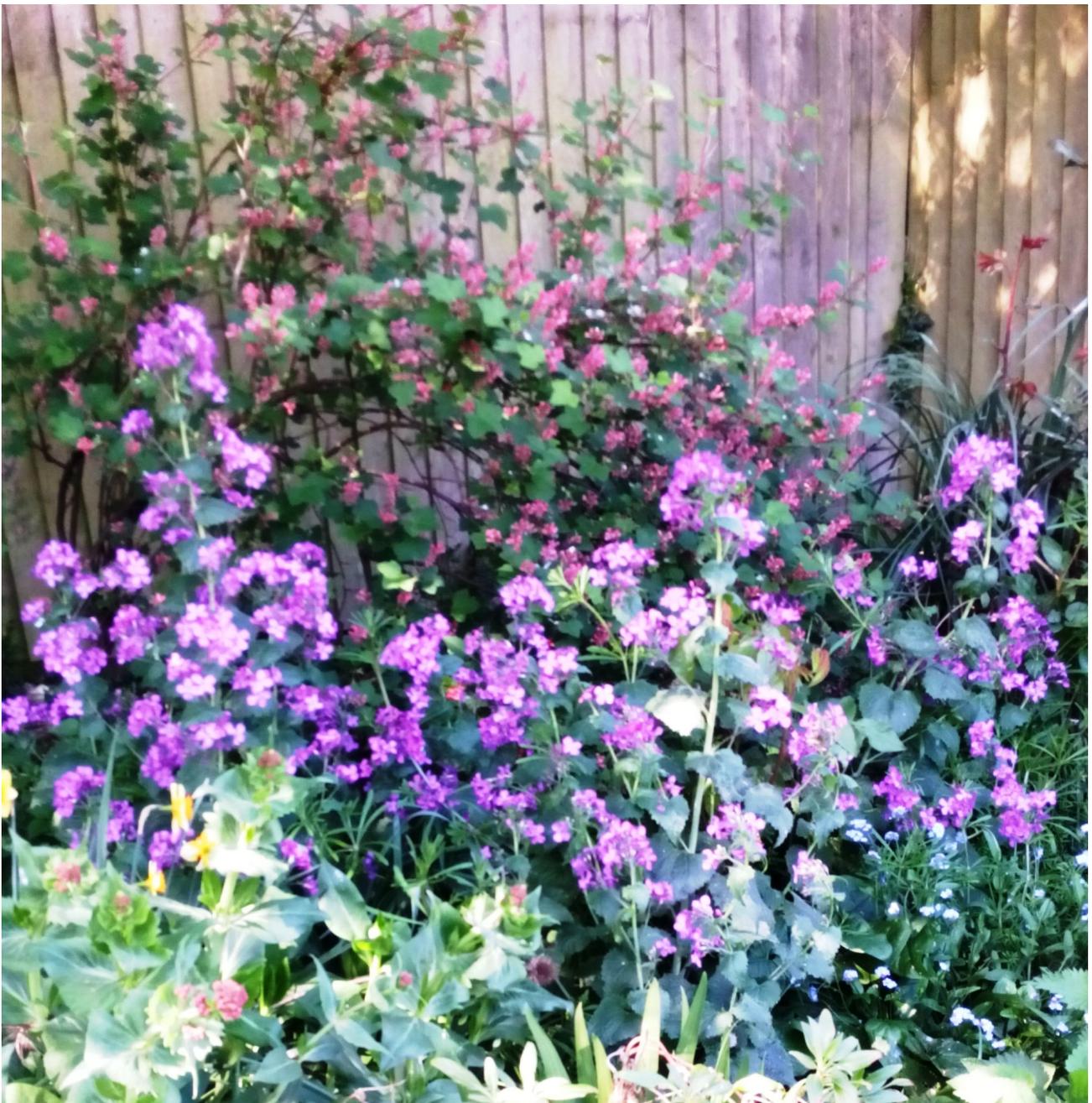


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Campaign for an **E**nglish **P**arliament

Think of England Number 103: May 2020



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Number 103 May 2020

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RECOMMENDED READING: Exploring Englishness. A do-it-yourself guide by Vivienne Endecott ISBN 978-1-9993708-1-7 Pop Publishing



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: I do hope that you are keeping safe and well in these most difficult times and our sympathies are with all those who have suffered bereavement. Our thanks and praise also for all NHS and careworkers and everyone



who keeps the wheels of our lives turning. Clearly most of this issue is about responses to Covid19 but I have included an article re-printed from the English Standard about the English music festival, which, unfortunately will not take place this year.

In my online campaigning I have had a lot of discussion with Scots about the meaning of devolution when it comes to the health services and responsibility for PPE.. We had the usual blame NHS England for not supplying PPE to Scotland. As I said in online comments NHS England is not NHS UK, although the daily government briefings would have you believe it was. Later we discovered Scotland had stocks of PPE but so much easier for Sturgeon to blame England. Scotland and Wales were hugely offended when Visit Britain failed to include their literary heroes on a map of Britain. You will remember that Visit England was subsumed into Visit Britain. It was later unearthed but it seems to me that looking at the websites that the same staff cover both. Clearly they are confused!

