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Campaign for an **E**nglish **P**arliament
The Voice of England

Think of England

Number 83 : September 2018



**Championing England
& Challenging Prejudice**

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Campaign for an English Parliament Aims, Principles and Policies.

We campaign for an English Parliament, meaning a parliament for the people of England, for whom England is their chosen or inherited home and who are legally entitled to vote.

We campaign for an English Parliament with powers at least as great as those of Scotland's, i.e. a Parliament and Executive (Government) that can make Acts (primary legislation) on the same domestic issues (e.g. health, welfare & education) that are devolved to the Scottish Parliament.

The CEP works with academics, business groups, trades unions, think tanks and the media to create the conditions whereby UK MPs see that there is no alternative to the re-establishment of the English Parliament.

The CEP is a pressure group. It is not a political party. It does not contest elections.

The CEP is not and will not be affiliated to or formally linked with any political party

Editorial: This month there are two events. Please do your part by attending them and also writing to your MP and the media. It is the only way to make our voices heard. We must keep chipping away at the indifferent and prejudiced edifice the British elite have erected.



The whole of the British elite seem to be deaf and blind to the blight they inflict on England. The Archbishop ludicrously invites us to ameliorate the plight of England as having one of the lowest levels of financial capability in the developed world rather than noticing the discrepancies in funding. In every domestic issue our infrastructures are breaking down.

Rural life is facing increased crime through lack of sufficient police resources, mothers face uncertainty over the quality their care, to say nothing of the old and vulnerable who seem to be increasingly abandoned by the British State. We are faced with discriminatory laws making parking at work a burden on our finances either directly or indirectly through increased prices. For many the only way of getting to work is by car. Our expanding population means that cash strapped local authorities need to increase school places and build on ancestral land that is sacred to our memory and our prisons are in uproar through lack of resources. Meanwhile we are subsidising Scotland so that they can offer their people many free services that we in England have to pay for.

The British Government Committees reports give little confidence that anything will change for the better any time soon.

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Campaigning for England :

Letters To the Editor - The Times

Dear Sir, Northern Ireland is reported to be "the nation that has had the longest period without its own elected government". Surely a stronger contender for this dubious accolade would be England?

The English have had to sit by and watch the devolution of powers from the United Kingdom to newly-created Scottish, Welsh and Northern Irish parliamentary assemblies and executive governments over the last 20 years, but there has been no equivalent opportunity for England to gain her own national parliament or government. We are still without these essential attributes of nationhood. It is time to end this constitutional injustice.

Yours faithfully, Andy Smith (CEP Member)



There is a political ideas event on in Cambridge on the **8th September** and our Campaign Director, Eddie Bone, has been trying to contact the organisers to see if they are discussing the need for an English Parliament. Even if they don't we think it would be a good event for members to attend.

“ The Big Tent Ideas Festival is a new way of doing serious political debate: bringing together the popular literary festival format with the big challenges of contemporary politics.

We believe that in a rapidly polarising political climate, bringing politically interested people from various walks of life together matters more than ever before.

Held in the stunning surroundings of Babraham Hall Research Campus - Cambridge, over 1500 people with an interest in political reform from across Britain will attend this year's Festival to listen to leading speakers from across the world.

The Big Tent is a movement for reform, opportunity, empowerment, responsibility and a renewed sense of active citizenship. Insist on a better politics under a Big Tent where everyone is welcome.

book a slot at Speakers Corner and have YOUR say!”

THE FESTIVAL SITE: The site opens at 10am with coffee and breakfast stalls open at 10.15

Festival Welcome at 10.45

First Sessions In each Tent at 11am

Live Performances at 7pm

Formal close of the Festival Programme 8pm

Stay and enjoy a chill out evening of Festival food and drink till gates close at 10pm.

FOR ANY QUESTIONS: please email georgie@bigtent.org.uk.

14 September: Reframing the Union: Conference Programme

by Forum on Geopolitics at POLIS, University of Cambridge

Together with **These Islands**, the **Forum on Geopolitics** is pleased to present a one-day conference examining the state of the Union between Great Britain and Northern Ireland in the post-Brexit landscape. You may book free tickets at <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/reframing-the-union-conference-programme-tickets-49692582853>

Conference Programme: Over the past few years, Brexit and the possibility of Scottish independence have left the United Kingdom and the European Union in flux. History shows that we have been here before, albeit in different ways and different contexts. The purpose of this mini-conference organised by the University of Cambridge Forum on Geopolitics and These Islands is to take a fresh look at what the past might tell us about the present, in order to inform the interlinked debates about the future of the nations within the United Kingdom and of the UK and the European Union.

