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**Campaign for an English Parliament**

# **Think of England Number 114: October 2021**



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Number 114 October 2021

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## RECOMMENDED READING:

Devil-Land: England Under Siege 1588-1688 by  
Clare Jackson, Allen Lane, 684pp; £35



## 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:** MSP Clark claims that the principle of union should be based on the consent of each nation in reserved matters. England has no organisation by which this consent could be given.



Michael Gove, born and educated in Scotland albeit with an English constituency, has a portfolio for an English Department and is also Minister for the Union. Where does he stand on England? We all know where Scotland's Gordon Brown stands on his suggestion for the UK Constitution—anything that emasculates England.

A political drama ends in distinctly British farce: Since we have BBC Wales and BBC Scotland but not BBC England to which audience would Britishness be targeted? And culture is a devolved matter. The Department of Culture etc is a pan-UK Department whereas the national administrations of Wales and Scotland have their own Departments which promote Welsh and Scottish culture. England has no such support for English culture, which is not the same as British.

School funding under threat as chancellor Rishi Sunak reins in spending. This applies to England only.

Education spending per head in 2019/20 was:

England: £1,319

Scotland: £1,685

Wales: £1,382

NI: £1,528

Office for National Statistics, Public Expenditure Statistical Analysis 2020.

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### Campaigning for England:

#### MP fears England could turn its back on rest of the UK

<https://www.express.co.uk/news/politics> Jack Walters,

NI MP Sammy Wilson, 68, has claimed support for Scottish, Irish and Welsh separatism, has worn away English support for the Union. "I sometimes wonder, will the break-up of the United Kingdom come from England rather than the Celtic fringes where a lot of the whinging goes on."

Unlike in Welsh, Scottish and Northern Irish constituencies, anti-UK parties hold none of England's 538 seats in the House of Commons.

Despite the lack of political presence, Wilson claimed voters in England could simply lose interest in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland." Wilson highlighted how the SNP used a "sense of victimhood" even when the Government tells them they are getting money for their health service from this national insurance contribution [tax rise]," "Nationalists, Scottish nationalists are one example but Irish nationalists are exactly the same, have now recognised that this is a weak point and they deliberately go out of their way to antagonise English people."

Speaking to Express.co.uk in July, the ex-director of the Welsh wing of the Vote Leave campaign, Matthew MacKinnon, said: "It suits their agenda to blame the English for everything."

A Panelbase poll conducted in 2020 found support for English independence had reached an all-time high. The survey indicated 34 percent of voters were in favour of England going it alone.

A Savanta ComRes poll found that one in four English voters support Nicola Sturgeon's mission to take Scotland out of the 314-year-old Union. The poll also indicated that just under one in three English voters opposed Scottish independence.



#### Trident decisions should require Scottish consent, says MSP

Katrine Bussey: The Sunday Times

Big decisions on defence, including the UK's Trident nuclear deterrent, should require the consent of Scottish politicians, a Labour shadow minister has said.

Katy Clark, MSP for West Scotland region, warned that issues such as the nuclear submarines based at Faslane on the Clyde and "unpopular wars such as Iraq", had helped drive people towards Scottish independence. She made the case for Scottish politicians — either Scots MPs at Westminster or MSPs — to be given more say on such matters in a new book, which calls for the option of "radical change short of independence" to be included if there is a second referendum.

"The principle of the union between the nations should be based on the consent of each nation. "

#### Take Scots independence off agenda, ministers told

Oliver Wright, Kieran Andrews: The Times

Downing Street has told ministers to stop talking about Scottish independence for fear it makes Westminster sound needy and plays into the hands of nationalists.

Michael Gove, the senior minister, has shifted Westminster's approach to the Union away from aggressive confrontation with the SNP to one that will include injecting money directly into areas that need attention. as the country emerges from the pandemic, even if it means encroaching on devolved responsibilities.

