant, as a sideline to his main career. An only child, he was brought up by his mother, and educated at King Edward's grammar school. He won a scholarship to Queens' College, Cambridge, where he read English and was noted for his comic performances in collegerevues. The financial problems caused by his father's early death left him determined to succeed in business, and his colourful career started almost as soon as he left university.

After a year “teaching, and then bumming around the USA”, as he put it, he decided that “I had to earn some money, and returned to England determined to start a record company.” So in 1961, aged 21, he did just that. He was asked to act as agent for various US labels, but the deal depended on him selling enough of their records within just a few months. He did so, by “trudging around southern England carrying samples in paper bags”, and then set out to look for records that could be produced in Britain.

Once again, he succeeded, this time by recording a bestselling set of controversial sex therapy albums. He followed up by matching folk singer Isla Cameron with actor Tony Britton to record a song-and-poetry set, Songs of



Talent scout... Joseph in his London office in the 1960s, and some of the artists whose careers he helped – (from top right) Annie Ross, the Dubliners and Billy Connolly



Love, Lust and Loose Living, and went on to record poetry albums by Christopher Logue and Adrian Mitchell, jazz by Annie Ross and blues by that most influential of early British bluesmen Alexis Korner.

Much of the most inventive music of the early 1960s emerged through the British folk scene, and Joseph was an enormous enthusiast. He first signed the Ian Campbell Group and then the Dubliners, before moving on to make the Transatlantic label the home for many of Britain's greatest guitarists and songwriters, from Bert Jansch and John Renbourn to Ralph McTell. Renbourn said that with Transatlantic he was “virtually free to record whatever I wanted”.

My own first meeting with Joseph was at the Beaulieu folk festival in 1966,

when I was a student dabbling in singing and songwriting. As I came off stage, I found a delightful and enthusiastic man waving a publishing contract at me. I signed, of course.

Thankfully for Transatlantic, Joseph also had some genuine musical talent on his books. Jansch and Renbourn were successful solo artists who went on to form the much-praised Pentangle, while another of his signings, the Humblebums, consisted of that rock-star-to-be, Gerry Rafferty, along with Billy Connolly. Other Transatlantic acts included the Sallyangie (which involved a young Mike Oldfield), those great harmony singers the Young Tradition, and American bluesman Stefan Grossman.

In the 1960s and early 1970s, it was crucial for anyone writing about folk or

blues to drop into Joseph's London offices in Marylebone high street to find out what he was doing, though the conversation could soon swing to comedy, rock or the US music scene. Apart from his British acts, Joseph distributed a wide range of American labels, and had an adventurous catalogue that included world music celebrities from Ravi Shankar to the Chilean star Victor Jara.

In 1975, Joseph sold his controlling interest in Transatlantic to Granada, and two years later retired from the music industry. It seemed like the end of an era, but it was merely the start of a new career in his early love, the theatre.

As a producer, he presented plays in Britain and on Broadway, including Alec McCowan's Kipling in 1984, and Brian

Clark's The Petition, starring Sir John Mills and directed by Sir Peter Hall in 1986. His theatrical agency represented young designers and stage directors, and, in 1985, he became the sole representative of Arnold Wesker.

Joseph was that rarity, a shrewd, inventive businessman who cared for, and understood, a wide spectrum of the arts. He was also a keen sports fan and a life-long supporter of Birmingham City football club, and Warwickshire cricket team.

He leaves his wife of 40 years, Sarah, and their two sons, Joshua and Gideon. **Robin Denselow**

Nathan 'Nat' Joseph, record company founder, theatrical producer and agent, born July 13 1939; died August 30 2005

Birthdays

Bertie Ahern, Irish taoiseach, 54; **Maria Aitken**, actor and stage director, 60; **Nicholas Barter**, principal, Rada, 65; **Darren Campbell**, Olympic athlete, 32; **David Goodhart**, editor, Prospect magazine, 49; **Ray Gravell**, rugby footballer, 54; **Linda Gray**, actor, 64; **Wesley Hall**, cricketer, manager and Barbadian politician, 68; **Scott Hamilton**, saxophonist, 51; **Sir Ian Holm**, actor, 74; **Gerald Howarth**, Conservative MP, 58; **Freddie Jones**, actor, 78; **Donal Lenihan**, rugby football manager, 46; **Fiona Mactaggart**, Labour MP, prisons minister, 52; **Patrick Mower**, actor, 64; **Michael Ondaatje**, writer, 62; **Gerard Presencer**, jazz trumpeter, 33; **Molly Samuel**, former world karate champion, 44; **Han Suyin**, doctor and writer, 88; **Rachel Ward**, actor, 48; **Pam Warhurst**, deputy chairman, Countryside Agency, 55; **Prof George Zarnecki**, art historian, 90.

Letter

Christopher Hawtree writes: Harold Jackson's obituary of William Rehnquist (September 5) overlooks his wider fame/notoriety. In Myron (1974), Gore Vidal obeyed a supreme court guideline to avoid language that might inflame local sensibilities. Instead, he used the names of censorious judges for various parts of the body. As well as, for example, the powells, one finds a “rehnquist between the legs”. This certainly revitalised the language.

Hedy West

US folk singer, popular in Britain, whose performances had a political dimension

Described by the great English folk musician AL Lloyd as “far and away the best of American girl singers in the [folk] revival”, Hedy West, who has died at the age of 67, was the real deal. In the 1960s, the urban-based American folk revival had an idealised view of the singers and instrumentalists from poor, rural America, and sought to emulate them. This was West's background, but she was educated and intelligent and had little sympathy for the city copyists.

The foundation of her singing was the traditional ballads and songs of her childhood. These songs had their roots in the folk songs of Britain and Ireland – songs such as Little Matty Groves and The Wife of Usher's Well. In addition, she wrote her own songs, or adapted songs from her community, the best known of which are Cotton Mill Girls and 500 Miles, which was recorded by Peter, Paul and Mary, the Seekers, Bobby Bare and Sonny and Cher.

Born in Cartersville, Georgia, West

grew up on a farm in nearby Kenesaw. She was named Hedwig Grace, the former name from a German friend of her father, but it was quickly shortened to Hedy. It was a musical family: her great-uncle Gus played the fiddle, while her grandmother Lillie, a great influence on West's musical development, played the banjo. West had piano lessons from the age of four, and taught herself to play the five-string banjo, as her grandmother had done. In the late 1970s, she received funding from the American National Endowment for the Arts for a detailed project of the music and life of her grandmother.

