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

Think of England

Number 107: September 2020



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Number 107 September 2020

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Recommended reading: The English Town: A History of Urban Life by Mark Girouard Yale University Press, The author traces the development of English cathedral towns, Regency spas and industrial cities, through the centuries



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: The Guardian has come out with its usual; nasty take on England and the English. We have responded but don't expect that rag to print our reply.



It seems that this government is wilfully ignorant or does not care about matters that affect England only. Axing Public Health England (PHE), one of the few organisations whose remit is England only, in favour of a UK wide organisation destroys the former PHE's primary role of concentrating on the health of us in England. Matt Hancock appears to confuse English interests with British. For him 'national' means British and the 'country' the UK. And why did PHE have the crest of the UK as its logo that included not only the Scottish unicorn but the arms of the whole of the UK? That is a clear indication of how shallow any acknowledgement of English interests is.

It appears that lockdown has made it more convenient for the UK's 800 or so peers to review, revise and vote on UK matters that, uniquely in the UK, include English domestic matters so that they can claim attendance allowance even though it has halved.

We hear that 'in the interests of the Union' Boris Johnson intends to relocate 11 UK Departments to Edinburgh. One hopes that they will not be concerned with English domestic policy. We will monitor this proposal.

We also learn this month that £2,000 more is spent per person in Scotland on public services than it raises in tax. Now I wonder where the bulk of that bonus comes from?

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Campaigning for England: The Guardian 15 Jul 2020 [https://](https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2020/jul/15/english-identity-patriotism-england-independent)

www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2020/jul/15/english-identity-patriotism-england-independent

Why it's time to stop talking about English identity: Countering conservative patriotism with a liberal version is almost impossible unless England becomes independent

By Alex Niven a lecturer in English literature at Newcastle University and the author of *New Model Island*:



The CEP's response to the Guardian article written by Alex Niven.

Alex Niven writes that he is surprised that the latest YouGov survey showed a third of England's population want English independence. This percentage rises to more than 50% among the over 60s.

If only he had looked at the 2011 census data he would discover that 61% of the population in England considered themselves English, and 9.9% considered themselves English first and British second. That is 70% of the population of England considered themselves English.

He writes: "these findings point to a key problem with the seemingly endless recent debate about English patriotism."

What endless debate? Politicians and mainstream media refuse to talk about it or, if they do, it is only to put it down or deride it. Between 2013 and 2018 the Campaign for an English Parliament (CEP) sent out over 3000 Press releases. Very few were published, 10/15-minute radio interviews were reduced to three second soundbites.

Niven asks: "which Imperial yoke would these hypothetical yes voters be throwing off in an English independence referendum. The United Kingdom, a nation state centred on, led by, and overwhelmingly dominated by England?"

The answer the CEP would suggest is: the yoke of an inequitable devolutionary system which has exacerbated the suppression of all things England and English in favour of Britain and Britishness. The yoke of the United Kingdom that it is deliberately trying to eradicate England and Englishness.

England does not dominate the UK – Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland all have varying degrees of self-government. You would be hard pressed to find an English person in any of those assemblies, but there are plenty of Scots, Welsh and, from time to time, Northern Irish sitting as MPs for English constituencies in the UK parliament. England's taxpayers, whether they like it or not, subsidise the lifestyles of the Scots, Welsh and Northern Irish, courtesy of the Barnett Formula.

John Denham, a former Labour government minister, has said that the whole ethos of the British political elite is the presumption of unionism, which has five parts.

England must be governed by the UK government.

The UK should govern England from Westminster.

That the national identity of England should be British.

That this state of affairs is so perfect that it cannot be changed.

That the maintenance of the Union requires that England is denied its nationhood.

Alex Niven also states: "the 2016 Brexit vote and its aftermath, the ugly scenes involving far right demonstrators in Trafalgar Square last month."

This is typical of so-called mainstream media, seeing English patriotism to be far-right and ugly. Whereas the far-left demonstrators who were actually rioting, burning and looting in several English cities at the same time were seen as "largely peaceful".

Niven writes: "England is such a confused, confusing entity, a country but not quite a nation, a territory but not quite a sovereign state."

In answer, refer back to John Denham's points given above. The English are a nation, it is just that nationhood is being denied by the UK political elite.

Mr Niven says: "one of the major problems with contemporary debates about Englishness is that England does not really exist as either a coherent idea or a concrete political reality. Because it has so few political institutions that are truly its own, no Parliament, no legal system, few cultural references to distinguish it from Britain as a whole."

Earlier in his article Niven was saying England dominated the UK, now he is saying England does not really exist. – so which is it?

He is correct: England has no parliament, unlike the other 3 nations of the UK it is wholly governed by the UK Parliament.

