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**Campaign for an English Parliament**

# **Think of England Number 119: March 2022**



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Number 119 March 2022

**Contents:**

**Editorial**

**Campaigning for England:**

**Current English Affairs:** Roads and Transport, Tourism, Health and Welfare, Education, Police and Courts, Environment, Agriculture

**Governing England:** Education, Police and Courts

**England's hero:** Thomas Clarkson

**England's history:** East and West Africa Squadron – abolition of the slave trade and or slavery

**English culture:** Barring out

**English produce:** Spring greens

**Recipe:** Spring greens and ham soup

**Frontispiece:**

**RECOMMENDED READING:** The white slaves of England by Robert H Shereard.



## 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:** All of us at the CEP would like to extend our best wishes to the people of Ukraine in their battle against aggression.

The Times leader on NHS funding never mentions that it is the English health service

it is referring to. This, of course, is in line with the British policy of never mentioning national devolution and how the supra-national UK government is responsible only for the English NHS.

The British MP of an English constituency, born and educated in Scotland, Michael Gove, argues about our English education system. Who is there to speak for England in those matters that are devolved nationally to the rest of the UK? When England has been broken up into competing local fiefdoms by the British Political parties what input will local Mayors/governors have on policy for England as a country united since 937AD.

Meanwhile local authorities are in the firing line for sitting on £850m of pandemic grants. Existing local authorities are not trusted and tinkering with them by imposing another unwanted layer of bureaucracy will simply make matters worse.

Scottish and Welsh education policy promotes the teaching of Scottish and Welsh history. The British have no interest in teaching English history separate from British history. English children are being denied the opportunity to learn about their country but told to feel shame for British colonisation and slavery. In both those activities Scotland and Wales took a disproportionate part. As a cursory list of colonial governors and the surnames of Afro-Caribbean people testify.



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**Campaigning for England:** Some time ago we notified you that we were working on a series of sponsored talks around the country. Unfortunately at the last minute the sponsors pulled out. We do not yet know why but we have our suspicions. Although we have the funds to pay for those events we were informed that such funding would be seen as partisan in any debate. We hope to fully publicise what happened and name names in a future edition.

It has been apparent throughout the time the CEP has been in existence, over 20 years, that not only will British politicians and the British Media do everything they can to shut our voice down but also British Authorities such as the police and local councillors. Who or what is imposing this agenda and controlling the thinking of these people? Worse, and more tellingly, no-one is prepared to debate the issues with us. Whenever we have

set up a debate those opposing us pull out at the last minute therefore sabotaging the event. Even those who claim support us tell us of their support to our faces but then are 'advised' to withdraw. Meanwhile our Chairman is working on a series of videos that illustrate why we exist as a campaign, but our future depends on activist members joining the campaign team and making our voice heard.



**Current English Affairs:** Roads and Transport, Tourism, Health and Welfare, Education, Police and Courts, Environment, Agriculture

### **New mothers left alone and in pain as maternity crisis worsens**

Shaun Lintern, Health Editor Sunday February 06 2022, 12.01am, The Sunday Times

She is one of thousands of mothers across the country experiencing poorer care because maternity units lack enough staff.

Data from 122 NHS trusts in England shows maternity units were forced to shut their doors to women in labour more than 323 times in 2020-21. When this happens women are forced to go to an alternative hospital to give birth. Staffing shortages were given as a reason in more than two-fifths of the closures. Bradford Teaching Hospitals Foundation Trust closed most often, with 36 incidents over a total of almost 13 days. County Durham and Darlington Foundation Trust had 24 closures while East Kent Hospitals University Foundation Trust had 19.

The East Kent trust is the focus of an independent inquiry due to report its findings this year into almost 200 complaints of poor care.

In March, the final report into deaths and poor care at the Shrewsbury and Telford Hospital Trust will be published. The trust is at the centre of the largest maternity scandal in NHS history with 1,862 cases being examined. A separate inquiry into care at Nottingham University Hospitals Trust has heard complaints from almost 70 families.

In response to the growing concerns, NHS England promised to recruit an extra 1,200 midwives in March last year as part of a £95 million investment. But the latest official NHS England workforce statistics shows the numbers of full-time midwives working in the NHS is actually falling, as a rolling average, for the first time since 2009. In September, the number of midwives was down by 326 compared with the same month a year before.

Neya Joshi saw first hand the impact of a lack of midwives when she was admitted to hospital to be induced after her waters broke at the height of the pandemic. Visiting restrictions meant she was alone on a ward for 24 hours and, despite being told she was a high priority, there were no free beds.

