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

Think of England Number 115: May 2021



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Number 115 May 2021

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RECOMMENDED READING: That Will Be England Gone by Michael Henderson: The Last Summer of Cricket a nostalgic look at disappearing ways of doing cricket and disappearing ways of English life. Constable, £20



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: There were too many articles on the unequal UK constitution to include this month but hopefully they can be included in subsequent issues.



Despite the claims of the SNP that they rarely interfere in our lawmaking experience tells us that they have no such scruples when the interests of Scots are at stake. Thus unaccountable SNP MPs are supporting the use of Covid passports in England, a measure to which there are many objections by MPs of English constituencies. English votes for English laws was supposed to have stopped this but that meagre measure for England has been suspended. Of course our MPs cannot similarly interfere in Scottish law making when English people might be impacted! The SNP used the same bogus argument over English votes for English laws and an English select committee.

Alex Massie bemoans the fact that democracy in a union means the will of the majority. However to have it any other way brings us to 'minority rule' decried when exercised in South Africa. He says that Whitehall imperiously disregards the opinion of the other parts of the UK. What does he mean by the other parts, those not in Whitehall? And the 'elephant'? Both are code for England, which has no constitutional existence. Moreover he avers that we in England should mind our manners. While we are talking manners perhaps he should reflect that there is no representation for England in the Constitutional Reform Group. Until England has a parliament the boil will never be lanced. England and Britain will still be conflated in Westminster, abroad and by journalists.

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Campaigning for England : the state of the Union

Johnson must resist this very English unionism

Alex Massie: Monday April 12 2021, 12.01am, The Times

Westminster's problems with Scotland and Northern Ireland now are symptomatic of 20 years of short-term thinking. Pierre Trudeau, the former prime minister of Canada, once noted that his country's relationship with the United States was akin to finding oneself in bed with an elephant. This might be a strange arrangement but so long as the elephant behaved itself, it need not be an uncomfortable one. If the elephant starts to thrash around, however, everyone else risks being squashed. Well, England is the United Kingdom's elephant and Brexit is the moment it chose to remind its bedmates that even pachyderms must from time to time be permitted to exercise their prerogatives. If that made life less comfortable for Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, then so be it. The littler nations would just have to lump it.

There is a logic there but while certain choices may be made on a UK-wide basis their consequences are not necessarily shared equitably. Brexit set new constitutional fires blazing in Scotland and Northern Ireland while also introducing fresh tensions between London and Cardiff. Many of these problems had a common origin: the sense that the voices of the smaller nations were ignored.

In England, however, a different narrative has taken hold. England's rights must be respected and it is past time that the devolved administrations were put in their place. A new, more muscular "unionism" is emerging that is intensely suspicious of the devolved administrations. This is a very English form of "unionism", largely alien to unionists in Scotland or Northern Ireland or even Wales.

David Cameron once bemoaned Whitehall's tendency to "devolve and forget" but this is a second-order offence far less important than the primary inability to understand the realities of multinational, indeed multicultural, Britain. In the year of the virus, the true nature of the UK's constitution has spawned some hard learning. Often Boris Johnson has, in effect, been relegated to the status of prime minister of England. A new report is published today by the Bennett Institute for Public Policy at the University of Cambridge Titled "*Union at the Crossroads: can the British state handle the challenges of devolution?*", the report asks a question to which the implied answer is "not as presently constituted". With considerable understatement, it observes that there is an "absence of a deep and strategic capability within British government in the field of territorial relations". Too often Whitehall exhibits what the report deems an "imperious disregard" for the prerogatives of the other parts of the UK.

Inconveniently, in many aspects of the day-to-day management of the emergency the first minister of Scotland, is the equal of a prime minister whose responsibilities are often confined to England.

Even if you think the devolved parliaments are subordinate, it would be wiser never to actually say so in public. Parliaments are easily conflated with the people they serve, and a slight on Holyrood, Cardiff Bay or Stormont is swiftly perceived as a slight on the smaller nations. If this signals a certain prickliness on their part, it should also remind the elephant to remember his manners. The precise detail of constitutional authority matters much less than a perception that the smaller nations are overlooked, ignored and not afforded the respect they are due. Again, it is a question of sensibility and of tact.

The UK is not formally a federal entity but de facto, and even in the absence of a codified constitution, it possesses many of the features of a federal state anyway. It is a country of surprising, if often unrecognised, diversity in which unitary institutions are rarer than many people, including many MPs, think. It has no single education system, no single system of law, no pan-UK established church; even the NHS, notionally that great symbol of British unity, is actually organised along national lines.