Hedy's father Don West was a trade union organiser and a well known southern poet, and later she set some of his poems to music, including Anger in the Land, based on a story about the lynching of a black man, told to Don West by the victim's brother. The song was later sung by Pete Seeger.

Having won a prize for ballad singing when she was only 12, by her teens West was singing at folk festivals, both locally and in neighbouring states. In 1959, she moved to New York to study music at Mannes College and drama at Columbia University. She was also absorbed by the folk revival in the city, and invited by Pete Seeger to sing alongside him at a Carnegie Hall concert. Her talents were quickly recognised, and after singing on a compilation album, New Folks, for the Vanguard label, she soon made two solo records for the company.



West... backed ABC network boycott

She moved to the west coast and Los Angeles in the early 1960s, where she continued singing and later married. By this time, she was making regular visits to England. She then lived in London for seven years, making tours of the country's folk clubs, and appearing at the Cambridge festival and the first Keele folk festival. She recorded three albums for Lloyd at Topic – Old Times and Hard Times (1965), Pretty Saro (1966) and Ballads (1967) – together with another for Fontana, entitled Serves 'em Fine.

In the early 1970s, she lived in Germany, where, before returning to the US to study composition, she made a number of further recordings, including one with fellow American Bill Clifton, Getting Folk out of the Country (1974), and another entitled Love, Hell and Biscuits (1980). Her songwriting gave a political dimension to her performances, and she was active in the freedom movements of the 1960s and beyond. She strongly supported the boycott of the ABC network after it refused to include Pete Seeger in its programming.

Hedy's singing was heard less frequently in recent years, and she stopped altogether when cancer affected her voice. At the time of her death, she was living in Long Island. Her husband predeceased her. She is survived by her daughter.

Derek Schofield

Hedy West (Hedwig Grace), folk singer, born April 6 1938; died July 3 2005

Obituaries

Jacques Dufilho

Actor with a powerful presence on French stage and screen

With his shaven head, penetrating gaze, glowing look and sharp voice, the French character actor Jacques Dufilho, who has died aged 91, was a powerful presence on stage and screen for over half a century. Perhaps the nearest equivalent to him in England was Donald Pleasence, with whom he shared a talent for comic menace. Like Pleasence, too, Dufilho had one of his greatest stage triumphs in the role of the truculent, ignoble, pathetic tramp, Davies, in Harold Pinter's *The Caretaker*.

Dufilho, who played Davies in the Paris revival of the play in 1969, was also associated with such other contemporary playwrights as Jean Anouilh (*Colombe*, 1951), Jacques Audubert (*Le Mal Court*, 1955), Frederich Durrenmatt (*The Marriage of Mr Mississippi*, 1959, and *The Visit*, 1963) and Martin Walser (*Chêne et Lapins Angora*, 1968).

The last of these, in which he portrayed a Nazi general, co-starred and was directed by Georges Wilson, with whom Dufilho had a long working relationship. They later appeared successfully together in Charles Dyer's *Staircase*, Neil Simon's *The Sunshine Boys* and Herb Gardner's *I am not Rappaport*. But the very tall Wilson and the squat Dufilho could not have been more different.

The urbane, liberal-thinking, Parisian-born Wilson contrasted with Dufilho, who had a strong belief in conservative values: the monarchy, the Catholic church (he was a passionate supporter of the Latin mass) and the countryside (he always considered himself a man of the soil). "From my youngest age," he explained. "I was seeking order. That's what attracts me about the religious life, in which there is a miraculous meeting between a spiritual discipline and the control of the material life. It was while working on the land that I believed I found this truth."

Dufilho was born in Bègles, in the south-west of France, the son of strict Catholic parents, both pharmacists. He grew up with a love of nature and solitude. Yet this very singular man, after working on a farm, became an actor, a most gregarious profession. He saw no contradiction between the disciplines of theatre and religion, nor did his passion for horses prevent him from owning a couple of Bugattis.

At the age of 18, in 1932, he joined the Second Hussars, a cavalry regiment

based in Tarbes. Aged 24, he made his way to Paris on a motorbike – wearing riding britches – and went straight to Charles Dullin's Théâtre de l'Atelier, which had gained a reputation as the most advanced company in Paris. Dullin, who also loved horse riding, immediately took the young man into his troupe. Though mostly in small roles as servants, Dufilho was working beside the likes of Jean Marais, Madeleine Robinson and Alain Cuny.

In films from 1942, he played numerous domestics or civil servants in dozens of mediocre French and Italian farces. Slightly superior was the costume drama *Caroline Chérie* (1951) and its sequel, *Un Caprice de Caroline Chérie* (1953), both written by his friend Jean Anouilh, in which he played a sinister valet. Other roles included a bandit chief in Albert Lewin's exotic curiosity *Saadia* (1953), Marat in Jean Delannoy's *Marie Antoinette* (1956), and a bunch of eccentrics in films such as Louis Malle's *Zazie dans le Métro* (1960), Jean-Pierre Mockey's *Snobs* (1961), and Peter Ustinov's *Lady L* (1965).