"After they had started the induction I was told someone would come and check me within six hours but no one came and I was just left on my own for hours," she said. Eventually, after concerns over her baby's heart rate, she had an emergency caesarean section but her husband was then made to leave an hour later. "I was taken to the postnatal ward and that's where it all really went downhill," she said. "It was awful. I was just lying there. I couldn't move because I had the epidural and my baby was crying. "I kept pressing the buzzer and I had to keep repeatedly asking just for a glass of water which they took ages to bring. They put it on the table next to the bed and walked away and I couldn't move at all. I couldn't reach the table so I ended up pressing the buzzer again to ask them to put the water in my hand." Joshi, who lives in Croydon, claimed some care staff laughed at her and did not offer any help: "It had an awful impact on my mental health. It was horrific."

Gemma Snipe, 32, found the experience of giving birth to her son Oisín at Addenbrooke's Hospital in

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Cambridge last year so traumatic that she and husband John are unsure whether they will have a second child. Despite NHS guidance that women whose waters have broken should be induced within 24 hours, she waited almost 90 hours because the hospital did not have space for her. The couple were initially sent home to wait for a call and were then kept on a triage ward for 12 hours. The shortage of midwives and concerns over the safety of more than two-fifths of maternity units in England has prompted repeated warnings from the Care Quality Commission, the hospital regulator. It has specifically targeted hospital maternity units for inspection during the pandemic.



Kim Thomas, chief executive of the Birth Trauma Association charity, said: “We hear a lot of stories of women being left for hours on their own while in labour or particularly on postnatal wards. One woman told us she had to repeatedly soil herself in the bed because there was no one there to help her. That is pretty horrific. The English NHS needs another 2,500 midwives and charities say the treatment of women is ‘intolerable in a civilised society’

NHS England said: “Despite pressures and the impact Covid has undoubtedly had on staffing across the NHS, there has been clear progress when it comes to improving overall outcomes and experiences in maternity care and the NHS remains one of the safest places in the world to give birth.”

Croydon Health Services Trust said it had made “some immediate” changes as a result of Joshi’s experiences including regular ward rounds by staff and spot-checks to ensure women were cared for and listened to.

### **LEADING ARTICLE: The Times view on NHS funding: Healthy Targets**

Monday February 07 2022, 9.00pm, The Times

The Treasury is right to insist on targets to ensure money is well spent. But these need to address the whole health system, not just the operations backlog

The new health and social care levy will provide extra £12 billion a year for the next three years

It was hardly what Downing Street had in mind for the first day of the latest reset of Boris Johnson’s government. Yesterday was supposed to be the day that the Department of Health and Social Care set out its recovery plan, explaining how the NHS intended to tackle the enormous backlog in delayed operations that has built up over the course of the pandemic. This plan was originally scheduled to be presented in November but was delayed, apparently due to the uncertainty created by the Omicron wave. Now it has been delayed again amid a row with the Treasury over performance targets. Instead, all that Sajid Javid, the health secretary, was able to announce yesterday was the launch of a new NHS website that will update patients on current waiting times.

The continued absence of a plan to tackle the backlog is disappointing. There are now six million people waiting for operations, the most since records began. Of these, 300,000 have been waiting for more than a year. What’s more, the National Audit Office has warned that the backlog could rise to 12 million people by early 2025 if 50 per cent of the “missing” referrals — those who might have been expected to require treatment based on pre-pandemic trends — were to return to the NHS. Every day on a waiting list is for those affected a source of anxiety, suffering and in some cases increased risk of premature death.

The Treasury is of course quite right to worry about how the vast sums that it is about to pour into the health system will be spent. From April, there will be an extra £12 billion a year for the next three years as the new health and social care levy kicks in. That will see employers and employees hit by a 1.25 percentage point increase in national insurance contributions. The Treasury will be well aware that around half of the money poured into the NHS by the Blair government to tackle a previous backlog was permanently absorbed by higher salaries. Health spending is already on track to account for 40 per cent of departmental spending. The risk is that if the backlog is not cleared, there will be little money left over from the levy to fund an expansion of social care.

Nonetheless, there is clearly a risk that overly prescriptive targets make the difficulties at the NHS worse. After all, the backlog is just one manifestation of the pressures that the health system is under. There is a continuing crisis in emergency care, with one in four patients currently waiting more than four hours to see a doctor in A&E departments, while trolley waits are at record highs. There is also a crisis in the care

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system, which is adding to pressures on the NHS as patients continue to take up valuable hospital beds until places in care homes become available. Then there are the hidden waiting lists, not least in demand for mental health services, which has soared during the pandemic. One danger is that targets designed to reduce the backlog in operations lead to the NHS deprioritising other parts of the system.