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### Times letters 13/4/21 ENGLISH UNIONISM

Sir, Further to Alex Massie's article ("Johnson must resist this very English nationalism", Apr 12), there is a way of the United Kingdom remaining united but it will be a close call, should Scotland vote for independence. There should be four lower parliaments with the same powers. Over the top should be a senate made up of elected representatives from the four countries, dealing with such issues as the Treasury, Foreign Office, green matters, big infrastructure projects, all things digital and not much else. Sadly there is no interest in 10 Downing Street or Westminster for greater democratic reform. **Derek Wyatt**, Former Labour MP, Aldeburgh, Suffolk

Sir, Alex Massie is concerned that the smaller UK nations should be treated with tact and generosity. It should be remembered that England has acquiesced in being under-represented in the Commons relative to Scotland and Wales; in the Barnett formula for public spending; and in the West Lothian asymmetry. And unlike Scotland and Wales, the English have not been consulted in a referendum about these arrangements.



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It is hard to imagine that any other nation would have been more generous. **Brian Andrews**, London

### SNP open to voting for Covid passports in England

Daily Telegraph: Ben Riley-Smith, political editor and Harry Yorke, Whitehall editor,  
6 April 2021 •



The Party's Westminster leader considers backing status checks in move that would derail growing Commons rebellion. The SNP's Westminster leader has opened the door to voting for Covid status checks in England – likely to all but guarantee Commons support for the move despite a growing Tory rebellion. Ian Blackford told The Telegraph he is considering backing the checks, described as Covid passports, provided they include people's negative test results as the Government has proposed. The move would be likely to prove controversial because Scottish MPs traditionally do not vote on matters that only affect constituencies in England. But Mr Blackford pre-empted such criticism by arguing that Scots who travel into England to meet friends and work would be impacted by the checks, meaning SNP MPs can vote on them.

It would mean Labour's increasingly critical stance on Covid status certification would not be enough to stop the checks unless there was a major increase in the number of Tory rebels. The SNP has more than 40 MPs, making them a sizeable voting bloc among the 650 MPs in the Commons. "There really needs to be a conversation that takes place across all four governments [across the UK] on this. When it comes to SNP MPs potentially voting on such matters in Westminster, these measures will affect Scots visiting friends or for work in England."

In recent years, so-called "English votes for English laws" rules have meant support from a majority of English MPs is needed for legislation to advance in its early stages, but such rules have been suspended during the pandemic and it is unclear when they will return. Even under those rules, SNP MPs can vote in the final, binding vote on new laws.

### Telegraph :The Union will remain in peril until an English parliament is on the table

Philip Johnston 20 April 2021 • 9:30pm

We are on the cusp of the greatest constitutional crisis for 100 years. Victory for the SNP in the Holyrood elections will confront Boris Johnson with a renewed demand for an independence referendum which he proposes to deny them. Is constitutional reform the answer or are political solutions available? The immediate threats could be disarmed by two decisions. The first would be to accept that a SNP win is a mandate for another referendum and let Nicola Sturgeon hold one.

This is the best time possible for Unionists. Scotland's voters are aware that being part of the UK has helped them through the Covid pandemic and accelerated the arrival of a vaccine. They know they get a good deal out of the Barnett formula, with £130 spent on public services north of the Border for every £100 spent in England.

But denying a referendum will change the narrative to one of an English Tory leader blocking Scotland's right to self-determination. Those urging Boris to tough it out need to consider that it will be politically impossible to hold the line but by then the advantage will have been lost. Boris should call Ms Sturgeon's bluff by proposing an immediate plebiscite and not wait until 2023 as the SNP leader has suggested. It would be a gamble but one the separatists would lose.

Since these are essentially matters of identity, instead of cobbled together political solutions that fall apart with a change of administration, might they need permanent fixing through new structures of governance? To that end, the Constitution Reform Group (CRG) is today proposing a new Act of Union to forestall what they fear will be the break-up of the UK. Made up of Tory, Labour and Lib Dem politicians, as well as former first ministers of Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, the CRG says in a letter sent to all party leaders that the existing constitutional arrangements for the UK are "unsustainable and deficient".

When it comes to discussing these great matters, however, the biggest piece of the jigsaw always seems to be ignored. It's all well and good proposing a new relationship between the constituent parts of the kingdom, but it needs to accommodate the dominant member, England.

Indeed, one reason why devolution was always a problematic concept was because it enfeebled the centrifugal forces of the Union that bind England to the rest. Its institutions tend to unify, whereas the differing traditions and history of its component parts pull in the opposite direction.

Devolution weakened the glue that held the whole together but there is no going back. The challenge is how to stop it cracking apart entirely and this needs to address the English Question. While the English feel their identity strongly, they rarely make much of it.

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St George's Day has events up and down the land, more so than when I was growing up, but the Thames won't be dyed red and white nor will many people be sporting red roses in their lapels. Overt expressions of Englishness always appear to be frowned upon whereas flaunting one's Irish or Scots heritage is almost obligatory.

Without committing itself, the CRG says the option should be available, through a referendum, to set up an English parliament and replace the House of Lords with an elected national assembly. Would this help consolidate a new set of constitutional arrangements – or blow them apart because of England's size and dominance? I don't know the answer to that question; but it certainly needs to be discussed within the context of a proposed new settlement.