He is wrong: England does have its own legal system – as does Scotland, Northern Ireland and increasingly, Wales. English Common Law is also the foundation of the legal systems of the United States and the vast majority of Commonwealth countries.

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He is partially correct: England's culture is increasingly hard to distinguish from British – that is due to a deliberate policy of the UK governments, UK parliaments and the mainstream media.

The likes of the BBC say Rabbin Burns was Scottish, Dylan Thomas was Welsh, Oscar Wilde was Irish but William Shakespeare was British. The Wars of the Roses is described as a war for the British crown. Former Prime Minister Gordon Brown calls the English Channel, the British Channel. Celebrating St Patrick's Day (patron saint of Ireland) is encouraged but celebrating England's patron saint, St George, is deemed to be racist and actively discouraged.

According to Mr Niven: "the historian Benedict Anderson famously argued that all countries are imagined communities that develop their own fictional narratives over the years to create a sense of shared belonging."

Who is Benedict Anderson, you may well ask? He was born in China of Irish parents with dual United States and UK nationality, studied at Cornell University and Cambridge. He died in Java. A true internationalist, you might say. Anderson argued that in countries that are so large that the citizens do not know each other individually then they have to imagine a sense of community, but not that nations were fake.

It is a tool of subversives who wish to destroy a society that they first attack its roots and beliefs. That is what is happening to England today, the very bedrock of its past is being undermined.

Niven writes: "when we consider how ridiculously long ago it was since England was an autonomous nation, and how completely its sense of identity was replaced by Britishness in the several centuries since the foundation of the UK it's not much of an exaggeration to say that England barely exists at all. At the very least, feeling any kind of nationalism or patriotism for a nation that effectively disappeared a century before the invention of the steam engine seems deeply weird."

Up until the disappearance of the British Empire – say around 1970 – it was England and English that was used to refer to Great Britain and the British. Post 1970, the increasingly nationalist Scots were at pains to point out that this was not accurate. So, since then, the UK politicians and media have done their hardest to reverse the narrative and refer to Britain and British when they mean England and English.

Mr Niven goes on: "what, we might ask, does a modern ethnically diverse population of 56 million really have in common with the 5 million or so white people who lived in England prior to its mutation into the United Kingdom. I would suggest very little."

If suppression of England and Englishness continues then the current population may well have less and less in common with the England of the past. But, if England and Englishness is set free from the yoke of UK-ism the vast majority will accept it, embrace it, and develop it.

Niven further writes: "nationalism has a dubious history when it comes to progressive causes. But a half nation like England cannot even begin to form a part of a discussion about the reform of our cultural identity before it is backed up by the hard political reality of a fully sovereign English state, or at least the imminent prospect of English devolution. But increasingly it seems that until England is forced to reinvent itself in radical constitutional ways we need to stop talking about the chimera that is English identity and focus on more urgent more tangible political projects."

Nationalism may have a dubious history but it is on the rise everywhere. The Irish wanted their independence and got it. Most Scots are passionate about Scotland and Scottishness. An increasing number of Catalans want independence from Spain. The Chinese are nationalistic to the detriment of the rest of the world. But it seems the English, unique amongst the nations, must accept that they cannot be nationalistic. The whole tenure of Niven's article is anti-English. English history and culture are, at the same time, considered to be both bogus but also dominant, non-existent yet needing reinventing. Polling evidence shows that the English are alive and well, if a bit downtrodden due to the likes of Alex Niven and the UK political elite, who are desperately trying to erase England and the English.

Current English Affairs:

Health and Welfare

Care home coronavirus testing pledge abandoned

Andrew Gregory, Tim Shipman, Gabriel Pogrund & Shanti Das: August 02 2020, The Sunday Times

Ministers have abandoned a key pledge to test all people in care homes regularly throughout the summer, plunging the test and trace system into chaos.

In a leaked memo sent to local authority chief executives on Friday night, Professor Jane Cummings — the government's adult social care testing director — said "previously advised timelines for rolling out regular testing in care homes" were being torn up because of "unexpected delays".

Regular testing of almost two million residents and staff was supposed to have begun on July 6. But Cum-



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mings said it would not reach all care homes for older people and those with dementia until September 7. Other adult care homes will only be able to order test kits from August 31. She also admitted that the system for registering tests was “unnecessarily burdensome”.

A separate memo circulated among health officials last week said 64% of homes for the elderly or those with dementia had not had a round of “asymptomatic” testing. Of 9,144 homes, only 3,271 were sent testing equipment.

A senior public health official said more lives would “undoubtedly” be lost as a result.

Scientists on the Sage emergency committee demanded regular testing in care homes to prevent people with no symptoms spreading the virus between homes.

But Martin Green, chief executive of Care England, which represents providers, said: “This commitment has not been delivered. Many care homes have not had tests for a significant time.”