We note that the (English) health secretary has written off the debts of English NHS trusts but laid the debt on the Department of Health not the UK Treasury, mostly funded by English taxpayers. So no real help for the English NHS.

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Campaigning for England : From a member

Being in agreement with and support of the CEP's Aims, Principles and Policies and almost every word of John Denham's English Identity Lecture (I am strongly opposed to his apparent support of regional and county devolution within England instead of a single English Parliament and Government), I have for decades now, become increasingly incensed with the democratic, financial, cultural and identity deficit/discrimination England and the people of England suffer within the UK.

Due to my personal circumstances however, my campaigning activity has been and remains limited to raising the issue with family and friends generally, and with party representatives during local and general elections. I have also written to my local MP and those MPs/ex MPs who I understand share at least some of the same thoughts and concerns on the subject e.g. John Denham, John Redwood, Bernard Jenkin and Frank Field.

Also, and partly driven by the desire for progress in the remedying of this glaring inequality and discrimination, I recently read the Constitution Reform Group's 'Towards a New Act of Union' document and watched a recording of their presentation to the Welsh Legislation, Justice and Constitution Committee (30th September 2019). Whilst elements of the proposals for a Federal UK seem appealing versus the present situation, I believe, of their Steering Committee members, only Lord Salisbury has England's and the people of England's best interests at heart. And I was absolutely flabbergasted to hear Sir Paul Silk align himself with a philosophical question of whether England actually exists! I truly fear that Sir Paul and the other committee members will attempt to use the Federal UK idea as a Trojan Horse for devolution within and Balkanisation of England.

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## **Current English Affairs:**

### Health and Welfare

#### **Ready to do more coronavirus tests kept waiting by health officials**

Friday April 03 2020, The Times: Billy Kenber, Investigations Reporter

Business owners and academics have described their frustration at being unable to get a response from Public Health England (PHE), the NHS or the government after they offered to help meet the massive demand for testing.

Jim Dunn, the director of a diagnostics laboratory in Leicester that has been running up to 400 tests a day for private clients, said that he "tried and tried and tried to offer our help" to test samples from frontline healthcare workers but waited more than two weeks for a response until he was told that the lab was now an approved Covid-19 supplier.

It was also reported that PHE had failed to utilise the capacity of the Animal and Plant Health Agency to deliver 40,000 tests despite this first being identified two months ago. PHE has pursued a centralised strategy, producing its own diagnostic test to ensure the accuracy of results and initially restricting tests to a single lab. All 12 public health laboratories are now involved in coronavirus testing along with dozens of NHS hospital facilities.

John Ashton, former regional director of public health for northwest England, said that PHE's handling of the coronavirus pandemic had been "a fiasco". He said it was "incompetence" from the agency that had prevented it from mobilising the capacity in the private sector and universities earlier.

A Public Health England spokeswoman said it had developed a test for use on the "most vulnerable in hospitals" and was not involved in the approval of mass testing kits for wider testing, which had been left to the Department of Health and Social Care. "The government welcomes all offers of help, and this is a national effort," she said.

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Matt Hancock has written off more than £13 billion of historical NHS debt in the latest move by government to put the fight against the virus on to future balance sheets.

Friday April 03 2020, The Times: Francis Elliott, Kat Lay

The (English) health secretary said the "landmark step" would give NHS trusts the confidence to do what was needed "without worrying" about adding to their debts. In forgiving hospitals debts Mr Hancock is The way hospitals are funded will also change. The government promised "a simpler internal payment system" to ensure that funding was continued. Mr Hancock also said he had made £300 million available for community pharmacies and he wanted to make sure "every part" of the health and care system was supported.

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Sir Simon Stevens, the NHS England chief executive, said: “We’ve advocated for and support this pragmatic move which will put NHS hospitals, mental health and community services in a stronger position, not just to respond to the immediate challenges . . . but also in the years ahead.”

NHS England has announced that two emergency hospitals are to be located at the University of the West of England, Bristol, and at Harrogate Convention Centre. The Bristol hospital will be able to accommodate up to 1,000 patients and the Harrogate hospital up to 500.

NHS England said it had already managed to free up more than 33,000 beds across the country. Sir Simon Stevens, the chief executive, said the construction of the new, 4,000-bed Nightingale hospital in London was “nothing short of extraordinary”.

“Now we are gearing up to repeat that feat at another four sites across the country to add to the surge capacity in current NHS hospitals,” he said. “We’re giving the go ahead to these additional sites, hoping they may not be needed but preparing in case they are.”



Military appalled by planning fiasco over NHS protective kit

April 22 2020, The Times: Lucy Fisher, Defence Editor | Billy Kenber, Investigations Reporter | Kat Lay, Health Correspondent

A senior army source lambasted the health service for its logistics for PPE, alleging that masks, aprons, gloves and other items were being assigned to hospitals without regard to relative need, leading to over-supply in some areas and shortages in others.