Boris Johnson, like his predecessors, will not want to go anywhere near this if he can avoid it, hoping that defeat for the SNP and a wet summer in Northern Ireland will dampen the immediate problems he might otherwise face. Yet in their 2019 manifesto, the Tories promised to set up a constitutional commission to look at all the issues thrown up by devolution, Brexit, judicial activism and the rest.

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Current English Affairs: Environment, health, transport, economy, local governance

Raw sewage spilling out 1,000 times a day into rivers and seas

Andrew Ellson, Consumer Affairs Correspondent: Thursday April 01 2021, 12.01 am, The Times

Raw sewage spilt into rivers and seas more than 400,000 times last year as population growth and climate change put greater pressure on the country's waste infrastructure. More than three million hours of spills were recorded from overflow pipes, according to the Environment Agency.

Storm overflows are designed to discharge diluted sewage into waterways during heavy rainfall to prevent it from backing up into homes and streets. The Rivers Trust described the volume of overflow as "shocking" and said that it demonstrated why sewage infrastructure needs a "radical overhaul". The number of spills recorded was 27 per cent higher than the year before, although the increase was partly because of better monitoring of spills.

Michelle Walker, of the Rivers Trust said "if storm overflows work as designed, they will discharge less than 20 times per year, when there has been extreme rainfall. The 2020 data indicates that, appallingly, almost one in five overflows across England are discharging more than 60 times per year, a number that is supposed to trigger an Environment Agency investigation."



The Times view on falling numbers of field trees: Country Matters

Thursday April 15 2021, 12.01 am, The Times

The English countryside has changed dramatically since its depictions by Thomas Gainsborough and John Constable. Most strikingly, there are far fewer trees. The pressures of urban development has threatened woodlands and modern farming has depleted field trees, which are either isolated trees or small groups of them. A report this week by the Woodland Trust, a conservation charity, concludes that as much as four fifths of the country's field trees may have been lost since the advent of intensive farming.

That means a loss not only in scenic beauty but in the quality of the environment. The government has promised to more than double the annual planting rate of trees to 30,000 hectares a year by 2025, at a rate of 1,000 trees per hectare, but the reality is falling short. The proportion of Britain covered by woodland amounts to just over 13%, which the Climate Change Committee recommends should increase to 17%. This is still far below the woodland cover of 31% for France and 33% for Germany.

Woodland Trust volunteers found that just over half of the 1.2 million trees originally depicted had been lost. In total, some 84 per cent of field trees had been felled, or had died, and not been replaced. It is likely that the same picture holds in other parts of rural England.

A lack of scrutiny has enabled farmers to fell trees they regard as a nuisance. Some pledge to replace the trees by planting new ones in other locations. Yet the natural environment gains much from simply being durable. Mature oaks, for example, support more than 2,300 species, including birds and insects. The sharp reduction in Britain's butterfly population may be attributable in part to the decline of the ecosystem that trees provide. Ancient woodland covers about 2.5 per cent of the land area of Britain and half of that has already suffered damage from urbanisation or commercial forestry. Since 2018, planning applications have been required to take greater account of ancient woodland, but replacement as well as protection is needed. Respect for the environment does not mean it is untouchable; it ought to entail, however, that

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what is removed is replenished.

A £50 million government scheme launched in 2019 to encourage landowners and farmers to plant more trees is the right idea. These comprise native broadleaf trees and conifers. Yet the pace and ambition are dwarfed by the task.

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### **Greenfield developments in areas of natural beauty have doubled**

Ben Webster, Environment Editor: Thursday April 22 2021, The Times  
Parts of England protected for their beauty are being blighted by a doubling in the amount of greenfield land opened up to sprawling “executive home” developments, according to a report.

Permission has been granted for development on an average of 294 acres of greenfield land per year within England’s 34 Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs) since 2017, up from an average of 128 acres a year in the previous five years, according to research commissioned by CPRE, the countryside charity.

The High Weald AONB, which covers parts of Sussex, Kent and Surrey, is facing the largest amount of development, with 932 houses approved since 2017. Another 771 homes have been approved in the Dorset area, 592 in the Chilterns and 684 in the Cotswolds. The research found that twice as much land as the national average was used per new home in developments in AONBs, with builders focusing on large “executive” properties. Only 16 per cent of the homes met the government’s definition of affordable, which includes those sold or rented at lower than market value.

CPRE is calling for changes to planning rules to prioritise conserving AONBs over meeting housing targets and any developments in such areas to focus on providing affordable and social homes for local people. However, guidelines state that large developments can be permitted in these areas in “exceptional circumstances” and where it would be in the public interest. These terms are not clearly defined, creating loopholes for developers to use.



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Submissions to the a transport select committee

Graeme Paton, Transport Correspondent: Tuesday April 06 2021, 12.01am, The Times

350 miles of smart motorway ‘brought in by stealth’: An independent report said that motorists had been repeatedly misled over the expansion of motorways without a hard shoulder, often being provided with “incomplete information”.