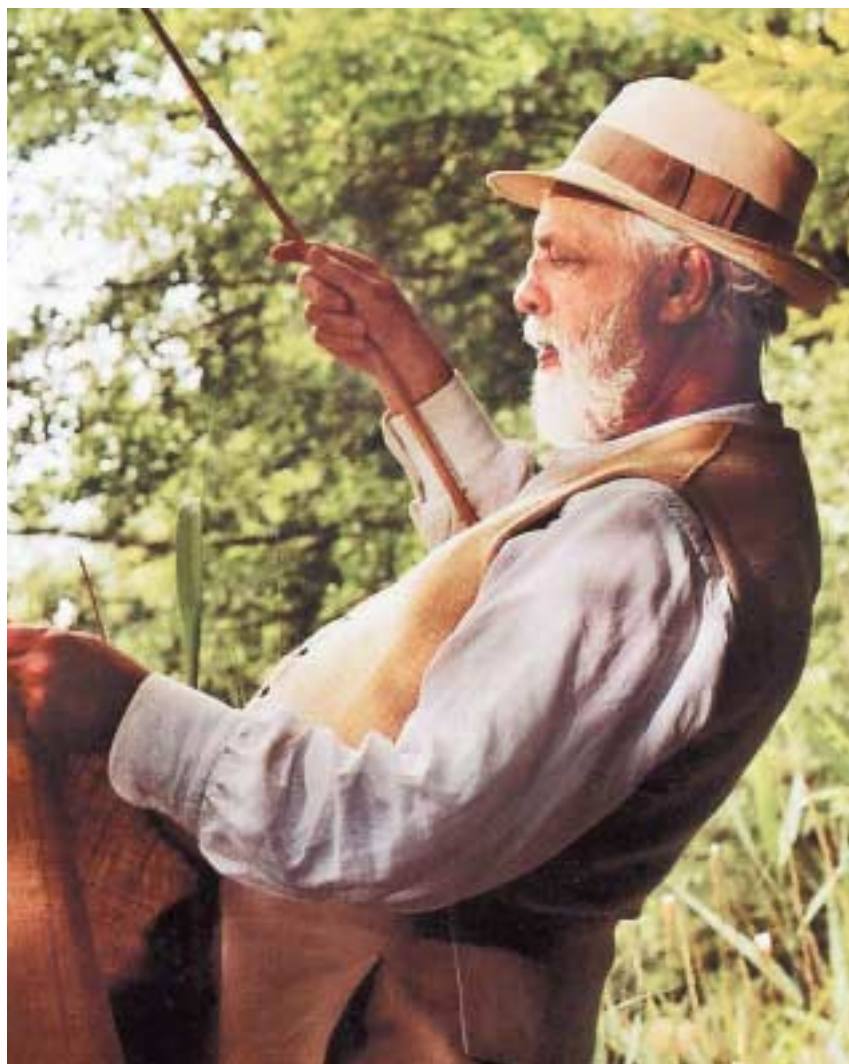
Dufilho began to get larger roles in the 1970s – among them a Breton patriarch in Claude Chabrol's *Le Cheval d'Orgueil* (1976), the chief engineer in Pierre Schoendoerffer's *Le Crabe-tambour* (1977) and a ship's captain in Werner Herzog's *Nosferatu* (1978) – but he had to wait until he was almost 80 before he was able to play a lead, the title role in *Pétain* (1993).

Because of his traditionalist views, there were some who felt that Dufilho's moving and nuanced performance came out of the actor's sympathy for the collaborationist general. However, Dufilho's part as the wise old man in rural France in 1918, in Jean Becker's enchanting *The Children of the Marshland* (1998), was even closer to his heart.

In the 1980s, he was able to buy a farm in the Gironde, the region where he had been born. There, he led the kind of monastic life that he had always longed for.

Ronald Bergan

Jacques Dufilho, actor, born February 19 1914; died August 28 2005



Dufilho . . . in his favourite role, as a wise old man in *The Children of the Marshland*

Majer Bogdanski

Keeping Yiddish and its culture alive in the diaspora

Majer Bogdanski, who has died aged 93, was imprisoned in a Stalinist labour camp, fought in Italy with the British army and became one of the last remaining links between modern Jewish culture in Britain and the vibrant Jewish socialist movement of prewar eastern Europe. Before the war, he was a leader of the Bund in Poland, the Jewish socialist organisation which, in contrast to the Zionist movement, saw the future of European Jewry in the diaspora, with Yiddish language and culture as its foundation.

Bundism was the central influence in Majer's life. He arrived in Britain in 1946. Much-loved in the Yiddish cultural scene, he influenced the life of everyone who met him. He had an extensive knowledge of religious and secular Jewish music, history and folklore, and Yiddish language and literature.

He was born in Pyotrów-Tyburnalski, Poland, the eldest of the five children of a cabinetmaker. His formal education ended at 13, when his mother died, a terrible blow for a family constantly on the edge of poverty – and especially for Majer, who adored her.

From then on, he cared for his younger siblings. He apprenticed himself to a tailor and attended night classes in Jewish and secular subjects. He also joined the Bund, which strove for cooperation with the Polish Socialist party and integration of Jews into Polish society, laying great emphasis on the education and personal development of working people.

At 21, he began army service and, to his own surprise, showed great ability. "A tailor boy," he recalled, "I was afraid to look at a horse, let alone ride it. A nearly four-ton gun, how did I come to it?" He was sent to military college, became a corporal and, in spite of the anti-semitism prevalent in Poland, was awarded a best student prize and became an instructor of other recruits.

In 1935, he married Esther Wolstajn, the daughter of a Bundist leader. They moved to Lodz. Mobilised with the outbreak of war in 1939, Majer was captured by the Red Army when Poland was carved up between Nazi Germany and Stalin's Soviet Union.

He was sent to a slave labour camp 1000km north of Archangel, but following the 1941 Nazi invasion of the Soviet Union, Polish prisoners were freed and Majer joined the British army in Italy. He never saw his father or his beloved

Esther again. On his return to Poland, he discovered that they had both perished in Auschwitz. It emerged later that, though severely tortured, Esther had not betrayed her fellow Bundists.

Majer settled in London's East End, worked as a tailor and developed his education. In 1954, he opened a workshop, where he worked on his own. At the age of 52, he began studying the violin and singing at the Stepney Institute. For 40 years, he entertained students of Yiddish and Jewish music from all over the world at courses and festivals in Oxford, London, Amsterdam, New York and elsewhere. He preserved many ancient Hassidic and cantorial melodies, and composed more than 400 of his own melodies to Yiddish poems, most of which he published in four anthologies, from 1993. The last appeared in 2003, and he wrote out all the music by hand.

His CD, *Yidishe Lider/Yiddish Songs*, was issued in 2000, as was *Budowitz*, a recording on which he sang traditional wedding songs. He also learned Sephardic melodies – a very different tradition from his own Ashkenazi background – and sang them in the 300-year-old Bevis Marks Synagogue in the City of London. He was a member of the London Friends of Yiddish for almost 60 years, and for many years its chair.

A lifelong socialist, Majer was an enthusiastic canvasser for the Labour party, and active in the Jewish Socialists' Group, founded in the 1970s and based on Bundist ideals. A school governor, he gave talks in schools and to younger socialists. When speaking about the Holocaust at the annual commemoration of the Warsaw ghetto uprising, and at other events, he always recalled the fate of the Gypsies and other victims.

Even in his 90s, Majer captivated audiences with performances of Yiddish prose, poetry and folksong, and his appetite for knowledge remained insatiable. As a regular at promenade concerts, he chose difficult new works, because "you have to get to know what is being written now".

He had a reading knowledge of about nine languages, five of which he spoke fluently, and his Tower Hamlets council flat was covered with books and papers on which he was working. Even when his physical strength was failing, his mind remained active and creative, and he continued to read and compose.

Majer never remarried and told me that not a day passed without his thinking of Esther. He accepted his impending death philosophically, joking that he was determined to greet the *malekhamoves*, the angel of death, with a smile.