Another danger is that whatever targets are set for fixing the backlog will be unachievable without a plan to address staff shortages across the NHS. Although there are the equivalent of an extra 29,000 full-time staff working in the NHS compared with a year ago, there are 93,000 vacant NHS positions, with shortages in nearly every speciality. There are also 105,000 vacancies in the care system, where the staff turnover rate is nearly 30 per cent a year. That led the Commons health and social care committee to conclude in a report last month that in the absence of a plan to tackle this staffing crisis, it doubted that Boris Johnson's promise of an extra nine million additional checks, scans and operations per year can be met. If the Treasury wants to ensure that the vast sums being handed to the NHS are spent wisely, it should insist on metrics for the whole health system, not just the operations backlog.

### Michael Gove criticises 'anti-rigour' in education

Nicola Woolcock, Education Editor Wednesday February 09 2022, 12.01am, The Times

Michael Gove has criticised the resurgence of "anti-rigour" in education and admitted that he oversaw a "fiasco" in scrapping Labour's schools rebuilding programme.

Gove, a former education secretary, criticised those seeking to reform or scrap GCSEs and expressed concern about the legacy of his reforms. His comments came in a report by Edpol published by Public First, a policy and research agency, based on interviews with former education secretaries.

He suggested that there was a move away from the standards his department had set. "My worry is that some of the anti-rigour arguments that had been in abundance have come back as a result of the pandemic," he said. "Some of the arguments being put forward, such as suggesting an inadequacy of GCSEs, reflect a misunderstanding of the value of independent assessment."

Gove has faced criticism over the academies programme, which was transformed and accelerated under his reign. More than half of schools are now academies — state schools independent of local authority control — and the government is continuing its drive to expand the scheme.

Gove famously angered teachers when he referred to the educational establishment's "Blob" mentality. In 2013, he said: "School reformers in the past often complained about what was called the Blob — the network of educational gurus in and around our universities who praised each others' research, sat on committees that drafted politically correct curricula, drew gifted young teachers away from their vocation and directed them towards ideologically driven theory."

Gove also told the report that one of his biggest mistakes was trying to cut back on department spending by scrapping the "wasteful" £55 billion Building Schools for the Future programme, which aimed to rebuild or refurbish every secondary school. "I thought reducing expenditure was necessary," he said. "It was a fiasco principally because we should have taken more time to get it right." He admitted he had been "tone deaf" to the fact that concerned parties had been expecting their schools to be refurbished and that the removal of that hope must have been painful.



### Anger as councils sit on £850m of pandemic grants

James Hurley Monday February 14 2022, 12.01am, The Times

Representatives of small businesses have expressed frustration that grants worth £850 million designed to help companies to deal with Covid-19 restrictions are still sitting with the English local authorities asked to distribute them.

Most of the £1 billion of emergency financial assistance announced in December that was intended to assist businesses hit by the spread of the Omicron variant has yet to be handed out, with a row emerging over who is to blame.

The Omicron Hospitality and Leisure Grant scheme provides one-off cash grants of up to £6,000.

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The Federation of Small Businesses, the employers' group, said that councils needed to do more to get the funds to companies seeking to recover from the pandemic. Mike Cherry, its national chairman, said: "The government recognised the need for this financial assistance back in December. We are now in February and it's exasperating to see such a small proportion of the cash has actually reached the businesses that need it. Hospitality businesses, in particular, were really under the cosh over the festive season, with staff isolating and bookings being cancelled. This money desperately needs to be distributed through local authorities in England.

Cherry noted that grants worth £300 million related to an earlier round of assistance were also "sitting unused in the coffers" of councils while many companies struggled.

The federation noted that there were large disparities between local authorities in the proportion of funds distributed. Councils in the southwest have distributed only 4 per cent of the available funds, on average, while those in the Yorkshire and Humber region have spent 21 per cent of their allocation.

Council representatives said that the funds were "unclaimed rather than undistributed" and that local authorities had been asked to deal with different grants over different timeframes and had to run checks before payments were issued. Councils are using the business rates system to identify eligible companies, but are also publicising the availability of funds to eligible companies that do not pay rates.

Shaun Davies, chairman of the Local Government Association's resources board, said: "Councils have led local efforts to support communities and businesses. This includes distributing billions in emergency grant payments to businesses. We know these grants have been a lifeline to businesses and councils continue to work hard to ensure as many in their area can benefit as soon as possible"

The government has said it is encouraging councils to provide the funding as quickly as possible while encouraging businesses to apply. Kwasi Kwarteng, the business secretary, has told local authorities to disburse any remaining funding, while Paul Scully, the business minister, has urged councils to quickly get the Omicron grants to companies.