The analysis, commissioned by the Irwin Mitchell, a law firm, carried out by Sarah Simpson, a transport planner at Royal Haskoning DHV, a consultancy said that there had been more effective consultation into changes to bus stops than hundreds of miles of smart motorways. Additionally there was no evidence of any formal consultation by Highways England, a government-owned company over the policy until 2019 and parts of the policy, including the removal of the hard shoulder, were covered in existing regulations and as such no specific consultation was required.

It suggests that drivers and motoring groups have had little opportunity to challenge the roads despite big safety concerns. Sir Mike Penning, who was roads minister between 2010 and 2012, has previously said that he was “totally misled” by officials over the policy.

Simpson’s report said that smart motorways with no hard shoulder at all — known as all lane running — had a worse safety record than other motorways. It said the risk of breaking down in a live vehicle lane was 216 per cent higher on a smart motorway without a hard shoulder than a standard one.

April 21 2021: Smart motorways will be made safer but ministers reject hard shoulders: A report from Highways England states that new safety measures on smart motorways will be accelerated by up to ten months. However the government warns that reinstating the hard shoulder on existing smart motorways would make roads more dangerous by reducing capacity by a quarter resulting in congestion on the motorways that would cause significant numbers of drivers to divert to far less safe roads.

It was announced that radar technology which detects broken down vehicles in “live” lanes would be introduced to all existing smart motorways by September next year, six months earlier than planned.

Additionally, no new smart motorways will open without the technology being installed first, affecting six routes under construction: two on the M6 and one each on the M1, M4, M27 and M56.

The commitments fell short of the wholesale reforms demanded by motoring groups and crash victims’ families who have labelled smart motorways “death traps” because of the risk posed to broken down vehicles. Four coroners have warned of the risk of future deaths linked to the smart motorway system after

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fatal crashes. The AA and RAC have called for more laybys — which are spaced up to 1.5 miles apart at present — to allow vehicles to pull off the motorway in an emergency.

Yesterday's report repeated figures published more than 12 months ago which said that fatal casualty rates on conventional motorways were a third higher than on smart motorways — 0.16 per hundred million vehicle miles compared with 0.12.



April 24 2021: Smart motorways delaying fire brigade callouts: It was reported last Sunday that it had taken ambulance crews 24 minutes to get to the scene of a serious crash on a smart motorway section of the M1 in March 2019. Ambulances had to be diverted the wrong way down the opposite carriageway in an attempt to reach the incident because of traffic blocking the rest of the motorway.

The London Fire Brigade said that Highways England can temporarily shut a lane to allow emergency services to reach a crash but insisted vehicles “close to the incident are unlikely to be able to move out of the way, causing delay to our response”.

In a separate submission to MPs, a former senior civil servant said that the benefits appeared to have been exaggerated. David Metz, former chief scientist at the Department for Transport, pointed to the conversion of part of the M25. He said that time savings and the speeding up of traffic were “lost” after a year, mainly because more cars diverted off local roads on to the motorway. In a further disclosure, he raised serious doubts over the value of the roads, saying that they often “fail to deliver” benefits such as improvements in traffic flows.

April 26 2021: Smart motorway cameras faulty or poorly placed, says ex-worker: An internal Highways England report in 2019 showed that CCTV operators took an average of 17 minutes to spot broken-down vehicles

A former Highways England employee has warned of serious failings on smart motorways, saying that “safety is very questionable” and that “technology installed is very poor and unreliable, its implementation and repair can at best be inconsistent” and that CCTV cameras installed to watch the carriageway were often faulty or placed in the wrong position. One camera had been pointed directly at an overhead gantry, completely blocking its view of the road. He criticised delays in fixing faults and said there was a shortage of staff and that training for control room workers had been cut.

Faults were reported to contractors but engineers often “cannot attend as there is nowhere to stop with their vehicle”. “The job has to wait until the road or lane can be closed overnight after all the necessary paperwork and approval has been submitted. Repairs can take days or even weeks,” he said.

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### **MPs insist on careful review of freeports**

James Dean, Chief Business Correspondent: Tuesday April 20 2021, 1.02am, The Times

Freeports have been approved at eight sites in England, including Plymouth. The likely economic impact of eight new “freeports” in England must be properly evaluated by the Treasury, MPs will say today.

The international trade committee also will urge the government to conduct an independent evaluation of freeports within five years to determine their success or otherwise. The ports are to be awarded tax breaks on stamp duty and VAT to attract investment, a simpler planning process and improved transport. In his budget in March, Rishi Sunak gave the go-ahead to the scheme in an attempt to provide “an unprecedented economic boost across the United Kingdom”. He said that the sites would be “special economic zones with different rules to make it easier and cheaper to do business”.

Angus MacNeil, an SNP MP and chairman of the international trade committee, said that it “remains to be seen” whether freeports would achieve those aims.