A government spokesman said: “A combination of factors has meant that a more limited number of testing kits, predominantly used in care homes, are currently available for asymptomatic retesting and we are working round the clock to restore capacity.”

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### **Coronavirus: Councils to pick up the bill for test-and-trace services**

Chris Smyth Wednesday August 12 2020, 12.00am, The Times

A third of NHS Test and Trace’s call centre staff are to be laid off and the rest deployed regionally to work with councils in an acknowledgement that the system has not been fighting local outbreaks effectively. Councils have been told to pay for local contact tracers themselves as health chiefs pleaded for help to put “boots on the ground” to track coronavirus cases.

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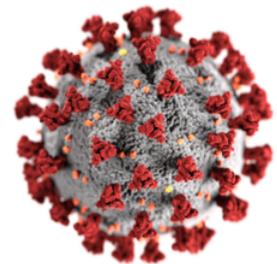
Council public health directors are pressing for a share of the service’s £10 billion budget to hire staff. Ministers are resisting handing over any money, saying they will offer councils extra testing and dedicated clinical call handlers but that it is up to local authorities to pay for their own staff.

Local authorities use council tax bills and welfare support records to track people who do not answer the phone to the test-and-trace service, with teams also sent to knock on doors.

Luton and Leicester councils, which have got on top of local outbreaks in recent weeks, said that their teams had an 80 per cent success rate in tracing contacts, significantly better than the national system.

Lucy Hubber, the deputy director of public health for Luton, said: “We are happy to do this, we think it’s better for our population, but we would expect a change in flow of resources.”

Jeanelle de Gruchy, president of the Association of Directors of Public Health, said that “valuing the local contribution of boots on the ground must mean funding it properly. She argued that tracers having face-to-face conversations on doorsteps were better able to persuade people to isolate for 14 days and to understand what practical or financial help they needed.”



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Public Health England (PHE):

PHE to be axed over coronavirus ‘failures’

Tony Grew and Magda Ibrahim: Sunday August 16 2020, 12.01am, The Sunday Times

Public Health England (PHE) will be axed and replaced with a new body amid concerns about its performance during the pandemic and fears of a rise in infections this autumn. PHE, an executive agency of the Department of Health and Social Care, employs about 5,500 people — mostly scientists and researchers — and has operational autonomy.

A new institute will for the first time give the government direct control over England’s response to the pandemic, with its chief executive reporting to ministers and Chris Whitty, the chief medical officer for England.

Matt Hancock, the health secretary, is expected to announce that PHE’s pandemic response work will be merged with the NHS test-and-trace system into a new body called the National Institute for Health Protection. “Its goal will be simple: to ensure that Britain is one of the best-equipped countries in the world to fight the pandemic.”

It is unclear how these changes will affect the UK-wide response to Covid-19, as Public Health Scotland and similar bodies in Wales and Northern Ireland report to the devolved administrations.

Ministers have privately been critical of PHE for being too thinly spread during the pandemic. It has wide responsibilities, including promoting healthier lifestyles and supporting local authorities and the NHS to

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Public Health
England

plan and provide health and social care services.

The Joint Biosecurity Centre was established in June to collect data about the prevalence of the disease to understand infection rates across the country and advise ministers on how to deal with increases in Covid-19 cases.

From the outset of the pandemic, PHE has had the task of providing data on coronavirus cases and deaths associated with the virus, as well as organising testing and laboratory evaluation, and working alongside contact tracers to manage the NHS test-and-trace service.

But the body has come under fire for its testing capacity and the way it recorded daily death figures.

Public Health England: Testing strategy was never our job, says scrapped body

Steven Swinford, Deputy Political Editor: Monday August 17 2020, 12.01am, The Times

Public Health England has suggested that the Department of Health was responsible for failures over coronavirus testing in the early stages of the pandemic as ministers prepare to axe the organisation.

Duncan Selbie, the organisation's chief executive, said: "This criticism of PHE's response to testing is based on a misunderstanding about our role. "The UK had no national diagnostic testing capabilities other than in the NHS at the outset of the pandemic. PHE does not do mass diagnostic testing. We operate national reference and research laboratories focused on novel and dangerous pathogens, and it was never at any stage our role to set the national testing strategy for the coronavirus pandemic. This responsibility rested with [the Department of Health and Social Care]. "Any suggestion that PHE monopolised, centralised and controlled pandemic testing and even stopped others from developing tests or conducting them is not true."

Matt Hancock: We must reform health quangos to fight future threats

Kat Lay, Health Correspondent: Wednesday August 19 2020, 9.00am, The Times

An overhaul of the public health system is necessary", Matt Hancock said and that there was "no time to lose". Comparing the plans to the structures Britain has to prevent terrorism or protect financial stability, he said: "While of course we must focus on immediate response, so too must we improve resilience and preparedness, not just for coronavirus but for the next threat that lies around the corner.