### **Northern skills 'are 30 years behind'**

Shayma Bakht Monday February 14 2022, 12.01am, The Times

It could take up to 30 years for skills in northern parts of England to catch up with qualifications in London, a new analysis suggests.

Emeritus, a global education technology company, used annual population data collected by the Office for National Statistics to calculate the skills disparity across the country and found that the north was more than ten years behind the south in the skills race. Its findings suggest that almost three out of five workers in London are classified as highly qualified, compared with only a third of workers in the northeast, underlining the challenge facing the government to level up regional economies. The company is calling on the government to take "urgent, large-scale, corrective action" to ensure that workers outside London are not disadvantaged in the jobs market. The research defines highly qualified as those who hold a qualification at NVQ level 4 or above, which includes technical qualifications as well as degrees.

For each region, Emeritus calculated the change in the proportion of the working-age population who were qualified at these higher levels between 2015 and 2020. The findings show that the northwest, Yorkshire and the Humber, eastern England and the West Midlands could take 15 years to catch up with qualification rates, while the northeast was the furthest behind the south, with the analysis suggesting that it would take more than 30 years to match London. Emeritus said that its analysis indicated that lower qualification levels could be contributing to a decrease in salaries across the country.

The northeast and Yorkshire and the Humber had the lowest qualification rates overall and also had the lowest average wages. When compared with London, the workforces in these regions were earning on average up to £9,000 less per year.

The government has made moves to improve adult education, including introducing the new Lifetime Skills Guarantee and the Lifelong Loan Entitlement, although the latter will not be in place until 2025.

It published its levelling-up white paper this month, which set a new target to increase the number of peo-

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ple completing high-quality skills training by 200,000 by 2030, including 80,000 in parts of the country with the lowest skill levels. However, Emeritus has said that the government had not yet committed to any new funding before 2024, which could leave many people unable to access it in the meantime.

### The Times view on teaching history: Island Stories

The Times Leading Articles Friday February 25 2022, 9.00pm, The Times

The government wants to embrace a richer history curriculum

The teaching of history is a perennial source of political controversy. That is hardly surprising. As George Orwell noted, “who controls the past controls the future. Who controls the present controls the past.” In recent years, the debate has become even more polarised, fuelled in part by the Black Lives Matters protests and demands that statues be toppled and buildings renamed to excise links to slavery. That has prompted fears that Britain’s history is being cancelled and its achievements ignored, while others call for the curriculum to be “decolonised” and a greater emphasis placed on deepening it.

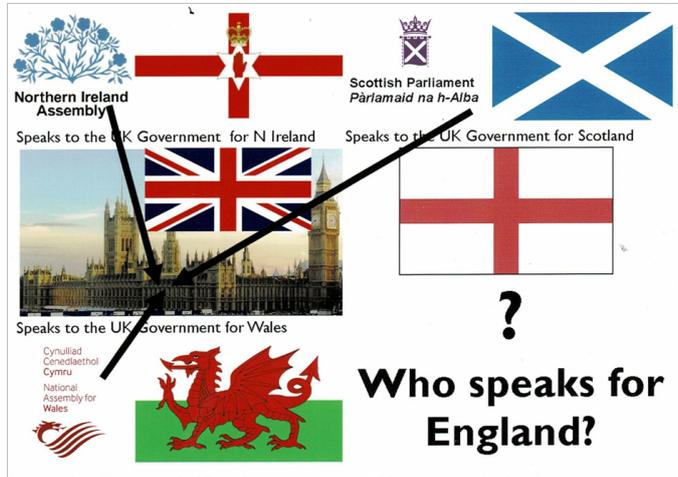
Perhaps surprisingly, given recent rhetoric from ministers, the government has sided with the latter. It is consulting on a new “model history curriculum” for 5 to 14-year-olds to enhance the teaching of migration, cultural change and contributions made by different communities.

Robin Walker, the schools minister, tells The Times that diversity needs to be part of the “canon” of history and that children should not have to keep learning about the Tudors and the Second World War. This leaves huge gaps in our knowledge of the past and young people depart school largely ignorant about controversies such as colonialism. Recent years, for example, have revealed a lack of understanding of Irish history, and indeed of the wider history of the European continent before the world wars

The present curriculum, introduced in 2013 by Michael Gove when he was education secretary, has long been controversial for its focus on “our island story”. Although Mr Gove was forced to broaden his curriculum, the underlying Whig version of history, in which Britain’s past is presented as a rich pageant building to the glorious present, remains at its core. Changing this curriculum is to argue not for some form of “woke” history but for a broader and richer basis of knowledge. The Tudors and Hitler can only take you so far.