The panels will look at the local, national and international factors driving the creation of the UK; the implementation of the Union; and its costs and benefits over the past three hundred years.

The Four Nations and One Union panel will give four graduate students or postdocs seven minutes each to present their work on the Union.

Each panel will have a chair and three or four speakers for 15 minutes each. The main part of the conference will end with a ten minute summary by the rapporteur, followed by a brief discussion. The keynote lecture will be delivered by Sir Malcolm Rifkind.

We hope that the event will result in a report to inform public debate, and also lay the groundwork for a 'UK roadshow' which would take discussion of how the United Kingdom developed historically to schools

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across the country.

Welcome, 9am

I. Unionism Before the Union, 9:30–11am

Why did the people of these islands want union? What were the different 'models' discussed. What were the arguments against? What was the balance of internal, three kingdom and geopolitical factors? What was the process of concluding union?

II. Implementing the Union, 11.30am–1pm

How was the Union 'bedded down' in the first three decades or so after its achievement. Were there attempts to reverse it? Why did these fail?

Lunch, 1–2pm

III. Auditing Union, 2–3:30pm

What were the political, economic and strategic benefits that England and Wales, Scotland and Ireland gained from the Union, and what were the costs?

Coffee, 3:30pm–4pm

IV. Four Nations and one Union, 4–5pm

Short (7-minute) presentations by young historians, followed by questions and a discussion chaired by Naomi Lloyd-Jones.

V. Rapporteur and overall discussion, 5–5:30pm

Daniel Robinson (University of Oxford)

VI. Keynote, 6–7pm

Sir Malcolm Rifkind

VII. Reception 7–7.45 pm



English Affairs and English Politics are issues that should be decided only by an English Parliament

Current English Affairs: Our collapsing Infrastructures

24/8/18 To all Churchwardens from the Archbishop of Canterbury!,

Did you know that half the population of this country are financially vulnerable? Are you aware that England has one of the lowest levels of financial capability in the developed world?

I would suggest that the Archbishop would be better asking the British Government why it funds every person in the rest of the UK more than each one us. ED.

<https://www.theguardian.com/society/2018/aug/31/deaths-feared-shrewsbury-telford-nhs-trust-maternity-unit-investigation>

Inquiry into deaths at NHS maternity unit widened

The Guardian, 31/8/18: Denis Campbell Health policy editor

Reports of poor care come as Shrewsbury and Telford trust is already being investigated.

An inquiry into the deaths of babies and mothers at an NHS maternity unit, allegedly as a result of poor care, is being widened to look into other cases of patients apparently suffering serious harm.

NHS Improvement said the investigation, by midwife Donna Ockenden, will look into more than the 23 cases originally planned after claims that about 40 other incidents merited investigation.

The Health Service Journal website on Thursday claimed that at least 60 cases of infant and maternal

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deaths and babies suffering brain damage had been identified. Its report included suggestions that the scandal at the West Midlands trust may prove bigger than that at the Morecambe Bay trust in Cumbria, where one mother and 11 babies died avoidable deaths.



Maternity care at the trust in recent years has been the subject of no fewer than six separate inquiries, including one by the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists. Three separate reviews are continuing into the death of a mother and two babies there last December.

A spokesperson for the health service regulator NHS Improvement, which oversees patient safety and is in overall charge of the Ockenden inquiry, said: "We have agreed to consider additional historical investigations that have been highlighted since our independent review, led by Donna Ockenden, was announced in April 2017, where women, infants and newborn babies had died or suffered harm in the maternity services provided by Shrewsbury and Telford Hospital NHS Trust. "This includes the cases that the trust had considered as part of its legacy review, as well as the finding of the review it commissioned the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists to undertake." It admitted that patients had come to harm as a result of "failings" in maternity and neonatal care at the trust, which first emerged in 2016.

The Shrewsbury and Telford trust disputes HSJ's contention that "at least 60 separate cases including baby deaths, brain injuries, and at least four deaths of mothers, have now been identified at the trust". While it agrees that 40 cases between 1998 and 2017 were looked at by its "legacy review" it insists the total number of them from which lessons can be learned, beyond Ockenden's 23, is 12, not 40.

In a statement on Friday, the trust said: "Of these 40, there were no signs of failure of care in 23 reviews and five families were not identifiable from the information available. Its reference to "further learning" suggests that mistakes were made, but it is unclear what harm, if any, resulted. Simon Wright, the trust's chief executive, added: "The death of any baby is a terrible ordeal for any family. We take our responsibilities in reviewing these cases very seriously. To suggest that there are more cases which have not been revealed when this is simply untrue is irresponsible and scaremongering. This will cause unnecessary anxiety amongst women going through one of the most important times of their life and I would like to assure them that our maternity services are a safe environment with dedicated caring staff."