Mr Hancock, speaking at the Policy Exchange think tank in Westminster, was warned that efforts to tackle problems such as smoking and obesity, a key part of PHE's work, could suffer. Linda Bauld, a professor of public health at Edinburgh University, said: "The overwhelming burden of death and disease in this country is not caused by 'external threats', as Matt Hancock put it, such as infections and biological weapons. Instead it is caused by chronic diseases: cancer, cardiovascular disease, diabetes, dementia and others. A significant proportion of these diseases are preventable and Public Health England plays a central role in that." She said there was a "real risk" that the plans would threaten this.

Richard Murray, chief executive of the King's Fund think tank, said: "Public Health England appears to have been found guilty without a trial. It is unclear what problem government are hoping to solve by carving up PHE and redistributing its responsibilities. "Undoubtedly, there are questions to be answered about England's handling of the Covid-19 crisis, but the middle of a pandemic is not the time to dismantle England's public health agency."

Why is Public Health England being scrapped and what will replace it?

Kat Lay, Health Correspondent: Tuesday August 18 2020, 5.00pm, The Times

What was Public Health England? PHE was established in April 2013 as part of the controversial health reforms started by Lord Lansley, when he was the health secretary. As an "executive agency" of the Department of Health and Social Care it was ultimately under the direct control of ministers. Its aim was to "protect and improve the nation's health and wellbeing, and reduce health inequalities", with a wide range of responsibilities including supporting screening and immunisation programmes and encouraging the public to lead healthier lifestyles, as well as preparing for and responding to public health emergencies.

In 2018-19 it cost taxpayers £287 million, and its supporters have argued that it has faced "years of underfunding" while trying to tackle a particularly wide remit.

What is replacing it? The new National Institute for Health Protection announced yesterday by Matt Hancock will encompass PHE, NHS Test and Trace and the Joint Biosecurity Centre (JBC). It will be led by Baroness Harding.

What are the criticisms of the plans? One main area of concern is what will happen to PHE's non-pandemic work, such as its efforts to reduce levels of smoking, tackle obesity, and deal with sexual health problems. While Mr Hancock has said he wants to "embed" those policies across government and the NHS, those working in the field say they worry that if something is everybody's responsibility, and nobody specifically allocated to it, it risks falling through the cracks.

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## Roads and Transport :

### **New powers 'let councils milk drivers for millions'**

Graeme Paton, Transport Correspondent: Wednesday August 19 2020, 12.01am, The Times

Concerns were raised today over plans to give all councils the power to fine motorists for traffic offences after figures showed that London and Cardiff collected more than £58 million in fines in 12 months.

An analysis by the RAC found that the two cities handed out more than one million penalty charge notices to drivers for offences such as stopping in yellow box junctions, making prohibited turns and disobeying "no entry" signs in 2018-19.

London and Cardiff are the only two cities in England and Wales where local authorities have powers to penalise "moving traffic offences" such as stopping in yellow junctions. Elsewhere, the responsibility rests with police forces.

Last month the Department for Transport proposed to expand the powers to all councils in England, as part of a wider blueprint of tighter restrictions on cars to promote cycling in built-up areas.

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Seven more smart motorways will go ahead as upgrade is accelerated

Graeme Paton, Transport Correspondent: Friday August 21 2020, 12.01am, The Times

Critics maintain that smart motorways are "death traps" as the government introduces a specialist unit to accelerate road and rail upgrades. At least seven new routes without a hard shoulder will be approved to improve 4,000 miles of English roads.

The plan is likely to include building at least seven stretches of smart motorway where the hard shoulder is removed to create an extra lane and lay-bys are installed to allow vehicles to pull over if they break down. It is expected that the routes will be on the M62, M6, M56, the M40 and M42 interchange, A1(M), M25 and the M3, bringing the total number of smart motorway stretches in England above 60 by the middle of the decade, with most of the M6, M1 and M25 being converted.

The move is being made after Grant Shapps, the transport secretary endorsed the policy in March by insisting that the stretches were "as safe or safer" than conventional motorways.

Highways England will renew its commitment to a tunnel under Stonehenge, pending the outcome of a review by Mr Shapps which is due to end in November. It will also confirm plans for the UK's biggest road tunnel under the Thames east of Dartford to cut congestion on the M25.

These developments are part of a plan in which Highways England will outline how it will spend £27 billion to improve motorways and A-roads over the next five years. Mr Shapps will outline plans for an "acceleration unit" to speed up the construction of transport projects. Large numbers of schemes have been delayed or been subjected to sharp cost increases. This includes HS2, the cost of which has almost doubled to more than £100 billion and may not be completed until 2040, up to seven years late. The electrification of the Great Western mainline was heavily delayed and Crossrail, the east-west line, will not open through central London until late 2022, a delay of three years.