Heather Valencia

Majer Bogdanski, tailor, musician and folklorist, born July 14 1912; died September 4 2005

Other lives

Arthur Booth

My father Arthur Booth, who has died aged 88, was a talented artist who painted hundreds of watercolours and many cartoons – in his younger years, he worked for *Punch* magazine. Yet most of his life was spent in the retail trade, in men's outfitters. His father Ezra, a master printer in Chesterfield, had rather scorned his son's choice of career. His last job was at Debenhams, in Stratford-on-Avon, where he was greatly loved by all the staff.

During the war, he had worked in the Naafi and travelled to Egypt, Singapore and Italy, where he met and befriended Gracie Fields' husband Boris. He went to stay with them both at their home on the island of Capri. Later, with his Irish wife, Annie Paul, Booth set up home in a tiny village in Warwickshire, which he loved. He cycled everywhere and continued doing so well into his 70s.

As his wife was a nurse, he became the original "new man", looking after three children, washing, ironing and cooking in the evenings and at weekends. He would take us for long walks and talk about the countryside, which was his greatest love. A wonderful father, grandfather and great-grandfather, he always had time for everyone – with drawing, board games and card games.

As he disliked telephones, Booth was a prodigious letter writer, sharing a weekly correspondence with me for

many years. He wrote wonderful illustrated letters to his granddaughters too. Reading biographical and travel books was another passion.

He was an ordinary yet extraordinary man.
Maureen Hills-Jones

Alice Thorner

Though born an American, my friend and collaborator Alice Thorner, who has died in Paris aged 87, had a passion for all things Indian, instilled in 1939, when she met Indian liberal-left students in England, where her husband, Daniel, was doing research in the India Office Library on the railway system in India. She and Daniel were part of a group that looked to India – which she first visited in 1945 – for a new kind of social transformation, neither capitalist nor communist.

She went back to India for a year in 1952; and that year – because of McCarthyism back home – stretched out until 1960, when they shifted to Paris. Those eight Bombay years were their most joyous together and her most cre-

Alice Thorner's passion for all things Indian led to the most joyous and creative years of her life, living in Bombay



ative. She researched Indian society, and, with her husband, published their masterpiece *Land and Labour in India* (1962).

After Daniel's death in 1974, Alice started a new life as a single woman, building a research agenda on urban processes in India and working with other women scholars on the gender question. Then, in 1990, she approached me to organise a conference on how communities constructed Bombay in the 19th and 20th centuries, and gave it a modern, secular identity. This conference was held between the two 1992-93 phases of violence which initiated a pogrom against Muslims in the city, and threw into question Bombay's secular character. Volumes from the conference, which we co-edited, reflected these concerns.

She remained a humanist committed to liberal ideas and critical thinking. She will remain a role model for many of us, a compassionate thinker who believed in social change.

Sujata Patel

Mick Arnold

Mick Arnold, who has died aged 73, could have been a character in a picaresque novel. Born in Poland, the only son of a portly newspaper editor and his glamorous socialite wife, he remembered from early childhood seeing his best friend shot dead as German tanks rolled into Lodz. After the sudden death of his father, his mother charmed them

The Mick Arnold I remember was a huggy-bear of a man intent on spending his oil fortune on plays directed by Wendy



a passage to Baghdad, where his uncle was the royal physician. There, he became the more or less only friend of the six-year-old King Faisal II, whom he knew as "Fizz".

When his mother remarried an Englishman, he went to school in Egypt, and then to Berkhamsted, in Hertfordshire. From there – despite his first languages being Polish and Arabic – he won a place to read English at Jesus College, Cambridge.

There, he met and married a fellow student Wendy Joyce, a budding theatre director, and they set off to start their life together on the £7-a-week pay of a cub reporter on the *Newcastle Journal*. When the first of their three children was born, Mick launched himself into a career in oil, which saw him travelling the world and using his familiarity with the Arab world. He ended up informally advising the US senate on the Middle Eastern political situation.

It was a very different Mick that I met in 1977, in the rambling Oxford house in which he and Wendy had settled. My Mick was a piano-playing huggy-bear of a man who seemed intent on spending his oil fortune on sending charabanc-loads of schoolchildren around Europe

in plays directed by the irrepressible Wendy.

The happiest part of my gap year was spent eating, working – and occasionally sleeping – in a down-at-heel old music hall in Portobello, Edinburgh, where we had resurrected one of Wendy's Cambridge revues as part of the festival fringe. Last autumn I received volume one of his autobiography, beautifully written and self-published by Wendy. He handed the manuscript of volume two to her on her birthday in June, three months after their golden wedding and two months before he died.

Claire Yandell

Obituaries pages traditionally describe/celebrate the lives of the great and good, the famous and infamous. There is another type of life that deserves noticing: people less in the public eye, or lives lived beyond formal recognition. Please send your contributions to: Other Lives, Obituaries, The Guardian, 119 Farringdon Road, London EC1R 3ER, or email to: other.lives@guardian.co.uk or fax to 020 7837 4530, with the writer's name, telephone number and email/fax details. Pictures should be posted or emailed to: pictures@guardian.co.uk, clearly marked with the person's name and for the attention of Other Lives. A selection of contributions will also be posted on our website at: guardian.co.uk/other lives

Reviews

Amid balloons and whistles, Daniel makes dashing debut

Last Night of the Proms

BBCSO and Chorus/Daniel
Royal Albert Hall, London

★★★★★

This year's Last Night of the Proms was a pageant of sea-faring Britishness, the climax of the nautical theme that has run throughout the whole season. Conductor Paul Daniel, making his debut in charge of the Last Night, and joining an elite group of British maestros to have led the Prommers in their

annual jingoistic jamboree, proved himself a versatile musician as well as a witty raconteur.

It's fitting that a Proms season that has shored up core traditions, but which has failed to entice audiences to new or challenging music, should end not with a world premiere but with a triumph of interactive technology. Before Henry Wood's Fantasia on British Sea-Songs, bugle calls once used in Britain's naval battles were relayed from the simultaneous Proms in the Park events around the country into the Albert Hall. Like the whole of the Last Night, it was a quaint attempt to connect an older, idealised

Britishness with the modern world. However, before the music disappeared in the traditional second-half orgy of balloon-popping and whistle-blowing, the Prommers were treated to some luxury casting in the evening's solo numbers. Paul Lewis, usually the most cerebral of pianists, was the flamboyant soloist in Constant Lambert's The Rio Grande. Lewis launched into the virtuosic piano part, and with mezzo-soprano soloist Karen Cargill, the piece sounded fresh, energetic and even moving, especially in Lambert's serene evocation of the Rio Grande's journey into the sea. Guitarist John Williams played

Rodrigo's Concierto de Aranjuez with aching tenderness, but it was counter-tenor Andreas Scholl who stole the show with his performances of three Handel arias. Accompanied by the BBC Symphony Orchestra, who managed a passable imitation of a period instrument group, Scholl's purity of tone created a startling musical intimacy, even in the party atmosphere of the Last Night. Still more ravishing was his singing of Down by the Salley Gardens, accompanied only by the gossamer threads of Williams's guitar.