#### Ian Murray calls for new constitutional settlement

David Leask: The Times

A new constitutional settlement is necessary to unite Britain and dampen enthusiasm for independence, Scotland's only Labour MP has said. "The Labour Party has to come up with a constitutional answer for the mid-2020s as it did for the mid-1990s, when it brought us the Scottish parliament and Welsh assembly and devolution for part of England."

Murray said that work on the constitution being carried out for the party by the former Labour leader and prime minister Gordon Brown would shortly enter a public phase. Murray said: "We need a new constitutional settlement, not just to answer the Scottish question but also how England operates in terms of devolution."

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**Current English Affairs:** Planning, Environment, Health and Welfare, Roads and Transport, Agriculture, Education

### **Government accused of inflating figures as 'less than a fifth of land' is protected for nature**

Telegraph: Olivia Rudgard, environment correspondent

The amount of green space being truly preserved is nearly 23 per cent lower than official numbers, claims an RSPB study.

Ministers claim that 28 per cent of UK land is protected, but the study, published in the journal *Global Ecology and Conservation*, argued that the true figure is closer to five per cent.

The authors analysed all the UK's (England's) protected areas of land and found that rather than 28 per cent, only 11 per cent of land is designated mainly for nature conservation. Other areas, including national parks such as the Lake District, are also working land. Of the 11 per cent, just half of these sites are in good condition, meaning that as little as 4.9 per cent is "effectively" protected for nature.

Prof Richard Gregory, head of monitoring conservation science at the RSPB and senior author of the paper, said: "National parks and areas of outstanding natural beauty were selected for a variety of reasons, including for wildlife, but these places are not currently set up to effectively manage nature."



### **Sewage spilt into UK rivers 400,000 times last year**

Ben Webster, Environment Editor: The Times

All rivers and lakes monitored in England failed tests for chemical pollution and 84 per cent did not meet the government's target of good ecological status, according to an Environment Agency report last year. A report found that on average other European countries were replacing their sewage pipes ten times faster than Britain

Lack of investment in the network is causing severe pollution of rivers, with sewage spilling into them from overflow pipes more than 400,000 times last year, a report by the Angling Trust and Salmon & Trout Conservation says. The report argues that the fault mainly lies with the government and Ofwat, the industry regulator, for failing to require water companies to invest sufficiently in the network.

Ofwat carries out reviews every five years to set the prices that 17 water companies in England and Wales can charge customers and the amount they must invest. The reviews are based on business plans produced by the companies.

Feargal Sharkey, the former lead singer of the Undertones who is a keen fisherman and campaigns for cleaner rivers, said: "The declining condition of our rivers is a national disgrace and it's frankly hypocritical for this country to be lecturing the world on climate change when England's rivers are failing, and our freshwater environment is slowly being transformed into a graveyard."

### **People and nature should be at heart of planning process**

Crispin Truman (chief executive of CPRE, the countryside charity): The Times

The CPRE has been campaigning both to protect our beloved green spaces and countryside and to ensure that rural communities have the genuinely affordable homes they need to thrive. With no changes to our planning system, there will still be over one million homes with planning permission that are yet to be built. There will still be social housing waiting lists at historic levels. The majority of our key workers will still be unable to afford open market houses or private rents in rural areas. Much-loved countryside and green space will continue to be lost.

The first thing to do is to set targets for affordable housing and for brownfield land reuse, and ensure developers reach these targets. Let the legacy of this Planning Bill be the end of land banking. Second, baking in good, low-carbon design from the start has to be a priority. Third, embed the role of communities in local decision-making, while improving diversity and inclusivity in who gets to be heard.

### **Do we really need to build 300,000 homes a year?**

Ross Clark: The Sunday Times

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As the secretary of state for the newly renamed Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, one of Michael Gove's first tasks will be deciding what to do about the government's pledge to build 300,000 new homes in England a year by the mid-2020s.

Where does this figure come from? It made its first appearance in the 2017 autumn budget, when Philip Hammond was chancellor, but the number seems to have been inspired by a report by the House of Lords select committee on economic affairs the year before.



Do we really need to build 300,000 homes a year anyway? The government estimated that the number of households in England was only expected to increase by 210,000 a year between 2016 and 2017.