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### **Tories are leaving rural voters prey to criminals**

Daily Telegraph, 18/8/18: Opinion SIMON HEFFER

Thugs are targeting the police-free countryside. We need bobbies back on the beat to stop them.

Last weekend, in a village not far from ours in north Essex, an elderly couple were watching television just after dark when four men broke in. One threatened the 87 and 82 year-old with a screwdriver. They locked them in their bathroom while rifling the house for loot. Neither, victim was hurt, though the police described them as, unsurprisingly, in shock. No arrests have been made, though Essex police say burglaries in their area have decreased by 4 per cent in the last year, against a national rise of 6 per cent.

Once, such a story would have horrified people; the idea of thugs entering an occupied house and ransacking it while restraining its vulnerable inhabitants should, indeed, be truly shocking. Now, in rural areas, random acts of serious crime feel almost commonplace. And no wonder: criminals know that the English countryside of a weekend is a police-free zone. In some parts of England it might - if a victim is lucky - take 40 minutes for the law to turn up.

It is true that there is more crime in urban areas than in rural ones, but the incidence of countryside crime is spiralling upwards. A survey last spring by the National Rural Crime Network showed 48 per cent of farmers and other rural businesses believe crime has a moderate or great impact on their lives; so do 30 per cent of rural residents. What the police must focus on, and prepare to handle, is that whereas most rural crimes used to be fly-tipping or speeding down lanes, now the emphasis is on property crime. This is a political problem, and one a Tory Government shamefully, and absurdly, avoids. I don't doubt Theresa May was right, when home secretary, to argue that police forces spent money unwisely. However, to cut policing when crime is rising is insane and crime rises the more policing is cut. Among core Tory voters in rural areas crime is a massive concern. It is not just burglary; rural towns are targeted by drug dealers, whose collateral damage includes more burglary, robbery and violence. Stories of dealers stabbing other dealers are often heard, and cars congregate in country lanes dealing drugs out of the gaze of CCTV. If the Government continues to pretend rural areas are all prosperous, happy low-crime places, it will be a terrible dereliction.

There needs to be more police in rural areas, and they need to be more visible. Our village had a police

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station and a visible bobby when we moved to it 25 years ago: the station was closed within months, and the village population has trebled since then.

Huge numbers of crimes go unreported because most victims feel there is no prospect of the police solving them. But there also has to be direction from above: and this is where Sajid Javid, the Home Secretary, comes in. He must undo, what Mrs May failed to and ensure police resources are properly used. The rural public wants a visible police presence to secure their properties and themselves instead.

It may well mean Mr Javid must tell the Prime Minister that some of her decisions at the Home Office were wrong - no surprise there - and that more must be spent on police officers. Otherwise, the Government will fail in its duty to protect the public and - if we want to get political about this violate the trust of its own core constituency. We don't want to live in a countryside where the elderly can't watch television on a Saturday night without fear of being held hostage and burgled. So what is Mr Javid and his rudderless, poorly-led, poorly-funded and badly-prioritised police force going to do about it?

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Letters to the Times, 10/8/18: **People power**

Sir, If the government wants to restore faith in local politics it does not need to go to the expense of setting up assemblies (report, Aug 9). Instead it could give back the powers that it has taken away from local councils. Too often councillors are told: "Under government planning guidance you have no reasons to refuse this application. If you do it will be lost on appeal and costs will be given against the council." In reality this "guidance" is central interference

backed up by the threat of massive costs awarded against a council. The result is that more and more planning applications are a tick-box exercise delegated to council officers.

Those are the rules that need changing, otherwise residents will become even more frustrated after they put in vast amounts of time only to be told that their view is against government guidance.

DAVID SIMPSON, Hampshire county councillor.

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21/8/18, Daily Mail Comment: **Powder-keg prisons are ready to explode**

WE knew the state of Britain's prisons was bad - but not this bad.

Following yesterday's revelations that Birmingham jail was effectively being run by the inmates - with prison officers locking themselves in their offices for safety - we now discover that up to 20 more jails are teetering on the brink of anarchy.

The Ministry of Justice stands accused of 'being asleep at the wheel', while prisons minister Rory Stewart admits that one in six jails is 'struggling' with essentially the same problems as Birmingham. And those problems could hardly be worse.