The limitations of such a narrow curriculum have become increasingly apparent. History is not a permanent body of knowledge that every child should know but a method of inquiry and a set of skills for analysing and interpreting evidence to answer questions related to the past. The questions that societies want to ask will inevitably change over time. As the *Times* writer Sathnam Sanghera argued in *Empireland*, his book on how imperialism shaped modern Britain, as society has become more diverse there has been greater interest in Britain’s past relations with the wider world, especially the former empire, not least among those whose families have migrated to Britain. Their story is part of our island story too. In contrast, a narrow curriculum risks fostering cultural insensitivity and a misguided exceptionalism.

In fairness, many history teachers understand this and use the flexibilities within the curriculum to study different peoples and cultures. Traditionalists need not worry that a more diverse curriculum will somehow undermine national cohesion and bury our island story. The opposite is likely to be true. Equipped with the skills that the study of history, taught properly, provides, children will grow up more tolerant and understanding of different perspectives. They may be less inclined to haul down statues and more prepared to debate the issues and come to a historical solution, such as explanatory plaques. That would be a lot better than an empty plinth.



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## Governing England:

UK Parliament: Committees

Commons:

Education Committee

24 February 2022: **Children's minister to face MPs on children's care homes**

In this final session of the Children's Homes inquiry, Will Quince MP, Minister for Children and Families, will face questions on the Government's support for children in care homes.

MPs are likely to investigate why the number of children in care is at a record high and why care leavers aged 19-21 are three times more likely to be out of employment, education or training.

Educational outcomes for these children may also be raised in the meeting, with the Committee likely to examine why looked-after children are less likely to attend high performing schools, why over 10% of vulnerable children in care homes attend special schools rated below average by Ofsted, and why there is no firm record of the number of children in care homes who are out of education or receiving unregulated education.

3 February 2022: **Education Committee to examine children's mental health and wellbeing**

The cross-party Committee will use the session to question experts on how the pandemic has impacted children's mental health and wellbeing following disruption to their education and social lives. The Committee will also consider what policy changes could support young people's mental health.

The Committee is likely to ask questions around the societal costs or benefits of policies that support children's wellbeing and resilience. There may also be questions about the outcomes of the Government's 2018 Green Paper on children and young people's mental health.

Health and Social Care Committee

25 February 2022: **Challenges of staff recruitment to NHS and social care roles to be examined by MPs**

Inquiry: Workforce: recruitment, training and retention in health and social care

**Purpose of session:** The inquiry into workforce recruitment, training and retention in health and social care will hear from frontline staff, including a GP, a nurse and a care home manager about the impact of workforce shortages on their day to day working lives. On the recruitment of social care workers, MPs will consider what role international recruitment should play in workforce planning.

Future sessions will assess barriers facing staff from Black, Asian and minority ethnic backgrounds and women, reforms to medical education, and training.

Public Administration and Constitutional Affairs Committee

25 February 2022: **Michael Gove to face questions from committee of MPs on constitutional issues**

Michael Gove will be questioned by the Public Administration and Constitutional Affairs Committee on a range of issues within his remit as Levelling Up Secretary and Minister for Intergovernmental Relations.

**Purpose of the session:** In the evidence session, MPs are likely to follow-up on the Government's response to the Committee's recommendations on the Elections Bill, currently passing through the House of Lords. The session will also scrutinise the Government's proposals for a new set of arrangements for relations and cooperation between the four governments of the UK, published last month, as well as the constitutional aspects of the recently released Levelling Up White Paper.

Parliamentary Bills

Legislation

Royal Assent

9 February 2022: Leasehold Reform (Ground Rent) Act 2022: Extent England and Wales

Government Bill: Originated in the House of Lords, Session 2021-22

**Long title:** A Bill to make provision about the rent payable under long leases of dwellings; and for connected purposes



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### UK Statutory Instruments

**The Care and Support** (Charging and Assessment of Resources) (Amendment) Regulations 2022 No. 243, Regulation 1

**The National Health Service** (Optical Charges and Payments) (Amendment) Regulations 2022 No. 221, Regulation 1

**The Cremation** (England and Wales) (Amendment) Regulations 2022 No. 218

**The Non-Domestic Rating** (Definition of Domestic Property) (England) Order 2022 No. 217

**The Direct Payments to Farmers** (Allocation of Payment Entitlements from the National Reserve) (England) Regulations 2022 No. 200

**The Housing** (Approval of Code of Management Practice) (Student Accommodation) (England) Order 2022 No. 198

**The Houses in Multiple Occupation** (Specified Educational Establishments) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2022 No. 197

**Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills** (Fees and Frequency of Inspections) (Children's Homes etc.) (Amendment) Regulations 2022 No. 196; Regulation 1