Road projects have been delayed, too. Last year it was announced that 10 out of 112 motorway and A-road upgrades in England due to be completed in the five years up to March this year had been cancelled or paused.

It comes despite a pending High Court challenge by environmental groups which claim that the proposals will fail to comply with Britain's commitments to cut greenhouse gas emissions.

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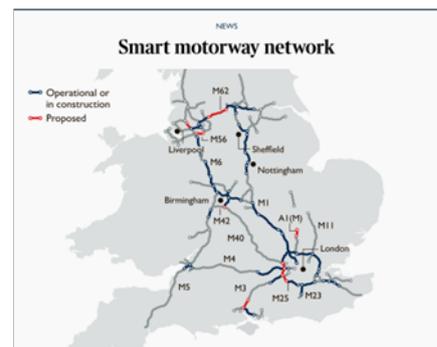
## Planning:

### **Councils lose power to thwart housebuilders**

Oliver Wright, Policy Editor: Monday August 03 2020, 12.01am, The Times

Ministers will announce what they describe as a planning revolution that will force authorities to allocate land for developments that will then not have to go through the full planning process.

Critics said yesterday that the move would reduce democratic accountability and lead to poor-quality new houses being built in areas without adequate public services. The Campaign for the Protection of Rural England (CPRE) said it would lead to a "gross oversimplification of the planning system" and was not the answer to the shortage of high-quality housing. The Local Government Association, which represents councils, said it would result in poorer-quality housing and take away the protection of residents to shape the



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area in which they lived.

The reforms:

- All land in local authority areas to be designated as either for renewal, development or protection.
- Developers wishing to build on land designated for renewal or development will no longer have to go through full planning procedures.
- Areas of outstanding beauty and green belt designated for protection.
- Standards to ensure properties match the style of existing homes.
- New system of developer contributions to local infrastructure.

**Councils are to be given up to three and half years to designate areas for growth, renewal or protection. Once agreed, however, local politicians will have little or no say over specific applications that fit the rules.**

Francis Elliott, Political Editor | Melissa York | Oliver Wright August 06 2020, 9.00am, The Times

Boris Johnson believes the planning system puts the country at a disadvantage against international competitors. Ministers insist that residents will be consulted over how land is designated and on “design codes” to ensure that new buildings fit in. They are braced, however, for opposition from councils.

Meeting the government’s target of 300,000 new homes a year by the mid-2020s and a million over the five-year parliament will be impossible without radical reform, they believe.

The Royal Institute of British Architects attacked the plans as “shameful” and claimed they would do “almost nothing to guarantee the building of affordable, well-designed and sustainable homes”.

Robert Jenrick, the housing secretary, told Times Radio that more money would be spent on social infrastructure, with an emphasis on “local vernacular and identity, tree-lined streets and parks and open spaces,

**Boris Johnson has promised to rejuvenate the economy with a “build, build, build” strategy**

Steven Swinford, Deputy Political Editor: Tuesday August 25 2020, 12.01am, The Times

Boris Johnson has been warned that an algorithm at the heart of his planning reforms is at risk of “levelling down” city and town centres. Under the changes to planning laws, local discretion over the rate of house-building will be removed and central government will “distribute” an annual target, at present 337,000 a year, among local councils. They will then be required to designate enough land to meet the target.

Analysis by Lichfields, a planning consultancy, has suggested that outside London much of the new housing will be concentrated in Conservative local authority areas in the suburbs and the shires, rather than in town centres. The analysis suggested that under the algorithm new housing will be built predominantly in London and the South East. The number of homes built in London would nearly treble, to 93,532, and the number in the South East would increase by 57 per cent, to 61,000.

The increase in the East of England would be 43 per cent, the East Midlands 33 per cent, the West Midlands 25 per cent and the South West 24 per cent. The North East, North West and Yorkshire and the Humber would all have lower overall numbers of homes built than the present three-year average.

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Historic Appledore shipyard sets fresh course under new owner Infrastrata

Robert Lea, Industrial Editor: Wednesday August 26 2020, 12.01am, The Times

Britain’s smallest large shipyard is to set sail again. Appledore in North Devon, which was closed down last year amid a political row with Gavin Williamson when he was defence secretary, has been bought by the owner of Harland & Wolff.

Infrastrata has bought the Appledore yard for £7 million from Langham Industries, its long-time private owner, after Babcock, the military services group that had been leasing and operating the facility, was forced to shut up shop when Mr Williamson refused to give it any more Ministry of Defence work.

The deal opens up a second maritime front for Infrastrata, which previously was known as Portland Gas.

Appledore has been a specialist in boats under 120 metres. Its last jobs on Babcock’s watch involved building patrol vessels for the Irish navy.

The Department for Transport is looking to replace the 72-metre Trinity House vessel THV *Patricia*, which maintains offshore lighthouses and navigational buoys. The Royal Navy needs multirole work boats and support ships for its two new aircraft carriers.