“We know how knackered their [NHS logistics] systems are, but we’ve been surprised we’ve not been called in to help more, and we’ve been surprised by their failure to ration [kit],” the insider said. Hospitals are encouraged to share stocks of PPE with local trusts who are running short.

It is understood that commanders are frustrated that the Covid Support Force has not been called in to lead on the allocation of PPE, given planning and logistics are military specialisms.

Prototype mask could protect NHS workers

Chris Hopson, chief executive of NHS Providers, which represents hospitals and trusts in England, said gowns and visors were the most needed items. He said this was because “the reserve was configured for a winter flu as opposed to coronavirus type pandemic”. He added: “There was meant to be an order of 200,000 gowns from China last week and only 20,000 arrived.”

Dream team of F1 engineers race to the rescue with coronavirus ventilators

The McLaren F1 base has transformed from a Grand Prix workshop to a ventilator factory

April 22 2020, The Times: Owen Slot

The greatest reward at the McLaren base, near Woking, is usually when one of their cars wins a Formula 1 Grand Prix. Last week, though, the team experienced an altogether greater satisfaction when the first ventilator that they had helped to make came off the production line en route to save lives in the battle against Covid-19.

Now, in the machine room where they normally build parts for the suspension of F1 cars, they are making manifolds and hose nipples for ventilators. Next to the machine room, in the gearbox room, they are mass-producing trolleys on which the ventilators can be transported.

This is all a race against time. If you can’t move the ventilator, you can’t use it. So when 15,000 ventilators have been ordered, they need 15,000 trolleys. At four o’clock, when the day shift finishes, the next shift arrives to carry on production throughout the night.

McLaren is working as part of the VentilatorChallengeUK consortium. Dick Elsy, chairman of the partnership of more than 50 companies, said they had squeezed 18 months of business planning into five weeks and were on course to manufacture a ten-year supply of ventilators in only ten weeks.

McLaren are making about 20 per cent of the parts. These are then sent to either the Ford plant in Dagenham or the Airbus plant in Broughton, where two halves of the ventilators are assembled. They are then constructed into one unit and tested at Penlon in Abingdon.

The F1 season had been supposed to start in Melbourne on March 15 but was cancelled at the last minute. A day later Mark Mathieson, the lead partner of McLaren Racing technical services, received a call inviting McLaren to join this broad engineering partnership.

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It was almost exactly a month later that the first new ventilators came off a very new production line. The combined FI effort was such that some 350 technicians have been sent by other teams — Renault, Williams, Haas and Mercedes — to test them.

One of the bigger challenges has been sourcing parts. A particular control valve was found at a company in Switzerland but it couldn't mass produce at the required pace. McLaren simply constructed a machine for them to do so. Mr Mathieson spent last weekend overseeing the transport of pressure sensors made in Mexico, that were handed over the US border, collected by DHL, driven to Dallas and then flown to Heathrow. They were at the Broughton factory by Monday.

At McLaren much of the site is closed, but socially distant pockets are working furiously.

~~~~~ **Shrewsbury and Telford NHS Trust: Maternity scandal inquiry grows by hundreds of cases**

April 22 2020, The Times: Neil Johnston, Midlands Correspondent

An inquiry into poor maternity care at a scandal-hit trust where dozens of babies died or suffered avoidable brain damage has widened to nearly 1,200 cases.

Since 2017 investigators have been examining failings that harmed mothers and babies at Shrewsbury and Telford NHS Trust in Shropshire. Last year a leaked interim report said that there was a “toxic” culture at the maternity unit dating back 40 years.

The review submitted by Donna Ockenden, a midwife, to NHS Improvement identified at least 45 avoidable deaths, including 42 babies and three mothers, 51 cases of brain damage or cerebral palsy in infants and 47 further incidents of substandard care.

The cases were between 1979 and 2017 but deaths and injuries were still being reported to the panel up to the end of 2018. Now Ms Ockenden has revealed that the review has been informed of 1,170 cases.

The new total includes hundreds of families whose details were passed to the inquiry by the trust after it examined its records for 2007-18 and found potential failings. Ms Ockenden has now written to those families inviting them to participate in the review.

Another 70 families who came forward after media reports about the scandal or who had begun their own legal action have also received the letter asking for their consent to be included.

An initial investigation into 23 incidents was ordered by Jeremy Hunt, as the health secretary, in 2017 after families claimed that babies were put at risk by a culture that promoted natural birth over safety.

The review has repeatedly expanded as the scale of the failings has become clear. The final report is due to be published next year but a deadline of the end of May has now been set for any more families to come forward.



~~~~~ **Nightingale plan to keep hospitals free from coronavirus**

April 28 2020, The Times: Oliver Wright, Policy Editor | Chris Smyth

Britain's Nightingale hospitals are being lined up to become the primary centres for treating Covid-19 patients as ministers announced that parts of the NHS would start reopening for routine care from this week.

Under proposals being discussed in government and the NHS the ten new hospitals would aim to care for as many coronavirus patients as possible allowing hospitals to be “Covid-free zones”. When they are all completed they could have the capacity to treat about 13,000 patients, freeing up beds and space to allow other hospitals to take on routine operations again.