Another damning report released yesterday, on the reasons behind the 2016 Birmingham jail riot, told a chilling story. 'There was no law, no order', said one inmate, adding that 'every day was a party'.

Drug-taking, violence and self-harm were rife and the squalor in which prisoners were forced to live was truly shaming. Apart from Birmingham, all the other jails on the danger list are run by the Prison Service.

The truth is that the roots of this grotesque shambles have nothing to do with the public/private debate. They run much deeper than that.

Outdated, neglected buildings, overcrowded, insanitary cell conditions, too few prison officers, too little control - and of course, the rampant scourge of drugs and the violence that goes with them.

All these factors have contributed to turning our jails into powder kegs. If we keep ignoring them, they will surely explode.



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ONLY IN ENGLAND!

Councils to tax companies £400 for every parking space

The Times, 8/8/18: Charlie Parker

Councils have been criticised for plans to introduce a £400 parking space tax that could end up hitting those driving to work.

Bristol and Reading are the latest local authorities to consider a workplace parking levy that charges companies that offer employees parking spaces in an attempt to reduce congestion. Reading borough council officials cited a similar scheme in Nottingham, where the city council bills employers with more than ten parking spaces £402 a year per place, as an example of what could be imposed.

Nottingham was the first council to introduce the scheme, in 2012. It has raised £9 million - a year, ac-

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According to the AA, but the tax has only had a "small impact on congestion" The AA added that 40 per cent of employers passed the charge on to employees.

Tony Page, lead councillor for transport in Reading, said that cash generated by the scheme could fund road improvements or a third Thames bridge. He said that "improving air quality, reducing congestion and encouraging more people to switch to sustainable transport" were the main aims.

Bristol city council said that its own workplace parking tax could either be absorbed by the companies or passed on to staff who drive and park at the office. A draft strategy claims that the levy could reduce private car travel in the city by 2 per cent: The document states: "Employers may choose to pass this charge onto their staff, which can encourage staff to consider alternative ways of travelling to work if they have to pay to park."

An original plan to make companies pay £1 a day for every space was scrapped in 2012. Officials said at the time that they would instead consider using higher business rates to generate income.

Jack Cousens, the AA's head of policy, told The Sun: "This is a tax on workers and it's reducing the spending that goes on city centre shops and restaurants that keep centres open and thriving." - Rob Halfon, a former Tory minister, said: "Yet again motorists are being battered by stealth taxes. Not only will this cause hardship to staff but it will hit businesses hugely. It's a war on motorists and it has to stop." Reading council insisted that the plan for a levy was in its "early stages" and other proposals could include congestion charges on city roads.

(See: STATUTORY INSTRUMENTS: 2017 No. 1141: ROAD TRAFFIC, ENGLAND

The Road User Charging and Workplace Parking Levy (Classes of Motor Vehicles) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2017. Ed.)

Scotland 'subsidised by UK' as gulf in spending widens

23/8/18, The Times: Hamish Macdonell, Scottish Political Editor

Nicola Sturgeon denied that Scotland was being subsidised by Westminster after figures showed that public spending north of the border is more than £1,500 per person higher than the figure for the whole of the UK.

Scotland's notional fiscal deficit - the gap between what it raises and what it spends was £13.4 billion in the 2017-18 financial year, down £1 billion compared with the previous year. However, this represents 7.9 per cent of GDP, compared with the 1.9 per cent recorded for the UK as a whole and more than double the limit allowed by the European Union for independent member states.

The spending gap is most pronounced in the amount of money spent on public services. In Scotland this was £13,530 per person in 2017-18, compared with £11,954 for the UK, a difference of £1,576.

Ms Sturgeon said that the spending gap could be explained by factors, particular to Scotland "There are very good reasons why public spending per head in Scotland is higher than it is in the UK, not least the rurality of our population," she said. However, critics believe that universal benefits that are available in Scotland but not south of the border play a more significant role.

Scottish students do not pay tuition fees at Scottish universities, saving up to £9,000 per year, most of which falls on the taxpayer. The budget for higher-education student support in Scotland for this year is almost £1 billion. Other universal benefits not available in England that increase public spending in Scotland include free care for the elderly.

However, Ms Sturgeon rejected the argument that Scotland was being subsidised. "If we look at the situation in Scotland within the UK over a longer period of time, this notion that Scotland is somehow subsidised, I think, simply does not stand up to scrutiny," she said. She added that substantial oil revenues in previous years meant that Scotland had instead been subsidising the rest of the UK.