Treasury modelling showed between 250,000 and 300,000 homes a year would need to be built to keep the ratio of house prices to earnings constant. As for trying to control house prices via housebuilding, that ignores other factors such as the availability of credit. If interest rates are low, people will buy housing not as somewhere to live, but as an investment. Moreover, after Brexit, some Europeans returned to the Continent, and the pandemic further tightened up our borders.

The housebuilding target could also have perverse effects. From a local authority's point of view, the easiest, quickest way to build new homes may be to grant planning permission for small flats in locations where political resistance is weakest, but demand is low. This doesn't solve anything if they are then bought by overseas investors, who may leave them empty.

### **NHS needs extra £10bn or will take seven years to clear patient backlog, warn health chiefs**

Telegraph: Laura Donnelly, health editor

Hospital leaders said that without such a boost, they will be forced to cut services and condemn patients to pain. Such a boost would be likely to require tax rises.

Sajid Javid, the Health Secretary, has raised concerns that the NHS waiting list – now at 5.5 million – could rise to 13 million, as increasing numbers come forward for care that should have been received earlier.

The NHS was given an extra £6 billion for the first half of this financial year, to help with Covid pressures. However, the budget for the second half of this year, starting next month, and any future funding beyond that, has yet to be announced. Rishi Sunak, the Chancellor, is understood to be facing down demands to maintain such levels of funding.

In the new report, the organisations representing NHS services said that around £5 billion was needed just to keep up with extra costs – such as staff and infection control – driven by Covid, while up to £4.5 billion was needed to recover the waiting list backlog. The estimates are based on a survey of England's 213 hospital, mental health, community and ambulance trusts.

### **Success of AstraZeneca drug raises hopes for prostate cancer patients**

Katie Gibbons: The Times

The trial showed that the drug gave meaningful improvement in “radiographic progression-free survival” However, in March this year the medical regulator rejected its use for men with prostate cancer in Britain. NHS patients in England are not able to access Lynparza if they have BRCA-positive advanced prostate cancer, according to draft guidance from the National Institute of Clinical Excellence.

### **Social care will unravel without extra cash now, warn councils**

Chris Smyth, Whitehall Editor: The Times

The prime minister refused yesterday to guarantee that no one would have to sell their home to pay for care, as the Conservative manifesto promised, arguing that the new cap on costs would let people buy private insurance.

The cap will come into force in October 2023 and will take almost half the extra £5.4 billion earmarked for social care over the next three years, so it remains unclear how much extra will be spent next year. There are fears the Treasury may claw back the extra money through cuts to council budgets at the

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spending review next month.

Bosses in the struggling elderly care sector said the lack of immediate help was a “yawning gap” in the government’s proposal, with most of the £12 billion a year raised by the new tax going to the NHS.

Ministers promised that the amount going to social care would eventually rise but there was widespread scepticism that it would ever be possible to take money away from the NHS. Social care leaders have a more immediate concern, saying the plan will do little to improve quality in the short term.

Social care will get £2.9 billion over three years for current services, similar to recent emergency annual bailouts.

Ministers are believed still to be determining how much of the money will be spent over the three years. Officials insist social care will get some extra money in 2022-23 but bosses fear it will not be enough to make a meaningful difference.

The breakdown is thought to be contingent on a spending review next month in which local government is likely to face further cuts. Councils have been forced for the past decade to reduce social care funding. Sally Warren, director of policy at the King’s Fund think tank, said: “There is a real risk that extra money for social care will get lost if local government doesn’t get enough funding for all its services in the spending review.”

**People going without support:** It is estimated that 1.5 million people over the age of 65 do not receive the care and support they need — this includes people whose finances exclude them from free care and those who are unaware of their own needs. Others are excluded because their condition is not considered serious enough for them to be entitled to publicly funded support. Providing people with early support could help to prevent conditions deteriorating and relieve pressures on families expected to provide care.