There were 30 bids to set up freeports and eight were approved at sites that pledge to invest in offshore wind, electric vehicles and trade. These were at East Midlands airport, Felixstowe and Harwich, the Humber, Liverpool city region, Plymouth and south Devon, the Solent, Teesside and the Thames.

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Don't be dazzled by metro mayors, councils do most of the work

Simon Edwards, director of the County Councils Network, Thursday April 29 2021, The Times

The majority of the column inches devoted to the local elections have been around the big personalities — the metro mayors — or the fortunes of the main political parties.

While party politics and the mayors will take the headlines, this should not detract from the impact of the elections have on the most important day-to-day services people rely on. While the mayors have a large profile and portfolios in the likes of transport and skills, the areas they represent cover less than half of

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England's population.

Even in those areas, the services that keep local communities and economies going are delivered by your local council. This is particularly the case in the county council and unitary authorities represented by the County Councils Network (CCN), responsible for more than £30 billion in public spending.

Governing England: UK Statutory Instruments regulating English Affairs.

The Zoonoses (Amendment) (England) Order 2021 No. 165

The Mandatory Travel Concession (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2021 No. 205

The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (Variation of Schedule 9) (England) Order 2021 No. 236

The Higher Education (Registration Fees) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2021 No. 304

The Agricultural Holdings (Transitional Provision) (England) Regulations 2021 No. 324

The Community Infrastructure Levy (Amendment) (England) Regulations 2021 No. 337

The Meat Preparations (Amendment and Transitory Modification) (England) (EU Exit) (Amendment) Regulations 2021 No. 366

The Spring Traps Approval (Variation) (England) (No. 2) Order 2021 No. 378

The Direct Payments to Farmers (Reductions and Simplifications) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2021 No. 407

The Bee Diseases and Pests Control (England) (Amendment) Order 2021 No. 420

The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development etc.) (England) (Amendment) Order 2021 No. 428

The Specified Diseases (Notification and Control) (Amendment, etc.) (England) Order 2021 No. 443

The Removal and Disposal of Vehicles (Amendment) (England) Regulations 2021 No. 461

The National Health Service Trust (Scrutiny of Deaths) (England) Order 2021 No. 504

The Assured Tenancies and Agricultural Occupancies (Forms) (Moratorium Debt) (Consequential Amendment) (England) Regulations 2021 No. 518



Select Committees on English affairs

The Commons Select Committee on Education scrutinises the work of the Department for Education, covering children's social care, schools, colleges, the early years and higher education.

Children's Homes Inquiry will examine a number of areas including educational outcomes and destinations, the quality of support provided by children's homes, unregulated provision, rates of criminalisation, the sufficiency of children's home places, and the impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic

The Commons Select Committee on Transport (including a member of the SNP) is nominated by the House of Commons to scrutinise the Department for Transport. Its formal remit is to hold Ministers and Departments to account, and to investigate matters of public concern.

Inquiry: The roll-out and safety of smart motorways: 21 April 2021: Chair responds to written ministerial statement on Smart Motorways.

The Secretary of State for Transport, Grant Shapps MP, has published a one year progress report on its stocktake on smart motorways, in which he says there will be no new smart motorways without additional safety measures.

Reacting to the written ministerial statement, the Chair of the Transport Select Committee, Huw Merriman MP said: "The Transport Committee is currently in the midst of an inquiry to determine if Smart Motorways are safe. We will consider all options based on the evidence. This may include recommendations for change and whether the roll-out should be paused and hard shoulders reinstated. We will look closely at today's announcement from Government that Smart Motorway construction will continue. We will consider the evidence basis on which it's been made.

"Our prior report from 2016 made it quite clear that we challenged the safety and roll-out of Smart Motorways. The safety enhancements and reassurances given to us by Highways England in 2016, and in subsequent years, do not appear to have been delivered in full. For example, in 2016 we were told that stopped vehicle detection technology would be introduced 'going forward' for new Smart Motorways and would be retrofitted for the stretches of Smart Motorway already in place. To hear this same commitment today, five

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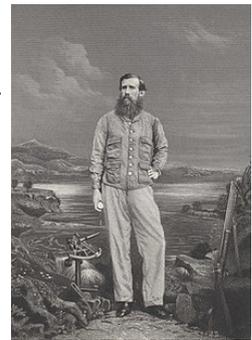
years after it was first suggested, begs the question as to why these safety enhancements haven't been made more quickly. The Government should be prepared to keep an open mind to the recommendations which come forward from our inquiry."

The Commons Select Committee on Health and Social Care (including a member of ALBA) is responsible for scrutinising the work of the Department of Health and Social Care and its associated public bodies. It examines government policy, spending and administration on behalf of the electorate and the House of Commons.

Department's White Paper on health and social care Inquiry

This inquiry will examine the proposals in the White Paper *Integration and Innovation: working together to improve health and social care*, and the extent to which the proposals will deliver integrated health and care services throughout England. The inquiry will also consider the extent to which the White Paper delivers the necessary long-term plans for social care and the health and social care workforce; and the proposals to confer additional powers on the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care.