According to the latest figures, the gap between public spending north and south of the border had been rising for the past four years. In the 2014-15 financial year it was £1,226 per person and had risen to £1,316 the next year, then to £1,448 in 2016-17.



Too few secondary places for pupils in five years

Times, 31/8/18: Rosemary Bennett Education Editor

Tens of thousands of children are at risk of missing out on a secondary school place in five years' time, local authorities chiefs have warned.

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They say that by 2023 more than half of councils in England will be struggling to keep up with demand as a glut of children in primary school works its way through the system.

The birthrate rose sharply in the early 2000s and the Local Government Association (LGA) said its analysis showed that 71 English councils (52 per cent) may not be able to meet the need for 133,926 new secondary school places. It also said that unless more secondary school places were created, 13 authorities were looking at a shortfall in 2019-20, rising to 25 councils in 2020-21 and 54 in 2022-23. Local authorities created an extra 600,000 primary school places to cope with the population boom.

The situation is not as straightforward in secondary schools, two thirds of which are academies or free schools beyond the reach of local authorities. That makes it difficult for councils to fulfil their obligation to provide enough places. The LGA is calling on the government to give councils the power to allow them to direct academies and free schools to expand, and to open new council-run schools where required.

Anntoinette Bramble, chairwoman of the LGA's children and young people board, said that families should not face uncertainty over school places. She said: "Councils need to be given the powers to help solve this crisis. As a starting point they should be allowed to open new maintained schools and direct academies to expand." "It makes no sense for councils to be given the responsibility to plan for school places but then to not be allowed to open schools themselves."

Paul Whiteman, general secretary of the National Association of Head Teachers, said the lack of school places was an issue "which isn't going away". "Local authorities are responsible for ensuring there are sufficient school places but the powers and resources necessary to do so have been removed. They are unable to require academies to expand, for example" he said. "In an increasingly fragmented school system we lack a co-ordinated approach to place planning. Instead it's haphazard; decisions are being made in isolation and new schools and new school places are not always being commissioned in the areas where they most needed."



Nick Gibb, the schools minister, said "This government has driven the largest

creation in school places in two generations and by 2020 there will be one million more new places across the school system than there were in 2010. "We are spending £23 billion by 2021 to ensure that every child has access to a good school place and, since 2010 43,000 fewer pupils are being taught in overcrowded schools." He added: "Our latest admissions data shows that 93.8 per cent of children received offers from one their top three choices of secondary school last year."

English politics:

01 August 2018: MPs launch inquiry into poor state of local roads

The Commons Transport Committee launches a new inquiry into the funding and governance of local roads in **England**. Local roads comprise over 97% of total road network length and carry two-thirds of motor traffic and almost all cyclist movements.

Concerns for driver and cyclist safety: Road condition and maintenance has been a matter of public concern for several years, with potholes plaguing the country. In a recent AA-Populus Driver Poll of more than 17,000 drivers, only 15% said that local roads are maintained to a high standard.

According to Cycling UK, potholes have been a contributory factor in 22 deaths and 368 serious injuries to cyclists since 2007.

Road re-surfacing frequency sees significant drop: Many local authorities struggle to find the funding to repair roads often enough and to the required standards. According to the latest Asphalt Industry Association (AIA) ALARM survey, English councils have seen a marked decrease in the frequency of road re-surfacing. On average, for all classes of road, this has dropped from once every 55 years to once every 92 years.

The Committee calls for written evidence on: The condition of local roads in England and how they have fared over time, particularly compared with other parts of England's road network;

The direct and wider economic and social costs of not maintaining local roads;

The quality of monitoring and reporting of local road conditions;

Whether the current approach to maintenance of local roads is appropriate and whether it needs to be improved;

The suitability of governance structures for maintaining local roads and whether any changes are required;

The funding requirements of local roads and the suitability of current funding streams for the immediate and longer-term future;

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Whether there is a role for alternative funding models for local roads maintenance and investment; and the regional distribution of local roads funding across England.

Send a written submission to the inquiry on local roads funding and governance. The deadline for written submissions is Tuesday 2 October 2018.

Chair's Comment: Chair of the Transport Committee, Lilian Greenwood MP, said:

"Local roads are the arteries of prosperous and vibrant towns and cities. They are critical to the movement of goods as well as our own journeys. However, many people will not have to travel further than their local shops to see an extreme state of disrepair.

This plague of potholes represents a major headache for all of us. The consequences of a deteriorating local road network are significant – undermining local economic performance and resulting in direct costs to motorists, through damage to road vehicles. The safety of other road users, particularly cyclists, is compromised.