**The Non-Domestic Rating** (Levy and Safety Net) (Amendment) Regulations 2022 No. 189; Regulation 1

**The Health and Social Care Act 2008** (Regulated Activities) (Amendment) Regulations 2022 No. 179; Regulation 2

**The Personal Injuries** (NHS Charges) (Amounts) (Amendment) Regulations 2022 No. 166; Regulation 1

**The Inspectors of Education, Children's Services and Skills Order** 2022 No. 145

**The Countryside Stewardship** (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2022 No. 141

**The Council Tax** (Demand Notices and Reduction Schemes) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2022 No. 127

**The Safety of Sports Grounds** (Designation) (Amendment) (England) Order 2022 No. 122

**The Microchipping of Dogs** (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2022 No. 121

**The School Admissions** (Admission Arrangements and Co-ordination of Admission Arrangements) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2022 No. 105

**The Apprenticeships** (Miscellaneous Provisions) (Amendment) (England) Regulations 2022 No. 86



*Thomas Clarkson by Carl Frederik von Breda,*

### **England's hero:** Thomas Clarkson

Thomas Clarkson (28 March 1760 – 26 September 1846) was an English abolitionist, and a leading campaigner against the slave trade in the British Empire. He helped found The Society for Effecting the Abolition of the Slave Trade (also known as the Society for the Abolition of the Slave Trade) and helped achieve passage of the Slave Trade Act 1807, which ended British trade in slaves.

He became a pacifist in 1816 and, together with his brother John, was among the twelve founders of the Society for the Promotion of Permanent and Universal Peace.

In his later years, Clarkson campaigned for the abolition of slavery worldwide; it was then concentrated in the Americas. In 1840, he was the key speaker at the Anti-Slavery Society's (today known as Anti-Slavery International) first conference in London which campaigned to end slavery in other countries.

**England's history:** East and West Africa Squadron – abolition of the slave trade and slavery  
The British Royal Navy established the West Africa Squadron at substantial expense in 1808 after Parlia-

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ment passed the Slave Trade Act of 1807, an Act for the Abolition of the Slave Trade. The squadron's task was to suppress the Atlantic slave trade by patrolling the coast of West Africa. With a home base at Portsmouth, it began with two small ships, the 32-gun fifth-rate frigate HMS *Solebay* and the *Cruizer*-class brig-sloop HMS *Derwent*. At the height of its operations, the squadron employed a sixth of the Royal Navy fleet and marines. In 1819 the Royal Navy established a West Coast of Africa Station and the West Africa Squadron became known as the Preventative Squadron. It remained an independent command until 1856 and then again 1866 to 1867. Between 1830 and 1865, more than 1,500 British sailors died on their mission of freeing slaves with the West Africa Squadron. Between 1808 and 1860 the West Africa Squadron captured 1,600 slave ships and freed 150,000 Africans. It is considered the most costly international moral action in modern history.

David Sanderson, Arts Correspondent January 19 2021, *The Times*

To begin with, things were tricky because it could only stop ships flying the British flag. But after the Napoleonic Wars were over, a chap called Viscount Castlereagh, the 2nd Marquess of Londonderry, ensured that France, Spain and Portugal would stop slaving as well, and, as a result, the Royal Navy was then allowed to stop and search their ships too.

And people from England can be proud of the squadron's commander, Sir George Collier. He massively increased the number of ships in the squadron and was told: "You are to use every means in your power to prevent a continuance of the traffic in slaves." He pursued this order with vigour.

The slavers responded by building faster ships that could outrun the navy's powerful warhorses, but our top brass was quick to come up with a solution. A captured and very fast Brazilian slave ship was renamed HMS *Black Joke*, and in just two years it freed thousands of slaves. Weirdly, today, British schoolchildren are not taught about the vessel, or the bravery of its crew.

In one engagement it spent 31 hours chasing a Spanish brig called *El Almirante* that was en route to Havana. When the British finally caught up, they realised that their two tiny guns were no match for the 14 monsters that the Spaniards could muster. But after little more than an hour, 15 of the *El Almirante*'s crew, including the captain, were dead, and the remainder had surrendered. In the hold, the captain of the *Black Joke*, Lieutenant Henry Downes, found 466 slaves, who were later landed and freed.

The West Africa Squadron was disbanded in the 1860s. It had been a huge operation — swallowing up 13 per cent of the navy's manpower — and it's reckoned that it cost far more than Britain earned from its earlier slaving enterprises. Again, that's not something you'll hear in many classrooms.

