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ISSUE #1395 | 03-09 FEBRUARY 2020

THE BIG ISSUE

A HAND UP, NOT A HANDOUT | EVI

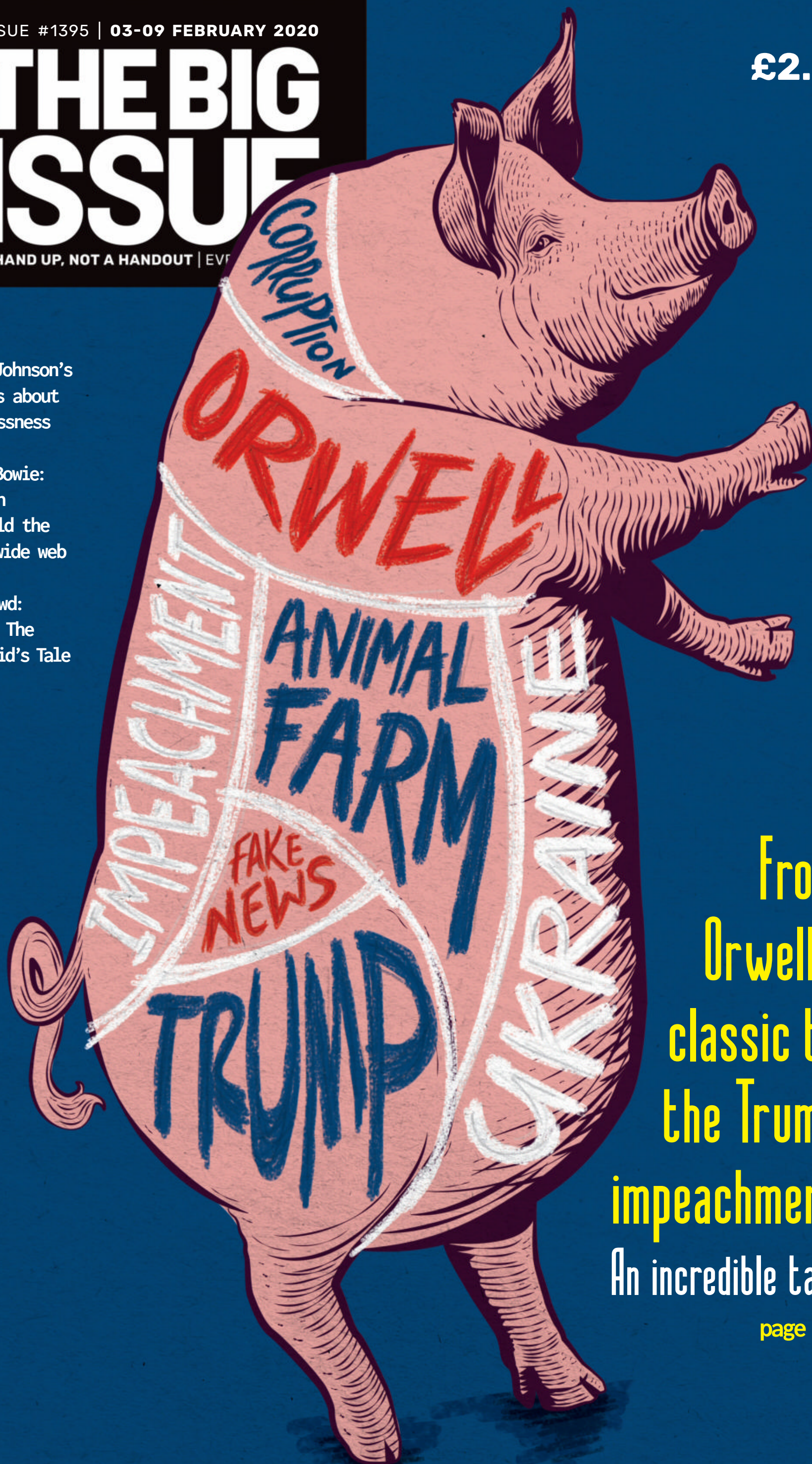
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INSIDE

Boris Johnson's
porkies about
homelessness

David Bowie:
the man
who sold the
world wide web

Ann Dowd:
beyond The
Handmaid's Tale



From
Orwell's
classic to
the Trump
impeachment
An incredible tale

page 20



**“I was injured 10 years ago,
and Help for Heroes are the
only people still involved.”**

Simon, veteran

Many very seriously injured veterans were told they would never walk again, never talk again and never live independently again. Every journey is different, but with the right help they can defy the odds.

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#NeverSayNever #TimeToTalk
h4hweb.com/neversaynever3

**HELP for
HEROES**
SUPPORT FOR OUR WOUNDED



Help for Heroes is a charity registered in England
and Wales (1120920) and Scotland (SC044984)



Vendor photo: Louise Haywood-Schiefer

P46

Hello, my name is Kris

Welcome to this week's Big Issue. I sell the magazine six days a week in the Marylebone district of London. I started in my hometown of Newcastle after I was made homeless at the age of 18. I sold the magazine all over the country but then took a break. After I moved to the capital I decided to get badged up again and sell The Big Issue. When I went into the office one of the guys said, "Good to see you, Kris." He remembered me just like that. You can read more about my story on page 46.