**Postcode lottery:** Not only are there big discrepancies across local councils on who is eligible for public care funding, the type of care available differs from area to area. Unlike the NHS, local councils make their own decisions about budgets and services and some spend more per head than others.

Between 2016 and last year, the number of people requesting social care support increased by 120,000, but about 14,000 fewer people received it.

**Underfunding:** In the past decade, despite the rapidly increasing demand, public spending on adult social care has been cut by £86 million and spending per person is below what it was a decade ago. Social care has a cash shortfall that ranges between £6 billion and £14 billion a year, according to the Health Foundation.

**Councils fear social care reforms will fall apart:** Local officials say that ensuring people who pay for their own care do not face higher fees to subsidise council-funded residents will cost more than the extra cash promised last week.

People who pay for themselves face care home fees 40 per cent higher than those paid by councils for means-tested places, in a system criticised as a “stealth tax” on the middle classes.

The County Councils Network, which represents rural bodies, said in a report that either care homes would be forced into bankruptcy or councils would face higher fees they could not afford.

Martin Tett, the network’s spokesman for adult social care, says 272 care homes have already closed their doors in counties over the past three years”.

Local bodies estimate that raising council fees to sustainable rates would cost £761 million in rural communities and £1.5 billion across the country.

Last week’s review allocated councils only £2.9 billion over three years for the existing social care system, less than this annual cost and leaving no money over for improving the quality of care or offering it to more people.

Of the 545,000 people in rural areas who asked for help last year, 58,000 were rejected because their needs were deemed not severe enough.

**More tax rises needed to fix social care, warn town halls:** In the latest warning about the rising cost of living, the Local Government Association (LGA) said that to pay for social care voters faced a “double whammy” of both council tax increases and a rise in national insurance.

Councils have been promised £5.4 billion for social care over three years, of which £2.5 billion will be used to cap at £86,000 the lifetime amount people pay for their care.

At present councils can raise tax by 5 per cent each year, including a 3 per cent “precept” dedicated to



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social care. Larger rises must be put to a local referendum. The association estimated that councils needed an extra £2.6 billion a year to stabilise social care and keep up with demand, saying that to raise this money, “council tax income would have to rise by about 9 per cent in 2022-23 and by a further 4 per cent in each of 2023-24 and 2024-25”.

Given this, the association is expecting councils to increase council tax by as much as possible, with most raising the precept to the maximum this year.

### **Inquiries into abuse and neglect of adults leap by half at care homes. Campaigners say the government needs to act on quality concerns to reduce the suffering of patients**

Emily Dugan and Susan Watkins: The SundayTimes

The number of vulnerable adults investigated as victims of abuse and neglect in care homes jumped by 47 per cent in the space of a year.

More than 68,000 people living in care and nursing homes in England were the subject of formal safeguarding inquiries in the year to March 2020, official figures show.

### **Traffic jams send smart motorway careering to £200m loss**

John Simpson: The Times

A stretch of smart motorway on the M1 intended to provide a £1 billion economic boost is on course to cost more than £200 million, according to a previously undisclosed official report.

The “dynamic hard shoulder” at junctions 10 to 13 to alleviate pressure on one of the busiest motorways has increased congestion. During its first five years the afternoon rush hour was as busy as ever and at all other times traffic had increased, according to an analysis released to Highways Magazine under freedom of information law.

The analysis took “observed journey times” and compared them with the original forecast of savings that the project was expected to deliver. The authors then created a 60-year projection of the financial benefits. The report said: “If the scheme remained on this trajectory the monetised impact on journey times would be minus £225 million.”

The forecast benefits had previously been £996 million. The smart motorway stretch cost £489 million. The report indicated that the original appraisal had vastly overestimated both the effect on journey times and the number of drivers who would benefit.



### **Farmers have no faith in subsidy plans**

Ben Webster, Environment Editor: The Times

Farmers are shunning a government scheme to reform agricultural subsidies because of a lack of trust that they will receive what is promised, according to the public spending watchdog.

Only 2,178 farmers out of 44,000 in England who are eligible have expressed interest in participating in a pilot due to start next month of sustainable farming incentive payments.