It also is assumed that the Home Office wants to invest in a new fleet of border patrol vessels policing migrant incursions in the English Channel and any future agitation over fishing rights in coastal waters.

However, John Wood, Infrastrata’s founder, said that Appledore could not rely on such work. Therefore, it is pitching for commercial work to repair and build cruise ships and ferries, including the new Scillonian shut-



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tle to the Isles of Scilly, as well as building vessels needed to support the construction boom of offshore wind and marine energy arrays. He said that the yard also could work on steel fabrication for renewable energy projects, as well as for the existing oil and gas industry. Mr Wood said that he hoped Harland & Wolff and Appledore could work together. "Our vision is to transform them into thriving centres of excellence that create jobs, train apprentices and re-establish this country at the forefront of a new generation of shipyards," he said. He added that many of Appledore's workforce had moved jobs to the Babcock-run Devonport dockyard in Plymouth, but he was hoping to entice them back.



English politics:

Peers vote in droves under lockdown — to claim £1m

Caroline Wheeler and Tom Calver: Sunday August 09 2020, 12.01am, The Sunday Times

Records show that 75 peers who had not previously voted this year did vote in 'virtual divisions'

Peers claimed almost £1m in taxpayer-funded "attendance" allowances while working from home during the lockdown.

Since the rules were changed to pay peers £162 a day, participation has soared to record levels.

An average of 502 peers voted in each of the 18 divisions that were held in June — the highest monthly average since 2000. By contrast, the average number who voted during the 2017-19 session was 360 a month.

Before the coronavirus crisis, the daily attendance allowance was £323. This was halved to £162 on May 6 to discourage members — most of whom are over 70 and in the "at-risk" category — from attending in person.

However, peers have claimed a total of £926,000 since April, according to a response to a parliamentary question. They claimed £624,000 in June, working out as 3,850 payments across only 17 full sitting days.

This means that, on average, nearly a third of the chamber claimed an allowance each day. Analysis of parliamentary records reveals that 75 peers who had not previously voted this year did vote in the new "virtual divisions".

A hardcore of 110 peers — about a seventh of the total number — have voted in every division so far since the Lords started sitting again in late April.

A full breakdown of which peers have made claims will not be published for several months.

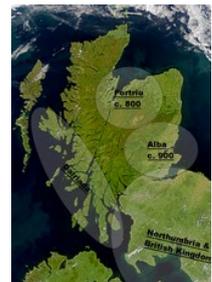
The House of Lords said: "The reduced allowance of £162 is the maximum a member can claim for participating in the business of the House."

Edinburgh hub 'proves Boris Johnson's dedication to Union'

Tom Eden: Tuesday August 11 2020, 12.01am, The Times

A new UK government hub in Edinburgh epitomises the prime minister's commitment to the Union, the Scottish secretary said on his first visit to the completed building.

Queen Elizabeth House, near Waverley Station, will house about 3,000 UK government workers, with civil servants from 11 departments to be based at the new building from September. On his visit with Lord Keen of Elie, the advocate-general for Scotland, and the MPs Iain Stewart and David Duguid, Alister Jack said that the new site was part of a wider strategy intended to increase the UK government's presence north of the border.



Brexit: Westminster accused of 'power grab' by Scotland's constitution secretary

Tom Eden: Thursday August 13 2020, 12.01am, The Times

Mike Russell criticised proposals to establish an internal market between the four nations at the end of the Brexit transition period, claiming "every devolved power could be undermined".

He argued that the proposed legislation considers Westminster to be sovereign in trade and regulation disputes, and the British government has "a veto on everything".

"It reveals completely the agenda of the current UK government, which is hostile to devolution and hostile particularly to Wales and Scotland for exercising their rights under devolution."

Scotland's Union dividend rises to £2,000 per person

Kieran Andrews, Scottish Political Editor Wednesday August 26 2020, 5.00pm, The Times

The "dividend" Scotland receives for being part of the United Kingdom has increased to almost £2,000 per

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person, according to official figures.

The annual Government Expenditure and Revenue Scotland (GERS) figures show that £15.1 billion more was spent on public services north of the border than was raised in taxes last year.

Gers estimated that Scotland raised £308 less per person than the UK average in taxation, and public spending was £1,663 per person higher.

This creates a "Union dividend" of £1,941 per person, up from £1,805 the previous year. The Spending as a share of GDP increased in Scotland, according to the report. This was "largely due to the spending increases announced by the UK", it added.

The figures do not take into account the bulk of the UK government's spending to support 930,000 Scottish jobs during the pandemic.

Scotland's tax revenues increased by £436 million last year to almost £65.9 billion, according to the report, although the amount provided by North Sea oil and gas halved from £1.4 billion to £0.7 billion.