Yesterday Matt Hancock, the (English) health secretary, said the NHS would begin scaling up its non-coronavirus workload with some hospitals restarting cancer and mental health treatments. For routine operations and appointments one option may be asking patients to take virus test 48 hours in advance and attend only if it is negative.

However, NHS figures said it would take time for routine elective surgery, such as hip and knee replacements, to return as many anaesthetists were still on intensive care wards helping patients needing ventilation.

Mr Hancock appealed to people who needed emergency care to seek it after figures showed attendance in A&E was down by more than 50 per cent on the same time last year.

Making the Nightingale network a semi-permanent fixture would allow hospitals to follow the lead of the Royal Marsden in creating “clean” sites for cancer surgeries, where all patients are tested for Covid-19

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before admission. Under the plan patients with Covid-19 symptoms or with a confirmed diagnosis who needed hospital care would be admitted to a Nightingale centre instead of a local hospital. The scheme would probably start in London.

NHS managers also hope that the use of Nightingale hospitals could encourage people to seek help for non-coronavirus conditions. Analysis by Edge Health, a provider of data to NHS trusts, has estimated that there have been 10,000 non-coronavirus deaths among patients unable or unwilling to seek medical treatment



Police and courts

Ex-convicts help offenders to change

April 14 2020, The Times: Richard Ford

Having found themselves on the wrong side of the law, ex-offenders know about the difficulties of trying to go straight. Now a probation service is using their experience to help criminals turn their lives around. It has employed three ex-convicts as case support workers to deal with offenders at risk of being recalled to prison and a further 15 to supervise unpaid rehabilitation work in the community.

The idea came from offenders who told probation staff in Kent that it would help them to receive support from others who had fallen foul of the law.

“They wanted the opportunity to speak to people who had made mistakes and come through the other side, not probation officers who have lived blameless lives,”

said Lisa Udale, senior probation officer at Kent, Surrey & Sussex Community Rehabilitation Company. She said it was a big change for staff but that any reservations disappeared when they saw case support workers successfully persuading offenders to stick with rehabilitation.

Met police lose two thirds of finance officers as fraud soars

April 15 2020, The Times: Ben Ellery

The Metropolitan Police employed 91 financial officers in 2007-08 but that number had fallen to only 30 by February this year, according to a Freedom of Information request.

Keith Ditcham, a former detective chief inspector at Kent police now acting director at the Royal United Services Institute, the security think tank, said the force needed to change its priorities.

“Fraud is a crime that is on the rise and it would appear the resources don’t match the level of the threat,” he said. “I don’t think it’s seen as sexy and police chiefs and crime commissioners have focused their attention elsewhere, such as terrorism, counter-narcotics and county lines.

“But fraud accounts for more than one third of all reported crime.”

In the 2018 calendar year there were 46,579 offences of fraud recorded by the Metropolitan Police, a 9 per cent increase on the previous year. The surge has been fuelled by criminal gangs who target people online and by cold calling, and dupe them into handing over their life savings.

In 2018 it was estimated that the cost of fraud offences to people in London was £396 million.

A report by data analyst Thomson Reuters last year found “some fraud teams were only able to conduct one investigation at a time, with more complex ones not being pursued at all”.

Charles Thomson, a partner at the law firm Baker McKenzie and author of the report, said: “Budget cuts are taking their toll on police forces, who are having to downsize fraud teams while fraud cases continue to rise.

According to the National Audit Office, central and local government funding to police forces fell by 19 per cent, adjusted for inflation, between 2010-11 and 2018-19.

Police chiefs in fear of sacking by ‘arrogant’ commissioners

April 23 2020, 12.00am, The Times: Richard Ford, Home Correspondent

Elected police commissioners are having a corrosive effect on forces with chief constables looking over their shoulders in fear of being fired, according to a report.

It warns that a “metaphorical axe” hangs over the heads of all chief constables because of the power of police and crime commissioners (PCCs) to remove them from their jobs.

Chief constables are scathing in their assessments of some PCCs, describing them as “ill equipped”, arrogant and driven by personality and ego, the report says.

One PCC admitted that some of his counterparts were “completely useless”, according to the research by the school of law at Essex University.

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Elected commissioners replaced police authorities when they were introduced in 2012 by Theresa May, then home secretary, and given the power to hire and fire chief constables and to set budgets. The aim was to make the police more accountable through a directly elected official.

Simon Cooper, who wrote the report, said: “The interviews conducted for this research find the PCCs’ power to remove their chief constables has already compromised the independence of these senior officers.” It had created an environment in which a lay person could command, overrule and potentially even control a chief constable, he said.

Some chief constables, it adds, lack the ability to question and effectively challenge the PCC because of their fear of removal.

One chief constable quoted in the report says: “The problem you have is that chief constables are given a contract. The PCC and I have had some fairly major bust-ups and difficult conversations but have I ever thought the PCC is now going to sack me? No I haven’t but I have had the courage to do it but I know some chiefs won’t. Some chiefs haven’t.”