Daniel carried off the rituals of Wood's Sea-Songs, Land of Hope and Glory and

Jerusalem with aplomb, even if this was more an exercise in crowd control than musical subtlety. He talked of the diversity of the Proms season and of music as a metaphor for cultures joining together. However, the Last Night presents the narrowest possible conception of British identity. With its football-crowd fellowship of flag-waving, the Last Night turns relics of Britain's imperial past into post-modern kitsch. It's all good fun, but the danger is that its increasingly foggish traditions have nothing to contribute to contemporary Britain, or to say about the realities of the world around us.

Tom Service



Paul Daniel proved a versatile musician as well as a witty raconteur at the Albert Hall Photograph: Dan Chung

Comedy

Vic Reeves Big Night Out
Too2Much, London

★★★★★

It was the must-see comedy gig of the year. To promote the DVD release of their Channel 4 series Big Night Out, Vic Reeves and Bob Mortimer were staging a one-off gig in a former Soho strip joint. Lured by the promised return of the Man with the Stick, Judge Nutmeg and

Vic crooning his chart-topper Dizzy, the comedy aristocracy were out in force: celebrity fans and sidekicks could be spotted both onstage (Paul Whitehouse, Matt Lucas) and off (Shooting Stars team captain Mark Lamarr).

Cheers greeted the revival of every character and catchphrase from the show's heyday. When Bob teases Vic about his desire to "bum" a heavy-weight boxer, Vic replies (cue hilarity): "You just wouldn't let it lie." And the audience can barely contain themselves when Reeves terrorises bespectacled lab assistant Les with some chives.

Of course, as another Shooting Stars colleague Will Self once pointed out, what makes the Vic and Bob material funny is that it isn't funny. Even in the early 1990s, the nonsensical postmodern vaudeville of Big Night Out was an acquired taste. To some, it reinvigorated the British variety tradition – albeit given an absurdist spin – and triggered a golden age in UK comedy. To others, it took the anarchic energy of alternative comedy and depoliticised it, paving the way for a decade of more or less silly, catchphrase-driven laughs.

Certainly, there are moments in tonight's brief show when the silliness is sublime. Witness Mortimer's alter ego Graham Lister in the Novelty Island paddock, forcing lard through a cardboard cut-out of Bryan Ferry's face. And when Vic describes Jordan rubbing her "boobs" to make a fire that will light Peter Andre's pipe, it becomes clear that the duo retain their flair for vivid word-pictures.

But the arbitrariness of it all can get wearing, the more so now that, 15 years on, Vic and Bob's pop-surrealism no longer has novelty in its favour. The silliness is often indistinguishable from puerility, as when Reeves uses a stick to simulate defecating ("it's not a shit, it's a stick") or Lucas dons a green jumpsuit and shouts "penis" a lot.

Rumour has it that reaction to this gig and to the DVD will decide whether Vic and Bob take Big Night Out on tour. I hope they do. It's a pleasure to watch them together onstage, enjoying themselves and making one another laugh. I'd be more inclined to join in, however, if they were to reinvent Big Night Out for 2005 rather than reanimate its 15-year-old corpse. First time round, the show was so unexpected it made your head spin. Tonight, it's less dizzy than cosy.

Brian Logan

Art

This Storm is What
We Call Progress
Arnolfini Gallery, Bristol
★★★★★

The exhibition's title – borrowed from Walter Benjamin's description of the angel of history as depicted in a Paul Klee painting – has a resonance far beyond the work selected for this lively group show. For this exhibition marks the re-opening of Arnolfini after a two-year closure for redevelopment. Although this is a rigorous selection of work with plenty of depth, the show has a justly celebratory air. There's

Vic Reeves, left, and Bob Mortimer at the Too2Much club

the exuberance of Jyll Bradley's panoramic arrangement of cut flowers curving across the ground floor, filling it with scent and colour, but also the confident inclusion of a Turner (Norham Castle, Sunrise, c1845), to give some historical perspective on the notion of progress. A room of Martin Boyce's work shows the artist recasting design classics into haunting fragments that seem to whisper of mortality, while Lee Mingwei's Letter-Writing Project is housed in two eerily tomb-like spaces in the main gallery. These subtle references to the human cost of progress murmur in much of the work.

Another highlight is Chen Chieu-jen's film, Factory: a reminder that what we think of progress now will soon slither into obsolescence. A silent film, it shows women toiling pointlessly in a Taiwanese factory abandoned as cheaper markets opened in other countries. What was once the future now looks tired and irrelevant. It's a sobering thought.

Elisabeth Mahoney

Until October 23. Details: 0117-917 2300.

Prom 73

Helsinki Philharmonic/Salonen
Royal Albert Hall, London
★★★★★

From the Wreckage is Mark-Anthony Turnage's new trumpet concerto, written for the Swedish virtuoso Hakan Hardenberger, who gave the UK premiere on Friday with the Helsinki Philharmonic under Esa-Pekka Salonen. The title refers not to a nautical disaster but to the fact that the work was begun "at a particularly dark time in Turnage's life". The concerto depicts a psychological journey from sorrow to calm via barely repressed anger and rage, its emotional trajectory delineated by the fact that Hardenberger opens the work playing a dark-sounding flugelhorn, which he changes first for a standard trumpet during the agitated central section, then for an ethereal-sounding piccolo trumpet in the closing pages. The outer sections are blues inflected, tender and appealing. In between come rhythmic and harmonic dislocation as the music seethes towards climaxes that collapse into exhaustion. Ticking, clock-like percussion goads Hardenberger on his way, measuring his progress. At the end, even after order has seemingly

been restored, the ticking resumes, hinting perhaps that Turnage's "dark time" is not quite over.

Salonen grouped this with three works written in the early years of the 20th century. The brass took a while to settle in the first movement of La mer, though thereafter every detail of Debussy's great seascape was perfectly and beautifully realised. The two suites from Ravel's Daphnis and Chloë glowed with a fiery sensuality. The third work was Luonnotar, Sibelius's weird depiction of Finnish creation myths. The soprano soloist, accurate if occasionally tentative, was Solveig Kringelborn. Salonen's conducting was little short of astonishing as the rustling orchestral sound created a sense of uncanny mysteries.