Our inquiry aims to investigate the situation in England, including current funding constraints and potential alternative models that could offer a solution. We know that this is a high priority issue among the public and I hope our inquiry will help put the onus on the Government to address it sooner rather than later."

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### **20 July 2018: Little confidence sweeping courts reforms can be delivered**

The Commons Public Accounts Committee report says that any savings must be genuine and not the result of cost-shunting which builds pressure elsewhere.

**HM Courts & Tribunals Service's £1.2 billion programme** to modernise the courts is hugely ambitious and on a scale which has never been attempted anywhere before. Transforming the courts and tribunals system in this way will change the way people access justice by digitising paper-based services, moving some types of cases online, introducing virtual hearings,

**Closing courts and centralising customer services:** Such sweeping changes will be extremely challenging to deliver. The performance of HMCTS to date shows that it has much to learn if it intends to do everything it plans.

**HMCTS already fallen behind:** Despite extending its timetable from four to six years, HMCTS has already fallen behind, delivering only two-thirds of what it expected to at this stage, and it still has not shared a sufficiently well-developed plan of what it is trying to achieve. The pressure to deliver quickly and make savings is limiting HMCTS's ability to consult meaningfully with stakeholders and risks it driving forward changes before it fully understands the impact on users and the justice system more widely. HMCTS needs to ensure that the savings expected from these reforms are genuine rather than the consequence of shunting costs to other parts of the justice system such as the police, prison service or Crown Prosecution Service all of which have their own pressures to manage. Without a better grip on these wider issues, there is a significant risk that HCMTS will fail to deliver the benefits it expects.

**Chair's comments:** Committee Chair, Meg Hillier MP said:

"Government has cut corners in its rush to push through these reforms. The timetable was unrealistic, consultation has been inadequate and, even now, HMCTS has not clearly explained what the changes will mean in practice. Our report recommends action to address these failings. But even if this programme, or a version of it, gets back on track I have serious concerns about its unforeseen consequences for taxpayers, service users and justice more widely. There is an old line in the medical profession—the operation was successful but the patient died'. It is difficult to see how these reforms could be called a success if the result is to undermine people's access to justice and to pile further pressure on the police and other critical public services. Government must engage properly with these challenges and explain how it will shepherd this programme through the upheaval taking place across the justice system."



### **England's heroes/heroines:** Grace Horsley Darling (24 November 1815 – 20 October 1842)

was an English lighthouse keeper's daughter, famed for participating in the rescue of survivors from the shipwrecked Forfarshire in 1838. The paddle steamer ran aground on the Farne Islands off the coast of Northumberland; nine members of her crew were saved.

Grace Darling was born at her grandfather's cottage in Bamburgh in Northumberland. She was the seventh of nine children (four brothers and four sisters) and when only a few weeks old she was taken to live on Brownsman Island, one of the Farne Islands, in a cottage attached to the lighthouse.

Her father ran the lighthouse (built in 1795) for Trinity House and earned a salary of £70 per annum (UK£

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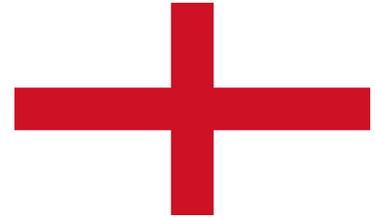
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5,800 in 2018) with a bonus of £10 for satisfactory service. The accommodation was basic and the lighthouse was not in the best position to guide shipping to safety, so in 1826 the family moved to the newly constructed lighthouse on Longstone Island.

Longstone Lighthouse had better accommodation, but the island itself was slightly less hospitable, so William would row back to Brownsman to gather vegetables from their former garden and to feed the animals.

In the early hours of 7 September 1838, Grace, looking from an upstairs window, spotted the wreck and survivors of the Forfarshire on Big Harcar, a nearby low rocky island. The Forfarshire had foundered on the rocks and broken in half: one of the halves had sunk during the night.

Grace and her father William determined that the weather was too rough for the lifeboat to put out from Seahouses (then North Sunderland), so they took a rowing boat (a 21 ft, 4-man Northumberland coble) across to the survivors, taking a long route that kept to the lee side of the islands, a distance of nearly a mile. Grace kept the coble steady in the water while her father helped four men and the lone surviving woman, Mrs. Dawson, into the boat.



As news of her role in the rescue reached the public, her combination of bravery and simple virtue set her out as exemplary, and led to an uneasy role as the nation's heroine. Grace and her father were awarded the Silver Medal for bravery by the Royal National Institution for the Preservation of Life from Shipwreck, later named the Royal National Lifeboat Institution. Her achievement was celebrated in her lifetime: she received a large financial reward in addition to the plaudits of the nation.