Nor do you hear much about the navy's east Africa operation, which was still going in the 20th century and at one time included apprehending slavers out of Zanzibar. And you certainly don't hear anything about the brave men who served on these ships. Most were from ordinary villages such as Brockenhurst and Nunnington, but for some reason Historic England has chosen to ignore them completely.

### **Fortnum's treats fuelled our man in Zanzibar's fight against slavery**

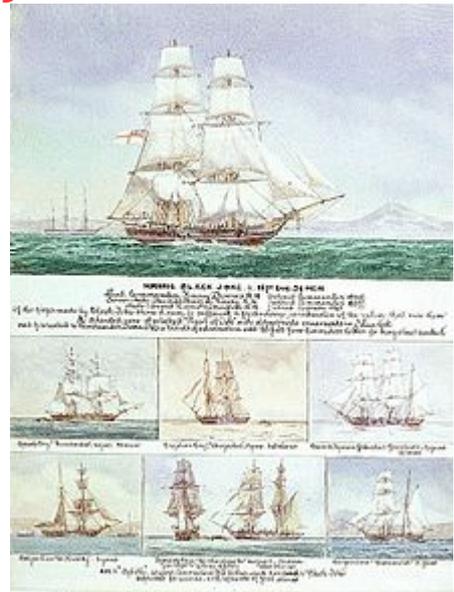
David Sanderson, Arts Correspondent Tuesday January 19 2021, 12.01am, *The Times*

Colonel Christopher Rigby was the "only Englishman in Zanzibar" taking it upon himself to free hundreds of slaves a day as well as keeping warring sultans at bay. And it was preserved horseradish and cheeses from Fortnum and Mason, as well as a few cases of beer, that kept him going.

The journal of Colonel Christopher Rigby has emerged 160 years after his time as the British consul in Zanzibar when he was pitched into the front line of the war against the slave trade. Colonel Rigby, who was born in Hampshire in 1820, found himself almost single-handedly enforcing the treaties imposed in the 19th century to end the slave trade.

His journal, which has been kept by his family since his death in 1885, recounts his horror at the trade when "Northern Arabs . . . do not hesitate to throw the slaves overboard to avoid the seizure of their boats". One entry from his time on the island, which is now part of Tanzania, says: "Harbour full of pirate boats . . . very troublesome . . . slaves were being actively shipped all night."

He also writes about "giving slaves their freedom . . . Busy the entire day writing out certificates of emancipation . . . at the rate of 300 a day."



HMS *Black Joke* and prizes (clockwise from top left) *Providentia*, *Vengador*, *Presidenta*, *Marianna*, *El Almirante*, and *El Hassey*

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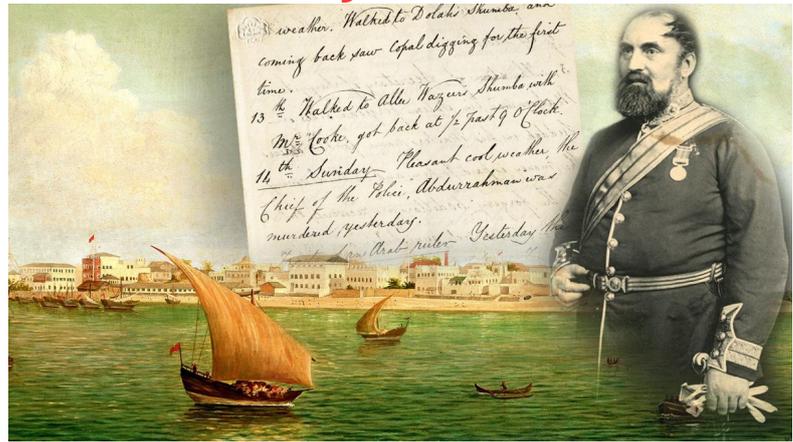
The journal draws attention to the role of Britain's representatives through the Empire seeking to end the slave trade. "He is a classic example of the kind of man the British Empire sent out in huge numbers around the globe. He engaged with the great explorers, he was central to the fight against the slave trade and there is what feels like genuine disgust at the trade and the sheer numbers involved."

The journal captures Colonel Rigby's frustrations at his dealings with the sultan of Zanzibar, Majid bin Said, and his rival brothers Thuwaini, the sultan of Oman, and Barghash, who did little to "check" the slave trade.

He writes of one meeting with Majid bin

Said: "Remonstrated with him strongly on the scandalous shipment of slaves going on . . . not the slightest attention is paid to the treaties."