The farming incentive payments are key elements of the environmental land management scheme that will be phased in by 2028 to replace the EU system under which farmers received 80 per cent of their £2.4 billion annual subsidy in “direct payments” per acre they owned.

The audit office said: “Defra lost farmers’ trust as a result of difficulties with its management of past agricultural subsidies. Delays informing farmers which actions they will be paid for in the sustainable farming incentive pilot . . . and how much they will be paid, have made matters worse.

### **University degrees in England are most expensive in the world, says OECD**

Graeme Paton: The Times

Universities have come under renewed pressure to cut tuition fees, with international research showing that England has the most expensive undergraduate courses in the world.

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The research also found that fees increased threefold in England over the past decade, faster than anywhere else in the developed world.

Universities in England can charge up to £9,250 per year for an undergraduate degree, and overseas students can pay even more. Scottish students do not pay tuition fees in Scotland. Northern Irish students benefit from a lower tuition fee cap and the Welsh government offers grants to students from Wales.



### **Overhaul would force students to pay back their loans earlier**

Nicola Woolcock, Education Editor, The Times

Students could start paying back their student loans far sooner under plans being considered by the government.

Ministers are said to be planning to cut the earnings threshold at which graduates begin repaying student loans to save the Treasury money.

At present students pay nothing until they are earning at least £27,000. The loans are written off after 30 years and taxpayers are projected to foot almost half the bill. If the threshold were reduced it would drag millions into making repayments earlier in their careers.

### **Michael Gove should empower mayors to help level up**

James Forsyth (political editor of The Spectator): The Times

Gove is now in charge of one of the government's biggest short-term problems: what to do about its proposed planning reform, which is facing huge opposition from Tory backbenchers, and levelling up, the government's long-term aim.

As long as the policy remains ambiguous there will be limits to what "levelling up" can achieve. If it tries to do everything, it will end up achieving nothing. It should be much more tightly focused on driving economic growth in the regions and devolving power down — such as the ability to vary taxes, including perhaps local VAT rates. Mayors not only provide someone who can act as a focal point for the region — just look at Teesside and the success of Ben Houchen — but also understand the needs of voters better. Polling for Gordon Brown's think tank shows that English voters who have a mayor are five times more likely to think their mayor understands them better than their MP.

Transport infrastructure and skills are key to "levelling up", neither of which sit in Gove's department. If he is to drive through this policy he is going to need to co-ordinate these areas.

### **A political drama ends in distinctly British farce**

Ann Treneman: The Times

So farewell then Oliver Dowden, the culture secretary who put the lack into lacklustre. He saved his only moment of drama for the last when he lost his job just hours before he was due to give a "keynote speech" (aren't they all?) on the need for more Britishness on TV.

### **Our pupils need to learn creative skills, not just facts**

Rufus Norris: The Times

Over the past decade the National Theatre has significantly increased its work in schools nationwide. In this time we've witnessed a relentless decline in the teaching of practical skills: speaking, listening, creativity, experimentation. Education and arts professionals believe this is stifling our children's ability to enjoy learning and take initiative in a world of constant change.

There has been radical growth in the creative industries and knowledge economy over the past decade. Everything we know about the future of work and automation suggests creative and social skills will be at a premium. Yet we've also seen arts and practical skills sidelined in English schools. Practical life skills such as oracy — the use of spoken language — are declining in a regime centred on written exams.

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### School funding under threat as chancellor Rishi Sunak reins in spending

Steven Swinford, Political Editor | Nicola Woolcock, Education Editor, The Times

Education will be hardest hit in the spending review with “minimal” additional funding to help children to catch up after missing out on school during the pandemic, The Times has been told. Two senior government sources said that the Department for Education (DfE) did not submit a formal application for catch-up funding. They said that this was greeted with “incredulity” by Downing Street and the Treasury.

This was contested by a source at the department, who said that an “ambitious” bid for catch-up funding had been submitted.