Grace Darling died of tuberculosis in October 1842, aged 26.

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### England's history: The Battle of Flodden 9 September 1513

The Battle of Flodden, Flodden Field, or occasionally Branxton in the county of Northumberland (Brainston Moor) was a military combat in the War of the League of Cambrai between an invading Scots army under King James IV and an English army commanded by the Earl of Surrey, resulting in an English victory. In terms of troop numbers, it was the largest battle fought between the two kingdoms. James IV was killed in the battle, becoming the last monarch from the British Isles to die in battle.

This conflict began when James IV, King of Scots declared war on England to honour the Auld Alliance with France by diverting Henry VIII's English troops from their campaign against the French. At this time, England was a member of the "Catholic League" defending Italy and the Pope from the French. Pope Leo X, already a signatory to the anti-French Treaty of Mechlin, sent a letter to James threatening him with ecclesiastical censure for breaking his peace treaties with England, and subsequently James was excommunicated.

Henry was in France at the siege of Th rouanne when the Scottish Herald brought him a letter from

*Come walk with me and view the land,  
Through field and forest, guarded by the Solent strand  
Before it fades from sight and passes from your hand,  
Come walk with me and view the land*

*Bright in the sky the kestrel's flight,  
Above ploughed fields where through the soil the chalk  
shows white  
Across the downland slope where beechwood hangers  
stand,  
Come walk with me and view the land.*

*Through Hampshire lanes that I love best,  
That run through quiet fields, by Itchen and by Test,  
Where bound in brick and flint, our barns and houses  
stand,  
Come walk with me and view the land.*

*Is it our folly or our fate  
Only to recognise the things we love too late?  
Are we the masters, or mere slaves to greed's demand?  
Come walk with me and view the land.*

*For now each green and pleasant field  
Gives up its corn and clover to a different yield,  
Straight roads and houses planted by uncaring hands,  
Come walk with me and view the land.*

*And will our children yet unborn  
Walk in the drover's tracks or on New Forest lawns,  
Or shall we tell them as we take them by the hand,  
We made no move to save your land.*

James IV. James asked him to desist from attacking France in breach of their treaty. The Herald declared that Henry should abandon his efforts against the town and go home. Angered, Henry said that James had

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no right to summon him, and ought to be England's ally, as James was married to his (Henry's) sister, Margaret. Henry replied by letter, writing that James was mistaken and that any of his attempts on England would be resisted. Using the pretext of revenge for the murder of Robert Kerr, a Warden of the Scottish East March who had been killed by John "The Bastard" Heron in 1508, James invaded England with an army of about 30,000 men. However, both sides had been making lengthy preparations for this conflict. A year earlier, Thomas Howard, Earl of Surrey, had been appointed Lieutenant-General of the army of the north and was issued with banners of the Cross of St George



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**English culture:** View the Land by Sarah Morgan

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### **Promotion: When and Where to Eat Oysters in England**

<https://www.tripsavvy.com/eating-oysters-in-england-1661793>

When English oysters are in season, some of the best places to eat them are along the England's east coast. Washed by cold waters and dotted with shallow bays and inlets, it is ideal for oyster beds, both natural and farmed.

While today, eating oysters is a relatively expensive seasonal treat, in the 19th century they were so plentiful and cheap that they were the food of the poor. Eventually the English lost the taste for them and in modern times, the bulk of the native oyster harvest was shipped to France.

According to Natural England, in 1864 more than 700 million oysters were eaten in London. One hundred years later, over-fishing had reduced the total throughout the country to only 3 million.

Nowadays, oysters are becoming plentiful once again. In the autumn and winter months, native oysters are widely available — though still an expensive delicacy. In some parts of England where non-native Pacific and rock oysters are farmed, they're available throughout the year.

**Oyster Myths:** What about only eating oysters in months with an "R" in their name? For years people have believed that oysters were unsafe to eat in May, June, July and August. But that's actually a myth that arose from the fact that those months are the hottest in the Northern Hemisphere and, thus, the months in which oysters are most likely to spoil. Nowadays, raw oysters that are properly kept and served promptly on ice can be eaten throughout the year.

But there is another reason not to eat England's native oysters May through August — it's against the law. Native oysters, which take about 5 years to mature, spawn during those non "R" months and they're protected by an act of Parliament during the spawning season. If the weather has been warm, you might want to stick to the farmed, non-native species in April (when the natives may have started to spawn) and September (when the spawning season may not be quite finished).