England's hero: John Hanning Speke (4 May 1827 – 15 September 1864) was an English explorer and officer in the British Indian Army who made three exploratory expeditions to Africa. He is most associated with the search for the source of the Nile. Speke was born at Orleigh Court, Buckland Brewer, near Bideford, North Devon. In 1844 he was commissioned into the British Army and posted to India. He spent his leave exploring the Himalayan Mountains. In 1854 he made his first voyage to Africa and joined an expedition about to leave for Somalia led by the already famous Richard Burton. Speke had experience collecting and preserving natural history specimens and had done astronomical surveying.



They were attacked by the Somalis. One member was killed by a spear, Burton was seriously wounded by a javelin and Speke was wounded and captured. He was tied up and stabbed several times with spears. Showing tremendous determination, he used his bound fists to give his attacker a facial punch; this gave him an opportunity to escape.

First Journey to discover the source of the Nile 1856: Speke and Burton went to East Africa to find the Great Lakes, which were rumoured to exist in the centre of the continent. It was hoped that the expedition would locate the source of the Nile. The journey was extremely strenuous and both men fell ill from a variety of tropical diseases. By 7 November 1857, they had travelled over 600 miles on foot and donkey and they reached Kazeh (Tabora), where they rested and recuperated among Arab slave traders who had a settlement there. Here Speke went temporarily blind and after an arduous journey, they arrived in Ujiji in February 1858 and became the first Europeans to reach Lake Tanganyika.

They had also heard of a second lake to the north-east, and in May 1858, they decided to explore it on the way back to the coast. But Burton was too weak to make the trip and thus stayed in base camp at Kazeh. Speke went on a 47-day side trip that was 452 miles up and down in which he took 34 men with Bombay and Mabruki as his captains and on 30 July 1858 became the first European to see the lake, known to locals as *Nam Lolwe* in the Dholuo language and *Nnalubaale* or *Ukerewe* in the Luganda language.

(Bombay had been captured as a child near Lake Nyasa by slave traders and was sold to Indian merchants on the coast of Africa who took him to Sindh. Thus he spoke Hindustani, as did Speke and Burton. After his master's death he sailed back to Zanzibar, where Speke and Burton met and hired him. Bombay also spoke several native languages beside Swahili.) Speke named the lake after Queen Victoria and was the first person to map it. Much of the expedition's survey equipment had been lost at this point but Speke estimated the elevation of the lake at 4000 feet by observing the temperature at which water boiled. This lake's being substantially higher than Lake Tanganyika did make it a more likely candidate for the source of the Nile.

Second journey to the source of the Nile, 1860-1861: As during the first trip, Arab slave traders had created an atmosphere of great distrust towards any foreigners, and most tribes either fled or fought when encountering them as they assumed all outsiders to be potential slavers.

Eventually Speke reached Lake Victoria on 28 July 1862, and on the north side of the lake, he found the Nile flowing out of it and the Ripon Falls. Finally, given permission by Muteesa I the Kabaka (or King) of Buganda to leave, Speke travelled down the Nile. Because of travel restrictions placed by the local chieftains, slave raiding parties, tribal wars and the difficulty of the terrain, Speke was not able to map the entire flow of the Nile from Lake Victoria north. By January 1863 Speke reached Gondokoro, Southern Sudan, where he met Samuel Baker and Florence von Sass who Baker had rescued from a slave market in Vidin

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during a hunting trip in Bulgaria. Speke, via Baker's ship, then continued to Khartoum from which he sent a celebrated telegram to London: "The Nile is settled."

Henry Stanley proved that Speke had been right and that the Nile flowed from Lake Victoria via the Ripon and Murchison Falls to Lake Albert and from there to Gondokoro (*From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia*)

England's history: HMS Beagle was a Cherokee-class 10-gun brig-sloop of the Royal Navy, one of more than 100 ships of this class. The vessel was launched on 11 May 1820 from the Woolwich Dockyard on the River Thames. There was no immediate need for *Beagle* so she "lay in ordinary", moored afloat but without masts or rigging. She was then adapted as a survey barque and took part in three survey expeditions.

First voyage (1826–1830): The ship was allocated to the surveying section of the Hydrographic Office. Her guns were reduced from ten cannon to six and a mizzen mast was added to improve her handling, thereby changing her from a brig to a bark (or barque).

The Beagle set sail from Plymouth on 22 May 1826 on her first voyage. The mission was to accompany the larger ship *HMS Adventure* (380 tons) on a hydrographic survey of Patagonia and Tierra del Fuego, eventually under the overall command of Flag Lieutenant Robert FitzRoy, a trained surveyor. The Beagle Channel was identified and named after the ship.