The report, published in the Criminal Law Review, says that perceptions of the calibre and experience of elected commissioners vary considerably. Some are described as well informed and value-driven while others “lack appropriate skills”. Others are accused of being driven by “arrogance” or “subjectivity, personality and ego”.

Senior figures interviewed for the research said the influence of PCCs was having a ripple effect further down the hierarchy, with progression to the top job no longer seen as attractive.

The report, based on interviews with 17 senior figures including chief constables and police and crime commissioners, concludes that there is a real risk that the power to sack a chief constable may lead to instability in police leadership and secondly that there is a possibility that it may lead chief constables to “become indebted to their PCC and becoming risk-averse in their day-to-day practice,” the report says.



Tourism

Visit Britain brought to book for literary map that excluded Scots

April 16 2020, The Times: Mike Wade

Writers have forced the unceremonious withdrawal of a British literary map that excluded Scotland and Wales from its celebration of playwrights, authors and poets.

Visit Britain’s interactive guide drew a line roughly at Hadrian’s Wall to cut off Scotland, and buried Wales under trees. Northern Ireland, with its literary culture including Seamus Heaney and C S Lewis, was omitted altogether.

The London-based tourism agency invited readers to discover the UK’s rich literary heritage by meandering only through England’s cities and shires. “Harry Potter, Dracula, Lord of the Rings, Wuthering Heights and so many more,” it enthused. “Explore the places that inspired these and other classics and sent British literature around the world.”

The map was published on Tuesday evening but withdrawn yesterday morning after explosion of rage that rattled the internet. Visit Britain admitted that there had been a mistake.

Kieran Hurley, the Scottish playwright and screenwriter, said on Twitter: “It’s absolutely fine to do things that are about England rather than about the UK or about Britain — just call it that.”

Visit Britain ran up the white flag, saying that the Visit England literary heroes map, originally published in 2018, had been “tweeted from Visit Britain’s consumer channel in error”. It offered no explanation for having replaced the words “England” and “English” with “Britain” and “British”.

Liz Lochhead, the Glaswegian poet, said the agency’s “ludicrous” approach typified a certain type of mindset among her southern neighbours, adding: “Scotland is just invisible.”

A spokeswoman for Visit Britain said it sincerely apologised for mistake.

Roads and transport

HS2 facing more delays after judge questions safety of tunnelling plan

April 29 2020, The Times: Graeme Paton, Transport Correspondent

HS2 could face a further delay after a judge demanded clarity over plans to build tunnels into central London amid claims they risk causing “catastrophic” damage to homes. The High Court has ordered bosses behind the high-speed line to provide reassurance that existing proposals for the route into Euston are safe.

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HS2 Ltd — the government-owned company leading the £106 billion project — has been given a week to deliver updated plans to Hero Granger-Taylor, a homeowner who tried to block the proposal on safety grounds.

This month the government sought to end a decade of uncertainty over HS2 by signing a “notice to proceed” which allows building work to begin. The 330-mile route will link Birmingham, Leeds, London and Manchester.

Ms Granger-Taylor has brought a High Court claim against HS2 Ltd over concerns that three new tunnels would cause a “massive structural collapse” to a 120-year-old, 33ft retaining wall outside Euston station. The court is being asked to rule that the plan is unlawful because of the risk posed to £3 million grade II-listed homes just metres away from the wall on Park Village East, Camden.

The tunnel is designed to run as little as five feet below the retaining wall at the side of the West Coast mainline and it is feared that it could collapse.

Colin Elliff, a specialist railway engineer and a member of the High Speed UK project, which proposes an alternative to HS2, completed a report last month into the risks. His report, which is being used to support Ms Granger-Taylor’s case, says that HS2 has “offered no credible evidence to show how the tunnel can be safely constructed immediately below the retaining wall”, which weighs 130 tonnes per metre.

The High Court yesterday told HS2 Ltd to furnish Ms Granger-Taylor with clearer information over the “three tunnels” design.

Mrs Justice Lang said that the company needed to better explain the structure and support systems it plans in relation to the tunnels. This includes the results of ground investigations into the retaining wall and how it would be protected from the tunnels below. It must also produce an environmental impact assessment report.

The statement should set out “the up-to-date position on whether the ‘three tunnels’ design will proceed”, the court said.

HS2 Ltd said yesterday that the initial demand from the court for additional documentation was “considerably” reduced following representations by the company.

“We strongly dispute any suggestion that the current designs pose any threat to the structural integrity of the retaining wall at Park Village East and have provided robust evidence to the court to that effect. We are currently considering the recent court order.”



English politics:

Devolved nations may break ranks if pandemic worsens

Saturday April 11 2020, The Times: Mark McLaughlin

The pandemic may drive a new wedge through the United Kingdom, Cambridge academics have said.

The UK’s leaders are following a “four nations action plan” to limit deaths, striking an uncommonly consensual tone after a decade of constitutional wrangling over independence.

However, this consensus could collapse if the death rate spirals out of control, opening a new fault line, according to Michael Kenny and Jack Sheldon, of the Bennett Institute for Public Policy social inequality research group.

They wrote: “While the incentives for co-operation are strong, there are countervailing dynamics too, and it is possible that co-operation could give way to greater divergence.”