The deadline for submissions for the spending review, which will set out government spending for the next three years, was a fortnight ago, two days before the reshuffle in which Gavin Williamson was replaced as education secretary by Nadhim Zahawi.

The government has made a commitment to provide £3.1 billion in catch-up funding, and sources said that the DfE was likely to receive only £1 billion to £2 billion at the spending review on November 27.

It is significantly less than the £5.8 billion extra demanded by head teachers and influential academy chains to cover the “significant long-term damage” to children’s education.

The Treasury previously rejected a £15 billion package drawn up in June by Sir Kevan Collins, who then resigned as education recovery commissioner.

Geoff Barton, general secretary of the Association of School and College Leaders, said: “Choosing not to invest in the future of young people at this critical point will only lead to greater problems in the future.”



### Governing England:

#### UK Statutory Instruments

The Meat Preparations (Amendment and Transitory Modification) (England) (EU Exit) (Amendment) (No. 2) Regulations 2021 No. 972

The Public Health England (Dissolution) (Consequential Amendments) Regulations 2021 No. 974

Purpose of the instrument 2.1 This instrument makes amendments to regulations in consequence of the dissolution of Public Health England (PHE). The various regulations amended by this instrument contain references to PHE and these references are in each case substituted with a reference to the United Kingdom Health Security Agency (UKHSA), to DHSC, or are deleted, as appropriate. The UKHSA was established on 1st April 2021 and will assume some of the responsibilities and functions previously undertaken by PHE when PHE is dissolved on 30th September 2021. The remaining responsibilities and functions of PHE will pass to DHSC, NHS England, NHS Digital and the Care Quality Commission. The Secretary of State has consulted the Scottish Ministers in accordance with section 45E(2) of the Medical Act 1983.

The Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) (Transfer of Public Health England Staff) Regulations

2021 No. 975

The Tuberculosis in Animals (England) Order 2021 No. 1001

The Allocation of Housing and Homelessness (Eligibility) (England) and Persons subject to Immigration Control (Housing Authority Accommodation and Homelessness) (Amendment) Regulations 2021 No. 1045

The Direct Payments to Farmers (Inspections) (England) Regulations 2021 No. 1057

The Education (School Teachers’ Qualifications) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2021 No. 1093

#### UK Government Committees on English Affairs

17 September 2021: Education Committee examines the state of teaching in England’s prisons

20 September 2021: Health and Social Care Committee, with Welsh and Scottish members MPs to investigate NHS backlog’s impact on mental health, general practice and long covid care

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UK Parliamentary Bills affecting only or mainly England or England and Wales Education (Assemblies) Bill [HL], Private Members' Bill (Starting in the House of Lords)

Last updated: 30 September 2021: A Bill to amend the School Standards and Framework Act 1998 to make provision regarding assemblies at state schools without a designated religious character in England; to repeal the requirement for those schools to hold collective worship.

Health and Care Bill, Government Bill, Originated in the House of Commons, Session 2021-22

Last updated: 28 September 2021 at 10:31: A Bill to make provision about health and social care.

Higher Education (Freedom of Speech) Bill, Government Bill, Originated in the House of Commons, Session 2021-22, Last updated: 24 September 2021 at 13:54

A Bill to make provision in relation to freedom of speech and academic freedom in higher education institutions and in students' unions; and for connected purposes.

Judicial Review and Courts Bill, Government Bill, Originated in the House of Commons, Session 2021-22, Last updated: 24 September 2021 at 11:01

A Bill to Make provision about the provision that may be made by, and the effects of, quashing orders; to make provision restricting judicial review of certain decisions of the Upper Tribunal; to make provision about the use of written and electronic procedures in courts and tribunals; to make other provision about procedure in, and the organisation of, courts and tribunals.

Leasehold Reform (Ground Rent) Bill [HL], Government Bill, Originated in the House of Lords, Session 2021-22, Last updated: 20 September 2021 at 15:45

A Bill to make provision about the rent payable under long leases of dwellings.