Tracy Black, the CBI Scotland director, said: "Even without considering the impact of coronavirus it's clear that Scotland continues to spend significantly more than it raises in tax."

England's hero : Michael Faraday FRS (22 September 1791 – 25 August 1867)

was an English scientist who contributed to the study of electromagnetism and electrochemistry. His main discoveries include the principles underlying electromagnetic induction, diamagnetism and electrolysis.

Although Faraday received little formal education, he was one of the most influential scientists in history. It was by his research on the magnetic field around a conductor carrying a direct current that Faraday established the basis for the concept of the electromagnetic field in physics. Faraday also established that magnetism could affect rays of light and that there was an underlying relationship between the two phenomena. He similarly discovered the principles of electromagnetic induction and diamagnetism, and the laws of electrolysis. His inventions of electromagnetic rotary devices formed the foundation of electric motor technology, and it was largely due to his efforts that electricity became practical for use in technology.

As a chemist, Faraday discovered benzene, investigated the clathrate hydrate of chlorine, invented an early form of the Bunsen burner and the system of oxidation numbers, and popularised terminology such as "anode", "cathode", "electrode" and "ion". Faraday ultimately became the first and foremost Fullerian Professor of Chemistry at the Royal Institution, a lifetime position.

Faraday was an excellent experimentalist who conveyed his ideas in clear and simple language; his mathematical abilities, however, did not extend as far as trigonometry and were limited to the simplest algebra. James Clerk Maxwell took the work of Faraday and others and summarized it in a set of equations which is accepted as the basis of all modern theories of electromagnetic phenomena. The SI unit of capacitance is named in his honour: the farad.

Albert Einstein kept a picture of Faraday on his study wall. Physicist Ernest Rutherford stated, "When we consider the magnitude and extent of his discoveries and their influence on the progress of science and of industry, there is no honour too great to pay to the memory of Faraday, one of the greatest scientific discoverers of all time."



Painting of Faraday (1842)
by Thomas Phillips

England's history: September 16, 1620 - The Mayflower ship departed from Plymouth, England, bound for America with 102 passengers and a crew of about 30. The ship weathered dangerous Atlantic storms and reached Provincetown, Massachusetts on November 21st. The Pilgrims disembarked at Plymouth on December 26th. **Mayflower** was an English ship that transported the first English Puritans, known today as the Pilgrims, from England to the New World in 1620. After a gruelling 10 weeks at sea, the *Mayflower*, reached America, dropping anchor near the tip of Cape Cod.



A congregation of approximately four hundred English Puritans chose to live as separatists in religiously tolerant Holland in 1608. As separatists, they were considered illegal radicals by their home country of England.

The government of Leiden was recognized for offering financial aid to reformed churches, which made it a sought-after destination for Protestant intellectuals. Many of the separatists were illegal members of a

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church in Nottinghamshire England, secretly practicing their Puritan form of Protestantism. When they learned that the authorities were aware of their congregation, church members fled in the night with little more than the clothes they were wearing, and clandestinely made it to Holland.

However, life in Holland became increasingly difficult for the congregation. They were forced into menial and backbreaking jobs.

In addition, a number of the country's leading theologians began engaging in open debates which led to civil unrest, instilling the fear that Spain might again place Holland's population under siege, as it had done years earlier. England's James I subsequently formed an alliance with Holland against Spain, with a condition outlawing independent English church congregations in Holland. Thus formed the separatists' motivating factors to sail for the New World, with the benefit of being beyond the reach of King James and his bishops. After deciding to leave Holland, they planned to cross the Atlantic using two purchased ships. A small ship with the name Speedwell would first carry them from Leiden to England. Then the larger Mayflower would be used to transport most of the passengers and supplies the rest of the way.

The Pilgrims had originally hoped to reach America in early October using two ships, but delays and complications meant they could use only one, the *Mayflower*. Arriving in November, they had to survive unprepared through a harsh winter. As a result, only half of the original Pilgrims survived the first winter at Plymouth. Without the help of local Indigenous peoples to teach them food gathering and other survival skills, all of the colonists may have perished. The following winter, they celebrated the colony's first fall harvest along with the Indigenous people, which became the first Thanksgiving.

English culture: Election of the Lord Mayor of London: Guildhall Yard;

The office of Mayor was instituted in 1189, the first holder of the office being Henry Fitz-Ailwin de Londonestone. The Mayor of the City of London has been elected by the City, rather than appointed by the Sovereign, ever since a Royal Charter providing for a Mayor was issued by King John in 1215. The title "Lord Mayor" came to be used after 1354, when it was granted to Thomas Legge (then serving his second of two terms) by King Edward III.