Tim Ashley

Pop

50 Cent
SECC, Glasgow
★★★★★

50 Cent is huge, in more than one sense: a muscle-bound, scarred and tattooed totem of machismo. When, inevitably, his shirt comes off, lingering images of his rippling torso are projected onto enormous screens. He's also a multi-million selling rapper and the nominal head of a nascent empire.

All his lieutenants in the self-styled "G-Unit family" are in Glasgow tonight, making a near-terminable series of appearances before and during his set. This kind of hip-hop is all about the franchise, but they're a dismal bunch, mostly without even the chutzpah to be made in their patron's bluff image. You wonder how Olivia, the only female presence, feels in a world where a woman is little more than a scantily clad rump to be shaken at a camera.

The sound is that staple of bad live hip-hop – thud and blether, punctuated with explosions and tasteful gunshots, not that 50 Cent, the Rasputin of rap – shot nine times and still standing – would be in any way perpetuating the idea that violence is glamorous.

When you can actually hear him above the barking of whoever else is onstage, 50 Cent's flow is less than impressive, little better than those much-maligned MCs who used to grace cheesy euro-dance hits. "Make some noise!" comes the repeated cry from the stage, as if the lumpen entourage were collectively some kind of defective ego in need of constant external reassurance. And the crowd, almost entirely white, a thousand unwitting Ali Gs straight outta the Gorbals, comply.

David Peschek

At Nottingham Arena on Tuesday (0870 121 0123) and touring.

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Weather & Crossword

Weather report

Around the UK and Ireland

	Sun hrs	Rain mm	Temp (°C)	Weather
Aberdeen	4.2	0.0	20	bright
Anglesey	1.9	0.0	17	bright
Aspatia	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Aviemore	3.1	0.3	17	bright
Belfast	8.0	0.0	18	7 sunny
Belmullet	0.7	-	17	13 fair
Birmingham	1.4	3.8	16	12 bright
Bognor Regis	1.4	0.0	20	16 cloudy
Bournemouth	0.2	0.0	19	15 cloudy
Bristol	0.0	8.9	16	14 cloudy
Buxton	0.0	1.8	14	11 dull
Cardiff	0.0	13.2	18	15 cloudy
Clacton	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Colwyn Bay	3.7	0.3	17	12 sunny
Cork	1.0	0.0	17	14 cloudy
Cromer	0.0	4.6	17	16 dull
Dublin	0.0	-	15	13 drizzle
Eastbourne	1.5	0.3	21	17 cloudy
Edinburgh	6.2	0.3	20	10 sunny
Esksdalemuir	9.0	0.3	20	9 sunny
Falmouth	1.4	0.0	18	14 bright
Fishguard	-	-	16	15 cloudy
Folkestone	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Glasgow	7.6	0.0	17	7 sunny
Guernsey	2.4	0.3	19	13 cloudy
Hastings	0.3	2.3	20	16 cloudy
Hayling Island	0.5	0.3	19	16 dull
Herne Bay	0.0	0.0	19	17 rain
Hunstanton	0.0	0.0	17	14 cloudy
Isle of Man	7.8	0.0	19	11 sunny
Isle of Wight	0.6	0.0	19	16 cloudy
Jersey	9.2	0.3	23	15 sunny

Met Office report for 24 hours to 6pm yesterday. Irish data (sunshine from previous day) supplied by PA WeatherCentre

High tides

Aberdeen	0754	3.5m	2033	3.4m
Avonmouth	0037	10.3m	1307	9.8m
Belfast	0524	3.0m	1754	2.9m
Dover	0457	5.5m	1737	5.4m
Galway	1152	3.9m	-	-
Greenock	0628	3.0m	1908	2.9m
Harwich	0551	3.2m	1818	3.3m
Holyhead	0428	4.5m	1717	4.5m
Hull	0003	6.0m	1240	5.8m
Leith	0908	4.5m	2141	4.4m
Liverpool	0501	7.5m	1751	7.3m
Liverpool Bridge	0743	5.8m	2013	5.8m
Penzance	1100	4.4m	2343	4.2m
Scrabster	0301	4.0m	1539	4.0m
Weymouth	0012	1.6m	1245	1.6m
Whitby	1024	4.5m	2306	4.4m

Around the world

City	Temp (°C)	Temp (°F)	Weather
Ajaccio	25	77	Sunny
Algiers	29	84	Sunny
Alicante	28	82	Sunny
Ams'dam	19	66	Fog
Athens	28	82	Sunny
Auckland	17	63	Fair
B Aires	12	54	Cloudy
Bangkok	31	88	Cloudy
Barcelona	27	81	Sunny
Basra	46	115	Sunny
Beijing	29	84	Fair
Belgrade	25	77	Fair
Berlin	18	64	Fog
Bermuda	28	82	Fair
Bordeaux	19	66	Cloudy
Boston	21	70	Sunny
Brussels	20	68	Fog
Budapest	23	73	Cloudy
Cairo	29	84	Sunny
Calcutta	30	86	Fair
Cape Town	23	73	Sunny
Chicago	32	90	Fair
Christ'rch	9	48	Fog
C'hagen	18	64	Cloudy
Corfu	28	82	Fair
C'blanca	24	75	Cloudy
Dakar	30	86	Fair
Dallas	33	91	Fair
Denver	28	82	Cloudy
Dhaka	35	95	Fair
Dublin	16	61	Fair
Faro	25	77	Sunny
Florence	25	77	Cloudy
Frankfurt	19	66	Rain
Funchal	23	73	Fair
Geneva	19	66	Sunny
Gibraltar	24	75	Sunny
Harare	25	77	Sunny
Helsinki	15	59	Sunny
H Kong	32	90	Fair
Innsbruck	21	70	Sunny
Istanbul	25	77	Sunny
Jerusalem	28	82	Fair
Jo'burg	26	79	Sunny
K'mandu	28	82	Sunny
Karachi	29	84	Thunder
K Lumpur	34	93	Fair
Kingston	32	90	Fair
Larnaca	30	86	Sunny
Lima	18	64	Fair
Lisbon	17	63	Drizzle
London	17	63	Cloudy
L Angeles	21	70	Cloudy
Lux'bourg	18	64	Cloudy
Madrid	21	70	Cloudy
Majorca	26	79	Fair
Malaga	27	81	Sunny
Malta	27	81	Sunny
Melb'rne	13	55	Cloudy
Mexico C	22	72	Fair
Miami	31	88	Cloudy
Milan	25	77	Thunder
Mombasa	28	82	Cloudy
Montreal	16	61	Sunny
Moscow	12	54	Showers
Mumbai	25	77	Rain
Munich	18	64	Cloudy
Nairobi	23	73	Cloudy
Naples	26	79	Fair
New Delhi	33	91	Fair
N Orleans	31	88	Sunny
New York	26	79	Sunny
Nice	24	75	Sunny
Oporto	20	68	Cloudy
Oslo	13	55	Sunny
Paris	21	70	Cloudy
Perth	20	68	Fair
Prague	23	73	Cloudy
Reykjavik	9	48	Sunny
Rhodes	27	81	Sunny
Rio de J	29	84	Sunny
Rome	26	79	Sunny
Shanghai	28	82	Cloudy
Singapore	33	91	Fair
St P'burg	15	59	Cloudy
Stock'h'm	15	59	Sunny
Strasb'g	17	63	Thunder
Sydney	22	72	Cloudy
Tel Aviv	30	86	Sunny
Tererife	29	84	Fair
Tokyo	30	86	Fair
Toronto	21	70	Cloudy
Tunis	31	88	Sunny
Vancouver'r	17	63	Sunny
Venice	25	77	Sunny
Vienna	20	68	Cloudy
Warsaw	26	79	Cloudy
Wash'ton	27	81	Fair
Well'ton	17	63	Fair
Zurich	18	64	Cloudy