Second voyage (1831–1836): *The Beagle* was taken into dock at Devonport for extensive rebuilding and refitting. The upper-deck was raised considerably, by 8 inches aft and 12 inches forward. The Cherokee-class ships had the reputation of being "coffin" brigs, which handled badly and were prone to sinking. Apart from increasing headroom below, the raised deck made *Beagle* less liable to top-heaviness and possible capsize in heavy weather by reducing the volume of water that could collect on top of the upper deck, trapped aboard by the gunwales. Additional sheathing added to the hull added about seven tons to her burthen and perhaps fifteen to her displacement. The ship was one of the first to be fitted with the lightning conductor invented by William Snow Harris. Her fitting out included 22 chronometers, and five examples of the *Sympiesometer*, a kind of mercury-free barometer patented by Alexander Adie which gave the accurate readings required by the Admiralty. To reduce magnetic interference with the navigational instruments, it was proposed to replace the iron guns with brass guns, but the Admiralty turned this request down. (When the ship reached Rio de Janeiro in April 1832, Fitzroy used his own funds for replacements.)

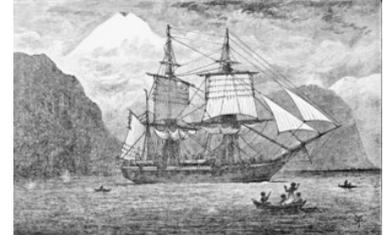
Fitzroy had found a need for expert advice on geology during the first voyage, and had resolved that if on a similar expedition, he would "endeavour to carry a person qualified to examine the land; while the officers, and myself, would attend to hydrography." Command in that era could involve stress and loneliness. His attempts to get a friend to accompany him fell through, and he asked his friend and superior Captain Francis Beaufort to seek a gentleman naturalist as a self-financing passenger who would give him company during the voyage. A sequence of inquiries led to Charles Darwin, a young gentleman on his way to becoming a rural clergyman, joining the voyage.

The second voyage of *HMS Beagle* is notable for carrying Darwin around the world. While the survey work was carried out, Darwin travelled and researched geology, natural history and ethnology onshore. His findings played a pivotal role in the formation of his scientific theories on evolution and natural selection. He kept a diary of his experiences, and rewrote this as the book titled *Journal and Remarks*, published in 1839 as the third volume of the official account of the expedition. This travelogue and scientific journal was widely popular, and was reprinted many times with various titles, becoming known as *The Voyage of the Beagle*. This diary is where Darwin drew most of the ideas for his publications.

After completing extensive surveys in South America she returned to Falmouth.

Third voyage (1837–1843): In 1837 *HMS Beagle* set off on a survey of Australia. In the six months after returning from the second voyage, some light repairs were made and *Beagle* was commissioned to survey large parts of the coast of Australia. They left Woolwich on 9 June 1837, towed by HM Steamer *Boxer*, and after reaching Plymouth spent the remainder of the month adjusting their instruments. They set off from Plymouth Sound on the morning of 5 July 1837, and sailed south with stops for observations at Tenerife, Bahia and Cape Town.

They reached the Swan River (modern Perth, Australia) on 15 November 1837. Their survey started with the western coast between there and the Fitzroy River, Western Australia, then surveyed both shores of the Bass Strait at the southeast corner of the continent. Numerous places around the coast were named,



HMS Beagle in the Straits of Magellan at Monte Sarmiento, reproduction of R.T. Pritchett's frontispiece from the 1890 illustrated edition of The Voyage of the Beagle.

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often honouring eminent people or the members of the crew. On 9 October 1839 Port Darwin was named in honour of their former shipmate Charles Darwin. They were reminded of him (and his "geologising") by the discovery there of a new fine-grained sandstone. A settlement there became the town of Palmerston in 1869, and was renamed Darwin in 1911 (not to be confused with the present day city of Palmerston near Darwin).

During this survey, the Beagle Gulf was named after the ship. (From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia)

English culture: **Worm charming** is a method of attracting earthworms from the ground. The activity is usually performed to collect bait for fishing but can also take the form of a competitive sport. Worms are sold as a live bait for fishermen, and many sellers use worm charming techniques to gather their stock. In some locations professional worm grunters need to obtain a permit in order to ply their trade. As a skill and profession worm charming is now very rare, with the art being passed through generations to ensure that it survives. The earliest place to practice worm charming was in London.



Competitive worm charming at Willaston

Most worm charming methods involve vibrating the soil, which encourages the worms to the surface. It is claimed that the worms surface because the vibrations are similar to those produced by digging moles, which prey on earthworms. The same technique is used by many species of bird, which devour the worms as they appear above ground.

The activity is known by several different names and the apparatus and methods vary significantly. "Worm grunting" generally refers to the use of a "stob", a wooden stake that is driven into the ground, and a "rooping iron" which is used to rub the stob. "Worm fiddling" also uses a wooden stake but utilises a dulled saw which is dragged along its top. Other techniques vary from sprinkling the turf with water, tea and beer, to music or just "twanging" with a garden fork. In some organized competitions, detergents and mechanical diggers have been banned.