**A brief overview of British and African efforts to abolish slavery:** UK 1807 Abolition of the Slave trade Act 1808 The West African Squadron (Royal Navy) is established to suppress slave trading. 1833 Abolition of Slavery Act, ending slavery in British colonies by 1838 2015 Modern slavery Act (building on 2007 legislation) Africa Black on black slavery not abolished in: - Niger until 1960 - Mauritania until 1981 - but carried on until 2007 - Mali until 1992 - Ghana until 1998 - Western Sahara until 2010 - Chad until 2017



Zanzibar in the 19th century, as depicted by Charles Porter Brown. Colonel Christopher Rigby, right, kept a diary detailing his attempts to stop slavery there and his successes in freeing individual slaves BRIDGEMAN IMAGES/BONHAMS

### English culture: Barring out

Barring out is the former custom in English schools of barring a schoolmaster from the premises. A typical example of this practice was at the school in Bromfield, Cumbria, where it was the custom "for the scholars, at Fasting's Even (the beginning of Lent) to depose and exclude the master from the school for three days." During this period the school doors were barricaded and the boys armed with mock weapons. If the master's attempts to re-enter were successful, extra tasks were inflicted as a penalty, and willingly performed by the boys. On the third day terms of capitulation, usually in Latin verse, were signed, and these always conceded the immediate right to indulge in football and a cockfight. The custom was long retained at Eton College and figures in many school stories, including the story "The Barring Out: or Party Spirit" in *The Parent's Assistant* by Maria Edgeworth (1796), and the 1948 Billy Bunter story "Barring Out".

Dr. Samuel Johnson reports a story that Joseph Addison, when a schoolboy, was the ringleader of a barring out at his school.

Barring out continued in Falstone, a village in Northumberland, until 1940 when the headmaster William Moody, who was unaware of the custom, demanded entrance to his school and the students eventually relented and let him enter.



Barred Out, by Ralph Hedley (1896)

**English produce: Spring greens** date back to Prehistoric times and were introduced into the UK by the Romans or Celts in the 4th Century. They are like a Cos Lettuce in shape but have looser leaves and without much of a 'heart' and are a cultivar of *Brassica oleracea* in the cultivar acephala group, similar to kale, in which the central leaves do not form a head or form only a very loose one. It is considered to be closer to wild cabbage than most other domesticated forms, and is grown primarily in north-

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ern Europe, where its tolerance of cold winters is valued for an early spring supply of edible leaves.

The term is also used more loosely to refer to thinnings and trimmed-off leaves of other types of *Brassica*, including turnip and swede leaves, surplus thinned out young cabbage plants and leaves from cauliflower and Brussels sprouts.

Prepare by removing the leaves from the centre, wash gently and shred. Spring greens may be cooked by adding spring greens at the end of a stir-fry, or use in winter soups and stews. They are delicious sliced, steamed and drizzled with melted butter. Despite the name, we grow Spring Greens all year round in Lincolnshire and in Cornwall in the Winter.



### Recipe: Spring greens & gammon soup

<https://www.bbcgoodfood.com/recipes/spring-greens-gammon-soup>

By Barney Desmazery

**Prep:** 10 mins, **Cook:** 2 hrs; **Serves** 4

This rustic broth is deliciously meaty and worth cooking a gammon for, or using up leftover ham

#### Ingredients

450g piece gammon , soaked overnight	2 bay leaves
2 medium onions , sliced	2 tsp paprika
2 large potatoes , peeled and chopped into small chunks	225g spring greens , roughly chopped
450g can cannellini bean , drained and washed	

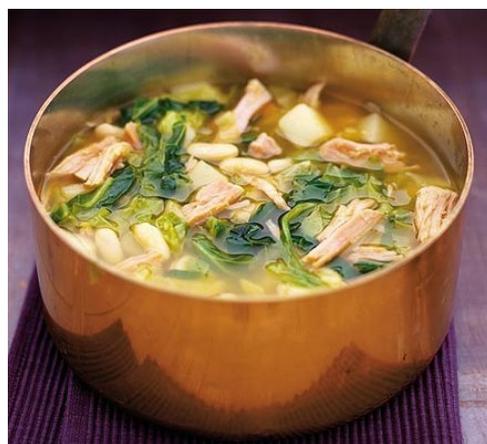
#### Method

Put the gammon in a large pan with the bay leaves, onions and about 1.5 litres of cold water or enough to cover. Bring to the boil, then reduce the heat and simmer gently for about 1½ hrs.

Drain the gammon, reserving the cooking liquid. When the gammon is cool enough to handle, trim away the skin, and shred the meat.

Return meat to the pan with the reserved cooking liquid, paprika and potatoes. Cover and simmer for 20 mins or until the potatoes are cooked.

While the potatoes are cooking, trim away the stalky bit from the greens and finely shred the leaf. Stir the greens and beans into the stock and continue to cook for about 10 mins until cooked. Season to taste and serve ladled straight from the pan.



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