There have been small, but notable, differences in the timing of some announcements.

“The Scottish government announced a ban on large gatherings two days before similar steps were taken elsewhere. Northern Ireland and Scotland also suspended criminal jury trials before England and Wales.

Non-essential construction sites in Scotland have been asked to close but there has not yet been any such edict in England.

“While these do not represent fundamental differences in overall strategy, and in some cases may reflect particular factors in the devolved territories, they do hint at the possibility that there is less cohesion in private.”

“While the temporary hospitals in England and Northern Ireland have been branded as ‘Nightingale’ hospitals, that in Glasgow has been named after Louisa Jordan, a Scottish nurse who died during the First World War.”

Coronavirus in Scotland: PPE manufacturers put England first

Tuesday April 14 2020, The Times: Kieran Andrews, Scottish Political Editor, Mark McLaughlin

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Major manufacturers of personal protective equipment (PPE) are refusing to send supplies to Scotland because they are prioritising England.

Gompels, which is based in Melksham, Wiltshire, has said that it will not supply Scotland or Wales under a contract that it holds with Public Health England. “You must be registered and operating within England — apologies to Wales and Scotland, we are told you have different processes for getting emergency supplies,” its website states.

Donald Macaskill, chief executive of Scottish Care, which represents more than 800 of the country’s 1,000 care homes, said that at least one English supplier had told him they did not have stock to deliver to Scotland.

The Department of Health and Social Care said that it was working “closely with the devolved administrations” to ensure there is enough PPE to meet clinical need and that supply routes have been set up within each nation to provide equipment to the front line. It said: “PPE supplies are being co-ordinated at a UK-wide level and allocation made based on clinical need across the whole country.”

The Scottish government said: “It would be totally unacceptable if PPE equipment needed in Scotland was diverted, intercepted or sent elsewhere in the UK.”

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### Scotland can get protective kit from English manufacturers

April 16 2020, The Times: Kieran Andrews, Scottish Political Editor | Mark McLaughlin

English companies have lifted restrictions against supplying personal protective equipment to Scottish care homes after confusion over who should be first in line for the kit.

Officials from the UK Department of Health and Social Care called suppliers on Tuesday after The Times reported concerns raised about the availability of PPE by representatives of the care sector. It is understood that the message was conveyed that no nation over the UK should be given priority over any other.

It had been reported that up to six suppliers had been unable to provide PPE to private care homes in Scotland because of deals with the English health service.

Gompels Healthcare in Wiltshire had said on its website that it could not fulfil orders to Scotland and Wales because of a contract with Public Health England.

Three other companies — Deliver Net, Countrywide Healthcare and Blueleaf — had entered into similarly restrictive agreements, the BBC had reported.

Fluid-repellent masks, gloves and rolls of aprons had been limited by Gompels because they were being distributed under rules governing Public Health England’s pandemic flu stock. Each of the UK’s four nations has its own system for an outbreak of influenza, which is separate to the Covid-19 strategy

Gompels said in a statement that it distributed “millions of items of PPE to care settings in Scotland, Wales and England” and would continue to supply its existing customers. “We continue to supply on a daily basis our full range (less these three products from Public Health England) to care providers in Wales and Scotland,” it said on its website.

Gompels had been highlighted by Jeane Freeman, the Scottish health secretary, in a letter to Matt Hancock, her Westminster counterpart, as she urged him to investigate the “contradictions” coming from UK suppliers.

Downing Street denied that any part of the UK was prioritised over the others and Whitehall officials stressed that the devolved administrations were in supply meetings and Cobra meetings and were signed up to the UK-wide PPE strategy.



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How offers of PPE were 'ignored' by government as Scottish Covid-19 deaths soared

April 26 2020, The Sunday Times: John Boothman, Jason Allardyce and Mark Macaskill

Suppliers say they contacted the Scottish government and had offered to provide supplies as early as mid-March. At least six firms who offered to provide life-saving personal protection equipment (PPE) to the Scottish government were “ignored” as the coronavirus death toll mounted.

The suppliers were poised to deliver millions of face masks, gloves, gowns and hand sanitiser to NHS staff and carers as early as mid-March but the deals failed to materialise due to alleged inaction by government officials.

The disclosure prompted fresh criticism of Nicola Sturgeon’s handling of the crisis last night as it also emerged that the first minister failed to attend a string of UK-level cabinet meetings in the build-up to the pandemic.

Boris Johnson, the prime minister, has been challenged for missing five Cobra meetings in January and Feb-

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ruary, at which the UK's response to the coronavirus threat was drawn up. Sturgeon was also absent, it has been confirmed.

Monica Lennon, health and sport spokeswoman for Scottish Labour, said the public may be "surprised" to learn that the SNP leader failed to attend "those crucial early meetings". Pointing to low levels of testing and tracing, a crisis in care homes, and the "shambolic" provision of PPE for front-line workers, Lennon added: "The first minister is accountable to people in Scotland for her part in this."

Miles Briggs, Conservative MSP for Lothian, revealed that he had referred to ministers and civil servants five firms that could provide PPE, yet most had seen "little to no response".