Stained glass in Guildhall, London, showing Henry Fitz Ailwin

Lord Mayors are elected for one-year terms; by custom, they do not now serve more than one consecutive term. Numerous individuals have served multiple terms in office, including:

As Mayor:

24 terms: Sir Henry FitzAlan (1189–1212)

9 terms: Ralph de Sandwich (1285–1289, 1289–1292)

8 terms: Gregory de Rokesley (1274–1280, 1284)

7 terms: Andrew Buckerel (1231–1237); John le Breton (1289, 1293–1298); John le Blund (1301–1307)

6 terms: Richard le Ranger (1222–1226, 1238); Hamo de Chigwell (1319, 1321, 1322, 1324, 1325, 1327)

5 terms: Serlo le Mercer (1214, 1218–1221)

As Lord Mayor:

Sir Nicholas Brembre (1377, 1383–1385; 4 terms)

Sir Richard ('Dick') Whittington (1397, 1398, 1406 and 1419; 4 terms)

The last individual to serve multiple terms was Sir Robert Fowler (elected in 1883 and in 1885).

Almost 700 people have served as Lord Mayor. Dame Mary Donaldson GBE, elected in 1983, as well as Dame Fiona Woolf DBE, elected in 2013, are the only women to have held the office.

Since 1435, the Lord Mayor has been chosen from amongst the Aldermen of the City of London.

The Lord Mayor is elected at Common Hall, comprising liverymen belonging to all of the City's livery companies. Common Hall is summoned by the sitting Lord Mayor; it meets at Guildhall on Michaelmas Day (29 September) or on the closest weekday. Voting is by show of hands; if, however, any liveryman so demands, balloting is held a fortnight later.

Promotion: English produce: Plums

Plums are grown throughout England but mainly in Hertfordshire, Kent, Herefordshire, Essex, Nottinghamshire, Lancashire, Northamptonshire and Lincolnshire.

Plums are fruit of the subgenus *Prunus* of the genus *Prunus*. The subgenus is distinguished from other subgenera (peaches, cherries, bird cherries, etc.) Dried plum fruits are often called prunes.

Plums may have been one of the first fruits domesticated by humans. Three of the most abundant cultivars are not found in the wild, only around human settlements: *Prunus domestica* has been traced to East Euro-

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pean and Caucasian mountains, while *Prunus salicina* and *Prunus simonii* originated in Asia. Plum remains have been found in Neolithic age archaeological sites along with olives, grapes and figs. According to Ken Albala, plums originated in Iran. The name plum derived from Old English *plume* or "plum, plum tree." Plums are a diverse group of species. The commercially important plum trees are medium-sized.

Plum cultivars include:

Damson (purple or black skin, green flesh, clingstone, astringent)

Greengage (firm, green flesh and skin even when ripe)

Mirabelle (dark yellow, predominantly grown in northeast France)

Satsuma plum (firm red flesh with a red skin)

Victoria (yellow flesh with a red or mottled skin)

Yellowgage or golden plum (similar to greengage, but yellow)

The taste of the plum fruit ranges from sweet to tart; the skin itself may be particularly tart. It is juicy and can be eaten fresh or used in jam-making or other recipes.

Plum juice can be fermented into plum wine. In central England, a cider-like alcoholic beverage known as plum jerkum is made from plums



Sloe or blackthorn, *Prunus spinosa*



Victoria plums

Recipe: Lighter plum and almond traybake

HANDS-ON TIME 10 MIN, OVEN TIME 30-35 MIN, PLUS COOLING

Ingredients:

100g unsalted butter, softened

155g jar apple sauce (we used Colman's Bramley

Apple Sauce)

1 tsp vanilla extract

100g wholemeal flour

1 tsp baking powder

12 plums, 5 chopped, 7 cut into halves and quarters

100g golden caster sugar

4 large free-range eggs

150g ground almonds

¼ tsp bicarbonate of soda

¼ tsp fine sea salt

Clear honey for drizzling

25g toasted flaked almonds



You will also need a 20cm x 30cm cake tin, greased and lined with baking paper

Method:

Heat the oven to 180°C/160°C fan/gas 4. Using an electric hand mixer, whisk the butter and sugar in a large mixing bowl until pale and fluffy. In a jug, use a fork to beat the apple sauce with the eggs and vanilla extract until just combined. In a bowl, mix the ground almonds, flour, bicarbonate of soda, baking powder and salt.

Whisk one-third of the egg mix into the butter and sugar until just combined, followed by one third of the dry ingredients. Repeat until all the wet and dry ingredients have been added. Fold in the chopped plums using a large metal spoon, then pour the mixture into the cake tin and level the top with a spatula. Arrange the plum halves/quarters on top of the mixture, then bake for 30-35 minutes until risen and golden.

Put the cake in its tin on a wire rack to cool, then transfer from the tin to a board, drizzle with honey and scatter with flaked almonds to serve.

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(Sucking England dry)

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