Worm charming is a behavior also observed in animals other than humans, especially among birds. The methods used vary; however, tapping earth with feet to generate vibrations is widespread. One common example is the "Seagull dance".

Worms are most commonly found in damp or wet conditions and tend to move away from dry soil. The success of worm charming can often depend on these soil conditions, with charmers choosing damp locations or using water to attract the worms.

Competitive worm charming: In most competitions the fiddlers with the collector (or collectors) of the most worms in a set time are declared as the winners. They usually have a zone in which to perform their charming, measuring three yards square.

One of the first worm charming events took place in a school fête at Willaston County Primary School in Willaston, Cheshire. The World Worm Charming Championships started in 1980 and is now an annual event that celebrates the sport. It was organised by then-deputy headmaster John Bailey, who wrote the original rules for the competition.

Rules of The British and European Federation of Wormcharmers include a plot no greater than 3 metres by 3 metres, a five-minute warm up period, a three-person team of charmer, catcher and counter and that all worms must be returned to the ground after the contest according to the British Association of Worm Length Supporters

The Devon Worm Charming Festival is also known as the International Festival of Worm Charming, this event takes place in the small village of Blackawton, South Devon, during the early May Bank Holiday. It has been running since 1984 and is accompanied by a Real Ale Beer Festival and other activities. *From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia*

English produce: Juniper takes root for home-grown gin

Harry Shukman: May 7 2019, 12:01am, The Times

The success of artisanal gin means the juniper berry could be making a comeback in England. Craft distillers have begun growing their own juniper, which gives the liquor its signature taste and smell. They have two aims in mind: to boast of their home-grown ingredients and to become self-sufficient.

Gin's popularity has risen sharply in recent years. According to a Wine and



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Spirit Trade Association report, 66 million bottles were sold in the UK last year, 19 million more than the year before. Although a native tree much of the juniper used in English gin is sourced in southeast Europe, where the climate is better suited to production. The tree does not grow in abundance in England.

Naomi Joy, 42, who makes Vicars gin in Worcestershire, has planted an experimental crop of 50 juniper saplings to use in her product when they start to bear fruit in three to five years. She said: "With any potential shortage of juniper, I just thought, 'Let's plant some of our own juniper.' There's a real thing at the moment for shopping locally. It could only add to our unique selling point."

Ben Marston, 46, the co-founder of Puddingstone Distillery, said that he planned to use juniper berries grown by the Box Moor Trust in Hertfordshire. Beckett's Gin has used juniper berries picked from Box Hill in Surrey for the past five years.

Most berries are collected from the native junipers, which are coniferous trees and shrubs in the genus *Juniperus* of the cypress family Cupressaceae. Depending on taxonomic viewpoint, between 50 and 67 species of junipers are widely distributed throughout the Northern Hemisphere the 'berry' is not a true berry but a cone with unusually fleshy and merged scales, which gives it a berry-like appearance. Juniper berries are a spice used in a wide variety of culinary dishes and best known for the primary flavoring in gin. A juniper based spirit is made by fermenting juniper berries and water to create a "wine" that is then distilled.

Recipe: Chicken with rosemary and juniper

<https://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/2011/nov/04/juniper-recipes-hugh-fearnley-whittinghall>

A light and delicious dish. For a richer result, add a splash of cream at the end. Serve with boiled potatoes, rice or pasta. Serves four to six.

Ingredients

6 small garlic cloves, bashed to break the skins but left unpeeled
1 sprig rosemary, plus extra to garnish
4 sprigs fresh thyme, plus extra for finishing
Salt and freshly ground black pepper
1 chicken, jointed, or about 1.5kg of chicken pieces
1 onion, diced

1 bay leaf
4 tbsp olive oil
500ml white wine
300ml chicken stock
1 tbsp juniper berries, lightly crushed



Method: In large, heavy-bottomed saucepan or casserole, heat half the oil over medium-low heat. Add the onion, garlic, bay leaf, rosemary and thyme; fry gently until the onions are soft and translucent – about 15 minutes. Remove the onion mix from the pan and set aside. When cool enough to handle, remove the garlic skins.

Season the chicken pieces. Pour the rest of the oil into the pan and raise the heat to medium-high. Brown the chicken on all sides and transfer to a plate.

Pour the wine into the pan and let it simmer for a few minutes, stirring to remove any tasty brown bits from the bottom of the pan. Add the stock, juniper and onion mix, bring to a boil and simmer for five minutes. Return the chicken to the pan, along with any juices, and simmer gently, partially covered, for 30 minutes. Remove the chicken from the pan and keep warm.

Bring the sauce to a boil and reduce to thicken slightly. Taste and season as necessary. Serve the chicken with the sauce spooned over the top and garnish with a little more thyme and rosemary.

OUR PRECIOUS UNION! Theresa May June 2017

(Sucking England dry)

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