In a separate case, the owner of an Edinburgh-based company that had partnered with a Chinese supplier gave the Scottish government first option more than six weeks ago on a shipment of millions of test kits, masks and protective clothing. The firm duly completed an application form to become an approved supplier but, after four weeks without word from Holyrood, the shipment was sent elsewhere. "They found it impossible to speak to anyone in the Scottish government who could pursue the offer," said a well-placed source.

Scottish ministers have indicated a preference for dealing with approved Scottish suppliers to meet "exceptionally high demand" for PPE, but Briggs described standard procurement channels as "slow and clunky".

England's heroes/heroines: General John Churchill, 1st Duke of Marlborough, 1st Prince of Mindelheim, 1st Count of Nellenburg, Prince of the Holy Roman Empire, KG, PC 26 May 1650 – 16 June 1722 was an English soldier and statesman whose career spanned the reigns of five monarchs. From a gentry family, he served first as a page at the court of the House of Stuart under James, Duke of York, through the 1670s and early 1680s, earning military and political advancement through his courage and diplomatic skill.

Churchill was the son of Sir Winston Churchill (1620–1688) of Glanvilles Wootton in Dorset. The Churchill family is stated by the Devon historian William George Hoskins (1954) to have originated at the estate of Churchill, in the parish of Broadclyst in Devon, during the reign of King Henry II (1154–1189).

Churchill's role in defeating the Monmouth Rebellion in 1685 helped secure James on the throne, yet just three years later he abandoned his Catholic patron for the Protestant Dutchman, William of Orange. Honoured for his services at William's coronation with the earldom of Marlborough, he served with further distinction in the early years of the Nine Years' War, but persistent charges of Jacobitism brought about his fall from office and temporary imprisonment in the Tower. It was not until the accession of Queen Anne in 1702 that Marlborough reached the zenith of his powers and secured his fame and fortune.

His marriage to the hot-tempered Sarah Jennings – Anne's intimate friend – ensured Marlborough's rise, first to the Captain-Generalcy of British forces, then to a dukedom. Becoming de facto leader of Allied forces during the War of the Spanish Succession, his victories on the fields of Blenheim (1704), Ramillies (1706), Oudenarde (1708), and Malplaquet (1709), ensured his place in history as one of Europe's great generals. But his wife's stormy relationship with the Queen, and her subsequent dismissal from court, was central to his own fall. Incurring Anne's disfavour, and caught between Tory and Whig factions, Marlborough, who had brought glory and success to Anne's reign, was forced from office and went into self-imposed exile. He returned to England and to influence under the House of Hanover with the accession of George I to the British throne in 1714.

His leadership of the allied armies consolidated Britain's emergence as a front-rank power. He successfully maintained unity among the allies, thereby demonstrating his diplomatic skills. Throughout ten consecutive campaigns during the Spanish Succession war, Marlborough held together a discordant coalition through his sheer force of personality and raised the standing of British arms to a level not known since the Middle Ages. Although in the end he could not compel total capitulation from his enemies, his victories allowed Britain to rise from a minor to a major power, ensuring the country's growing prosperity throughout the 18th century. He was one of the greatest military strategists in British history and was granted Blenheim mansion in Oxford in recognition of his services by Queen Anne.



Portrait by *Adriaen van der Werff*

England's history: The Battle of Tewkesbury

The Battle of Tewkesbury, which took place on 4 May 1471, was one of the decisive battles of the Wars

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of the Roses in England. The forces loyal to the House of Lancaster were completely defeated by those of the rival House of York under their monarch, King Edward IV. The Lancastrian heir to the throne, Edward, Prince of Wales, and many prominent Lancastrian nobles were killed during the battle or thereafter executed. The Lancastrian king, Henry VI, who was a prisoner in the Tower of London, died or was murdered shortly after the battle. Tewkesbury restored political stability to England until the death of Edward IV in 1483.



Tewkesbury Abbey

The term Wars of the Roses refers to the informal heraldic badges of the two rival houses of Lancaster and York, which had been contending for power—and ultimately for the throne—since the late 1450s. In 1461 the Yorkist claimant, Edward, Earl of March, was proclaimed King Edward IV and defeated the supporters of the weak, intermittently insane Lancastrian King Henry VI at the Battle of Towton. Lancastrian revolts in the far north of England were defeated in 1464, and the fugitive King Henry was captured and imprisoned the next year. His wife, Margaret of Anjou, and their 13-year-old son Edward of Westminster were exiled and impoverished in France. Edward IV's hold on the throne appeared temporarily to be secure.