### **Where to Eat Great English Oysters:**

**Whitby** on the East Coast of Yorkshire is a pretty seaside town with several good restaurants. The cold waters of the North Sea make for good oysters where there are shallow bays.

**Thornham.** The Village of Thornham near the North Norfolk Coast was once the haunt of smugglers. Now the creeks that run through the salt marshes from the North Sea are covered with rock oysters on trestles, reaching maturity in the salty tidal waters.

**Orford.** Visit this village beside the Suffolk Heritage Coast for a chance at one of the limited number of tickets to visit the National Trust's Orford Ness National Nature Reserve. The longest shingle spit in Europe with, according to the National Trust, 15% of the world's reserve of vegetated shingle, this rare and fragile landscape can only be reached by the Trust's own ferry and explored along designated paths.

**Mersea Island** off the Essex coast near Colchester is reached by an ancient causeway across saltmarshes that floods at very high tides. The island is surrounded by oyster rich water and has provided the famous Colchester oysters since Roman times (the reason for the ancient causeway). Oysters from the River Blackwater, to the west of the Island, have been cultivated and harvested by the Haward family for seven generations, since the mid 18th century. Their oysters are a mixture of natives (in season) and wild rock oysters available year round. The River Colne and the Colne Estuary, to the east of the island, is the source of native and rock oysters from The Colchester Oyster Fishery, who hold the current lease on beds that were granted to the local authorities in 1189 by King Richard I, The Lionheart.

**Mistley** beside the River Stour on the Essex/Suffolk borders, was once the home of the evil Witchfinder General. According to legend he once owned - or at least lived at The Mistley Thorn. These days, it's a hotel and restaurant about 10 miles northeast of Colchester. The American-born chef serves oysters year

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round and Colchester natives in season.

**Whitstable** in Kent is another of England's ancient oyster fisheries. Oyster shells found in the Coliseum in Rome have been identified as being from Whitstable. Today, the name "Whitstable native oysters" is protected by an EU geographical designation. The town has an oyster festival, but don't expect to eat any natives then - they hold it in July when the oyster season is over and the fishermen have time to celebrate.



**Falmouth**, on the south Cornish coast, hosts the 4-day Falmouth Oyster Festival every October, a celebration of Cornish seafood and local oysters that kicks off the start of the oyster fishing season there. If you are a real oyster lover, there is no better way to eat oysters than freshly shucked, from a stall by the sea.

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### Recipe: Beef shin and oyster pie

[https://www.bbc.com/food/recipes/beef\\_shin\\_and\\_oyster\\_pie\\_42507](https://www.bbc.com/food/recipes/beef_shin_and_oyster_pie_42507)

Marrow bone and the oysters are both optional in this pie, but they're definitely worth adding for a full, hearty flavour. Save time by using a pressure cooker if you have one.

By Pippa Middlehurst

From Britain's Best Home Cook

Preparation time: less than 30 mins

Cooking time: over 2 hours, Serves 4

#### Ingredients:

600g/1lb 5oz beef shin

1 carrot, finely chopped

4 garlic cloves, crushed

500ml/17fl oz porter beer

3 bay leaves

1 marrow bone, 6–8cm/2½–3in long (optional)

375g/13oz ready-rolled puff pastry

sea salt and black pepper

2 tbsp sunflower oil

1 onion, finely chopped

1 tbsp plain flour

400ml/14fl oz beef stock

4 thyme sprigs, plus extra leaves to scatter

8 fresh oysters, shucked (optional)

1 free-range egg, beaten

**Method:** Cut the beef shin into bite-sized pieces. Heat the oil in a large heavy-based pan (with a tight-fitting lid) over a medium–high heat. Add the beef in batches and brown on all sides for 4–6 minutes.

Transfer to a bowl.

Add the carrot and onion to the pan and fry over a medium heat for 6–8 minutes, or until beginning to soften. Add the garlic and cook for 2–3 minutes until aromatic. Return the browned beef to the pan and add the flour, stirring well. Add the beer, stock, bay leaves, thyme sprigs, a teaspoon of salt and a good grinding of black pepper. Bring to the boil, reduce the heat to very low, cover with the lid and simmer gently for 3–3½ hours, by which time the beef shin should be meltingly tender and the sauce thick and viscous. (Alternatively, you can cook the beef in a pressure cooker on high pressure for 50–60 minutes until tender, then simmer on the hob for a few minutes to reduce the sauce.)

Preheat the oven to 200C/180C Fan/Gas 6.

Sit the marrow bone (if using) upright in a 1.5 litre/2½ pint pie dish. Spoon in the beef and sauce and lay

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