Education (Careers Guidance in Schools) Bill, Private Members' Bill (Ballot Bill), Originated in the House of Commons, Session 2021-22, Last updated: 13 September 2021 at 16:20

A Bill to extend the duty to provide careers guidance in schools.



**England's hero:** Sir Thomas Browne (19 October 1605 – 19 October 1682) was an English polymath and author of varied works which reveal his wide learning in diverse fields including science and medicine, religion and the esoteric. His writings display a deep curiosity towards the natural world, influenced by the scientific revolution of Baconian enquiry and are permeated by references to Classical and Biblical sources as well.

He was born in the parish of St Michael, Cheapside, in London on 19 October 1605. Browne was sent to school at Winchester College. In 1623, he went to Broadgates Hall of Oxford University. Browne was chosen to deliver the undergraduate oration when the hall was incorporated as Pembroke College in August 1624. He graduated from Oxford in January 1627, after which he studied medicine

at Padua and Montpellier universities, completing his studies at Leiden, where he received a medical degree in 1633. He settled in Norwich in 1637 and practised medicine there until his death in 1682.

Browne's first literary work was *Religio Medici* (The Religion of a Physician) was circulated as a manuscript among his friends. It surprised him when an unauthorised edition appeared in 1642, since the work included several unorthodox religious speculations. An authorised text appeared in 1643, with some of the more controversial views removed. The expurgation did not end the controversy: in 1645, Alexander Ross attacked *Religio Medici* in his *Medicus Medicatus* (The Doctor, Doctored) and, in common with much Protestant literature, the book was placed upon the Papal Index Librorum Prohibito-



*Lady Dorothy Browne and Sir Thomas Browne, by Joan Carlile, c. 1641 – 1650*

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rum in the same year.

In 1646 Browne published his encyclopaedia, *Pseudodoxia Epidemica, or, Enquiries into Very many Received Tenents, and commonly Presumed Truths*, the title of which refers to the prevalence of false beliefs and "vulgar errors". A sceptical work that debunks a number of legends circulating at the time in a methodical and witty manner, it displays the Baconian side of Browne—the side that was unafraid of what at the time was still called "the new learning". The book is significant in the history of science because it promoted an awareness of up-to-date scientific journalism.

### **England's history:** US senators look at medieval Scottish plague raid in China inquiry

Mark McLaughlin: *The Times*

US senators are studying an aborted medieval raid by Scottish forces on English towns ravaged by the Black Death to assess the risk of China using coronavirus as a pretext to attack Taiwan.

Opportunistic raiders assembled in Selkirk in 1349 in the hope of invading England, which was debilitated in manpower and resources after a year-long outbreak of bubonic plague.

They were halted in their tracks when 5,000 Scots succumbed to the plague themselves and countless more were cut down in an English counterattack to drive them back north.

"Amassing their army in the forest of Selkirk, the Scots' close quarters proved the ideal incubation ground for the plague, killing 5,000 troops. Rather than pursue their invasion any further, they retreated home, bringing the devastation of the plague home with them. A full third of the Scottish population perished.

### **English culture:** Nottingham Goose Fair

The Nottingham Goose Fair is an annual travelling funfair held at the Forest Recreation

Ground in Nottingham, England, during the first week of October. Largely provided by travelling showmen, it is one of three established fairs in the United Kingdom to carry the name, the others being the smaller Goosey Fair in Tavistock, Devon, and the even smaller Michaelmas Goose Fayre in Colyford, East Devon.

Although it is now known for its fairground rides and attractions, the fair started as a livestock and trade event, with a reputation for its excellent cheese. The name "Goose Fair" is derived from the thousands of geese that were driven from the Lincolnshire fens in the East of England to be sold in Nottingham at the fair each year.

Nottingham, although it is thought that a fair was already established in the city before then. Goose Fair was originally held for eight days starting on 21 September, but was moved to early October in 1752, when the Gregorian calendar was first adopted in Britain. The fair was cancelled in 1646 due to an outbreak of the bubonic plague, and again during the two World Wars of the 20th century.