Weathercall

10-day regional outlook forecasts - 0901 471 00 + area code	10-day regional forecasts by fax - 09065 2600 + area code
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Kent, Surrey & Sussex 02	Watts, Leics & Derbs 12
Dorset, Hampshire & IOW 03	Lincolnshire 13
Devon & Cornwall 04	Mid Wales 14
Wilt, Glos, Avon & Somerset 05	North Wales 15
Barks, Bucks & Oxon 06	North West of England 16
Bedfordshire, Herts & Essex 07	Yorkshire & York 17
Norfolk, Suffolk & Cambs 08	North East of England 18
South Wales 09	Cumbria, L'District & I of Man 19
Shrops, Hereford & Worcs 10	Dumfries & Galloway 20
Central Scotland & Strathclyde 21	File, Lothian & Borders 22
Tayside 23	Grampian & East Highlands 24
West Highlands & Islands 25	Caithness, Sutherland, Orkneys & Shetland 26
Northern Ireland 27	

Starwatch



This stunning new view is based on data gathered by Nasa's Spitzer Space Telescope and reveals our Milky Way galaxy as we have never seen it before. No longer can we regard the Milky Way as a "bog standard" spiral galaxy, a flattened formation of stars and dust whose spiral arms unwind from a circular central bulge. Instead, the Sun is but one of some 300bn stars that form a barred spiral; so called, because the arms spring from the ends of a straight bar-like structure that lies across its centre. In fact, barred spirals are not rare and may outnumber their more regular cousins by two to one.

Radio studies of the natural hiss of hydrogen had long ago mapped the local spiral arms and located the Solar System near the inner edge of the Orion Arm, about 28,000 light years from the Galactic Centre. At 217km per second, the Sun takes 220m years or so for each of its roughly circular orbits.

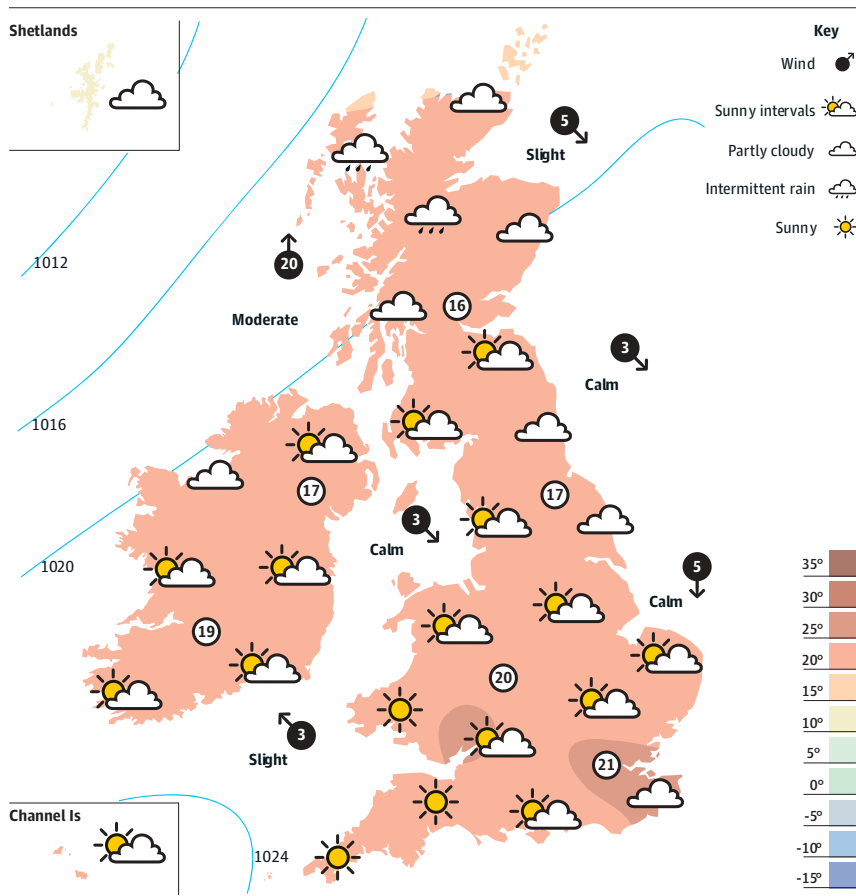
Representing waves of increased density, the arms look bluish because of the predominance of large short-lived hot blue stars. The stars in the bar, though, are more reddish and ancient, dating from closer to the Milky Way's formation 13bn years ago. They also trace much more eccentric orbits around what is thought to be a supermassive black hole at the centre. The alignment of these orbits through resonance effects may create and perpetuate the bar, which, in turn, may channel gas towards the core to feed the black hole or fuel the birth of new stars.

In the latest research, a team from the University of Wisconsin surveyed 30m stars at infrared wavelengths to cut through the obscuring effect of interstellar dust. They find the Milky Way's bar to be about 27,000 light years long and inclined at 45° to our line of sight to the centre.