At the Battle of Tewkesbury the forces loyal to the House of Lancaster were completely defeated by those of the rival House of York under their monarch, King Edward IV. The Lancastrian heir to the throne, Edward, Prince of Wales, and many prominent Lancastrian nobles were killed during the battle or thereafter executed. The Lancastrian king, Henry VI, who was a prisoner in the Tower of London, died or was murdered shortly after the battle. Tewkesbury restored political stability to England until the death of Edward IV in 1483

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**English culture:** (Article reprinted from *England's Standard*) **The English Music Festival** celebrates the

beauty and brilliance of English Music throughout the ages, with a focus on the Golden Renaissance of English Music — the late nineteenth to early-twentieth centuries. The main Festival takes place in the magnificent mediaeval Abbey at Dorchester-on-Thames, Oxfordshire, and this year will be our fourteenth such event. The 2020 Festival promises to be one of the most exciting events we have as yet held, featuring, as it does, the world premiere performance of works by no lesser composers than Elgar and Delius, alongside the Violin Concerto by the brilliant nineteenth-century composer Samuel Coleridge-Taylor performed by the BBC Concert Orchestra and broadcast on Radio Three; celebrated baritone Roderick Williams singing works by Vaughan Williams and Howells; the Armonico Consort performing Purcell



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and Handel; a rare performance of Holst's magnificent and substantial *Cloud Messenger*, and a recital of English Solo Song featuring composers such as Frederick Delius, Peter Warlock and Sir Arnold Bax. Complementing these are concerts of baroque music; late-evening concerts of light piano music; and 1930s and 40s jazz. We also run important Educational Projects — for instance, this year we will be taking a baroque workshop into a school in Oxford that is otherwise completely under-provisioned for music, and will also be offering the school children free tickets and Programme Books to our concerts — thus the children will be given the opportunity to directly engage in and explore a wonderful art-form and to experience live classical music-making, possibly for the first time in a concert setting, which could open up an entire new and glorious world to them and bring joy to them, not just now but for the rest of their lives.

However, the Festival is in a precarious financial situation. It receives no governmental funding whatsoever, nor any corporate funding (despite active efforts to seek such funding for the past 17 years). For many years it was supported by a generous elderly lady with a passion for English music, who gave us £30,000 a year — this kept the Festival afloat and enabled us to expand and develop our many activities. However, she sadly died a few years ago and the Festival has since been struggling to plug that funding gap. We desperately need your help to enable us to continue our ground-breaking work of discovering amazing works by composers such as Elgar, Vaughan Williams, Holst, Britten and Delius, and to bring these to our appreciative audiences. Please can you help us with a donation? Even the smallest of donations will make a great difference to us in this financially difficult year, and will help to continue the work of this unique Festival. Donations can be made by cheque: please make this payable to "The English Music Festival" and send to: Em Marshall-Luck, Founder-Director, The English Music Festival, PO Box 123, Clunton, Craven Arms, Shropshire SY7 7BP. Or make a BACS payment to: The English Music Festival, Lloyds Bank

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### Promotion: Cauliflower producers.

Lincolnshire is the focus for growing cauliflowers in England. Cauliflower has a long history with the oldest record dating back to the 6th Century.

Cauliflower is one of several vegetables in the species *Brassica oleracea* in the genus *Brassica*, which is in the family *Brassicaceae*. It is an annual plant that reproduces by seed. Typically, only the head is eaten – the edible white flesh sometimes called "curd" (with a similar appearance to cheese curd). Cauliflower heads resemble those in broccoli, which differs in having flower buds as the edible portion.

In the 1st century AD, Pliny included what he called *cyma* among his descriptions of cultivated plants in *Natural History*: "Ex omnibus brassicae generibus suavissima est *cyma*," ("Of all the varieties of cabbage the most pleasant-tasted is *cyma*"). Pliny's descriptions likely refer to the flowering heads of an earlier cultivated variety of *Brassica oleracea*, but comes close to describing modern cauliflower. In the Middle Ages early forms of cauliflower were associated with the island of Cyprus, with the 12th- and 13th-century Arab botanists Ibn al-'Awwam and Ibn al-Baitar claiming its origin to be Cyprus. This association continued into Western Europe, where cauliflowers were sometimes known as Cyprus colewort, and there was extensive trade in western Europe in cauliflower seeds from Cyprus, under the French Lusignan rulers of the island, until well into the 16th century.



### Recipe: Cauliflower Cheese

#### Ingredients

1 large cauliflower (leaves cut off), broken into pieces  
500ml milk  
4 tbsp flour  
50g butter  
100g strong cheddar, grated  
2-3 tbsp breadcrumbs, if you have them

#### Method

Bring a large saucepan of water to the boil, then add 1 large cauliflower, broken into pieces, and cook for 5 mins – lift out a piece to test, it should be cooked.

Drain the cauliflower, then tip into an ovenproof dish. Heat oven to 220C/200C/gas 7.

Put the saucepan back on the heat and add 500ml milk, 4 tbsp flour and 50g butter.

Keep whisking fast as the butter melts and the mixture comes to the boil – the flour will disappear and the sauce will begin to thicken. Whisk for 2 mins while the sauce bubbles and becomes nice and thick.

Turn off the heat, stir in most of the 100g grated cheddar cheese and pour over the cauliflower. Scatter over the remaining cheese, and 2-3 tbsp breadcrumbs if using.

Put in the oven and bake for 20 mins until bubbling.

Recipe from Good Food magazine, March 2010



**OUR PRECIOUS UNION! Theresa May June 2017**

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