It is not known exactly how long a fair has existed in Nottingham, but it has certainly been around for many centuries and may date back more than a thousand years. The earliest reference to a "St. Mathew's Fair" in Nottingham, held on 21 September, comes from Saxon times. The creation of commercial fairs by royal charter was widespread in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. In 1164, a charter was granted by King Henry II to Lenton Priory, near Nottingham, to hold an annual Martinmas Fair starting on 11 November. The royal charter meant that this fair took priority over any other fairs in the Nottingham district, which were forbidden for the duration of the Lenton fair. Then in 1284, King Edward I granted a charter for a separate fair to be held in Nottingham on St. Matthew's Day, although it is clear that a fair had already been established in Nottingham by the time the charter was granted. Nottingham's fair flourished in Tudor times, because the 1284 charter released it from the restrictions and competition of the nearby Lenton fair.

The first reference to the name "Goose Fair" can be found in the Nottingham Borough Records of 1541, where 21 September is referred to as "Goose Fair Day". The name comes from the hundreds of geese that were driven on foot from Lincolnshire, Cambridgeshire and Norfolk to be sold in Nottingham. The birds' feet were coated with a mixture of tar and sand to protect them on the long journey of fifty miles or more. It is recorded that up to 20,000 geese were driven up through Hockley and along "Goose Gate" into Nottingham's Old Market Square, where the fair was held annually for hundreds of years. The geese were sold in Nottingham to provide the traditional Michaelmas dish of roast goose. Michaelmas was cele-



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brated on 29 September to mark the end of the harvest season.

Goose Fair began as a trade event and, besides the sale of geese and other livestock, it became particularly famous for its high-quality cheese. In 1764, there was a cheese riot that was triggered by a sharp increase in the price of cheese compared with the previous year. The riot culminated in the mayor being toppled by a large cheese.

From an early date, side shows were added to entertain the crowds, and eventually the trade element diminished as transport links improved and annual fairs were no longer essential for stocking up on items from travelling merchants. Fairground rides started to take over by the end of the 19th century

### English produce: Kale

Kale is usually an annual plant grown from seed with a wide range of germination temperatures. It is hardy and thrives in wintertime, and can survive in temperatures as low as  $-15.0^{\circ}$  Celsius. Kale can become sweeter in taste after a heavy frost and is grown throughout England.

Kale or leaf cabbage, belongs to a group of cabbage (*Brassica oleracea*) cultivars grown for their edible leaves, although some are used as ornamentals. Kale plants have green or purple leaves, and the central leaves do not form a head (as with headed cabbage). Kales are considered to be closer to wild cabbage than most of the many domesticated forms of *Brassica oleracea* and its origins are unknown, but before the Middle Ages. Kale originates from Northern Middle English kale for various cabbages. The ultimate origin is Latin *caulis* 'cabbage'.

Kale originated in the eastern Mediterranean and Asia Minor, where it was cultivated for food beginning by 2000 BCE at the latest. Curly-leaved varieties of cabbage already existed along with flat-leaved varieties in Greece in the 4th century BC. These forms, which were referred to by the Romans as Sabellian kale, are considered to be the ancestors of modern kales.

Records in 14th-century England distinguish between hard-heading cabbage and loose-leaf kale.



**Recipe:** Sautéed kale is the best way to eat this healthy leafy green! Scented with garlic and cooked in olive oil until tender, you'll want to eat it every day.

### Ingredients

1 pound or 2 bunches kale  
2 tablespoons olive oil  
Optional: Lemon wedges, shredded Parmesan cheese

2 garlic cloves  
 $\frac{1}{4}$  teaspoon salt  
Fresh ground pepper



**Instructions:** Wash and dry the kale leaves, then destem and roughly chop the kale. Smash and peel the garlic cloves.

Add the olive oil to a large skillet and heat over medium-high heat. Add the smashed garlic and kale and cook for 3 minutes, stirring frequently until wilted and bright green.

Remove from the heat and add the kosher salt and several grinds of fresh ground pepper. Discard the garlic cloves and serve immediately. (If desired, you can add lemon juice or Parmesan)

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