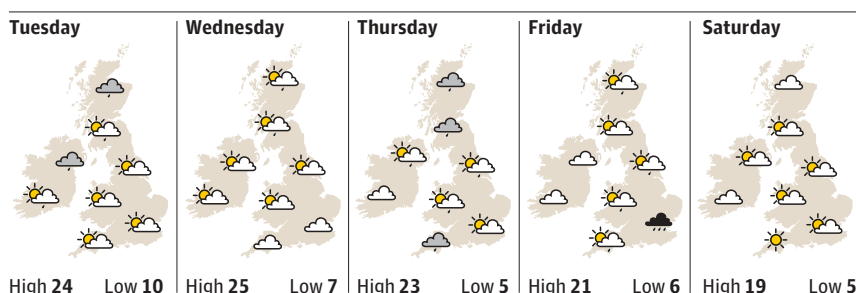
Alan Pickup

Weather forecast

UK and Ireland Noon



UK and Ireland Five day forecast



Weatherwatch

At this time of year everyone hopes for an Indian summer, or what an inspired tabloid subeditor once called "The last of the Phew". These are the warm sunny days that unexpectedly prolong the summer, or revive it when pessimists expect a wet autumn to slide into winter.

But where does the Indian bit come from - America or Asia? Most dictionaries, in a US-dominated world, favour the American explanation. The Indian summer often occurs after the first frosts in America when an anti-cyclone pushes up

from the south producing warm settled days and cold nights. Native Americans, described the phenomenon to the first European settlers and attributed it to the good graces of the God of the South West. Allegedly it was first called the "Indians' summer" and then shortened.

Added weight is given to this explanation by suggestions that the tribal habit of burning off the prairie in these warm autumn days added a haziness to the light which gave it an "Indian" feel. Henry Wadsworth Longfellow used the

Summary

London, SE England, Cent S England, E & W Midlands Mist and fog will clear to leave sunny spells. Light north winds. Max temp 20-23C (68-73F). Tonight, fair. Min temp 10-13C (50-55F).

SW England, Channel Is, S Wales Dry with any mist clearing to leave sunshine. Light north winds. Max temp 20-23C (68-73F). Tonight, dry. Min temp 10-13C (50-55F).

E Anglia, Linc, Yorks, NE England Mist patches will clear to leave sunny interludes. Warm inland. Light north winds. Max temp 19-22C (66-72F). Tonight, clear spells. Min temp 10-12C (50-54F).

NW England, N Wales Sunny spells. Light and variable winds. Max temp 19-22C (66-72F). Tonight, clear spells. Min temp 10-13C (50-55F).

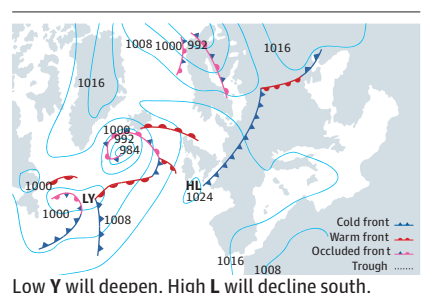
NE & NW Scotland, W & N Isles Patchy rain will spread from west to east. Mainly light south-west winds. Max temp 16-19C (61-66F). Tonight, rain. Min temp 12-14C (54-57F).

SE & SW Scotland Some brightness, mainly in the east. Light winds. Max temp 17-20C (63-68F). Tonight, cloudy. Min temp 10-13C (50-55F).

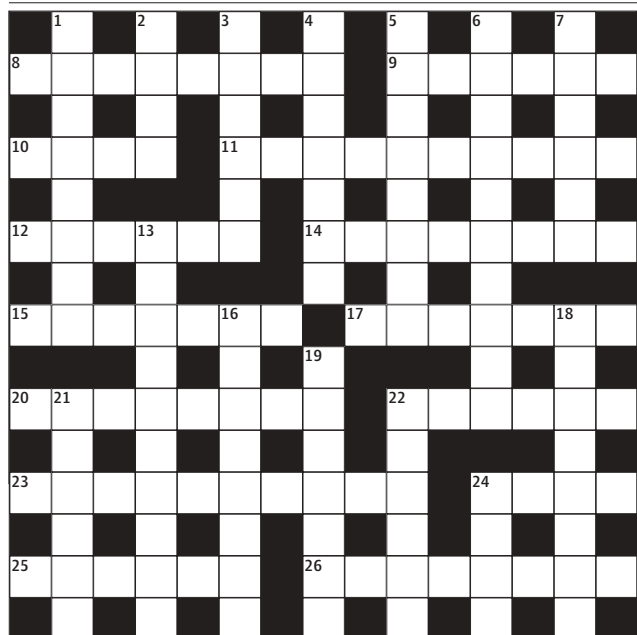
Northern Ireland, NW Ireland Dry with bright spells, mainly in the east. Cloudy in western parts later. Light south winds. Max temp 18-20C (64-68F). Tonight, rain. Min temp 13-14C (55-57F).

SE Ireland, SW Ireland Dry with bright spells once mist patches clear. Light winds, moderate in the west later. Max temp 18-21C (64-70F). Tonight, cloudy. Min temp 12-15C (54-59F).

Atlantic front Noon today



Cryptic crossword



No 23,557 set by Rufus

Across

- 8 Business award in force (8)
- 9 Miracle drug for backside in trouble (6)
- 10 Where they teach only ten letters of the alphabet? (4)
- 11 Revealing form of entertainment (10)
- 12 Female at unusually close quarters to the crew (6)
- 14 These days an alternative to fostering (8)
- 15 Went around in female dress? (7)
- 17 Mistake made by a baker (7)
- 20 Supporter seen here and there, on the move (8)
- 22 Provide two servings of dry wine in a jiffy (6)
- 23 Identical, nevertheless (3,3,4)
- 24 Second son of Noah was a poney (4)
- 25 Agreeable question (3,3)
- 26 Fair and square, initially, in accommodation (8)

Down

- 1 It's for grappling with a curse in volume (8)
- 2 Possibly mean to have the last word (4)
- 3 Off course, he was shipwrecked (6)
- 4 Panda giving a turn in cabaret (7)
- 5 Get neither hot nor bothered (4,4)

- 6 Dissolute client upset over debts (10)
- 7 Providing back-up when company is a failure (6)
- 13 Mineral water enjoyed by Londoners in the park (10)
- 16 The basics of meteorology (8)
- 18 Shouts out various numbers in course of tests (8)
- 19 A whip-round held by the junior diplomat (7)
- 21 Park in Indian city - or Greek city (6)
- 22 One big transport aircraft (6)
- 24 Corporation band (4)

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Winners of prize puzzle 23,550
This week's winners of a Collins English Dictionary Desktop Edition are: Philip Clive of London; Violet Corin of Connor Downs, Hayle; Audrey and Harold Hartley of Aigle, VD, Switzerland and Mike James of Sheffield, S Yorkshire.
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N	N	N	L	L	D								
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