A HAND UP, NOT A HANDOUT

This magazine was bought by your vendor for £1.25 and sold to you for £2.50. They are proudly working, not begging. Buy it, take it, spread the word.

If you can't get hold of a copy of the magazine on a regular basis, you can subscribe to receive The Big Issue every week: bigissue.com/subscribe

contents.



P13

JOHN BIRD

We're out of the EU. Now we need to tackle the biggest issue of the day – the future of the planet

P18

LETTER TO MY YOUNGER SELF

LGBT rights, love and Albert Square: the world according to Michael Cashman

P20

PIGS AND THE PRESIDENT

The horror that *Animal Farm* and Trump's impeachment have in common

P26

INTERNAL CONFLICT

Former ITN foreign correspondent Martin Geissler mulls the personal cost of reporting from the front line

P32

FILM

Cath Clarke salutes *Parasite*, an instant classic that delivers social commentary at its most piquant

P34

ANN DOWD

Aunt Lydia from *The Handmaid's Tale* is playing a nun for the fifth time in new series *Lambs of God*

P37

MUSIC

Why his 250th anniversary is all the more reason to celebrate Beethoven

the big list.

What to do this week in England and beyond

01

Meet Vincent van Gogh (no, really!)

The Van Gogh Museum in Amsterdam's award-winning Meet Vincent van Gogh immersive experience is coming to London for the first time. Cutting-edge audio-visual tech lets users walk in the Dutch maestro's footsteps. Recreate his brush strokes and dramatic colours! Step into life-size reproductions of van Gogh's paintings! Come face to face with the Yellow House! Cut off your own ear (joke)! **South Bank, London, February 7-May 21; southbanklondon.com/van-gogh-experience**



02

Hear the stories of women experiencing homelessness

An unflinching new podcast from journalist Audrey Gillan, *Three Women, Homeless* tells the story of these women's ongoing experience with compassion and skill. What emerges are disturbing parallels between the women's life stories, with sexual abuse, addiction and domestic violence common themes. Tears are shared, hugs are offered and the provision of services for homeless people questioned in this follow-up to Gillan's *Tara and George*. **tortoisemedia.com/podcast**



03

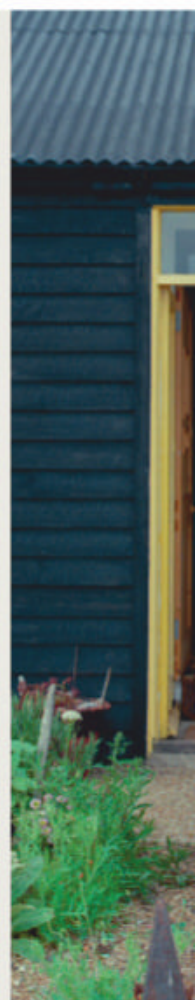
Sleep out for LandAid

Property industry charity LandAid's annual sleep out series expands to stadiums in three English cities across February – Birmingham, Bristol and London – with the target of raising £400,000 towards its goal of helping end youth homelessness. Each participant is asked to raise at least £150. Consider it training for The Big Issue's Big Sleep Out in November. **Edgbaston Stadium, Birmingham, February 6, Ashton Gate Stadium, Bristol, February 13 and The Oval, London, February 27; landaid.org/events/sleepout-landaid**

04

Donate to save Derek Jarman's Prospect Cottage

Filmmaker, artist, activist, gardener, maker and all-round creator Derek Jarman was one of the most influential figures of 20th-century British culture, and nowhere brings it home like his converted Victorian fisherman's hut, gardens and sanctuary in the shadow of Dungeness nuclear power station on the Kent coast. A campaign has been launched to raise £3.5m to save the property from destruction, and secure its future as a centre of creative activity for all – give generously if you can. **artfund.org/get-involved/art-happens/prospect-cottage**



"I haven't changed much":
 Revisiting the late **Nicholas Parsons'**
 Letter to My Younger Self



Labour peer **Lord Dubs** says
 the Government must give
 refugee children a future

Did the brains at Nasa really
 discover that a **pineapple
 plant** can prevent snoring?



05 Shop for Valentine's gifts at From Babies with Love

On the mushiest day of the year, show your loved ones you care not just for them but also for those less fortunate, with a little something special from the Big Issue Shop made by a social enterprise helping vulnerable children. From Babies with Love – who are supported by Big Issue Invest – design T-shirts and candles for grown-ups, and super-cute signature clothes, accessories and playthings for children. The profits from each sale go to support orphaned and abandoned children globally.

bigissueshop.com/vendor/from-babies-with-love

06 Watch a new series exploring the nocturnal world

From *Blue Planet* to *Frozen Planet*, you could be forgiven for assuming Netflix nature docs have got every single conceivable angle on the natural world covered. But you'd be wrong. *Night on Earth* is all about what animals get up to after dark. Expect gripping footage of survival and death as groundbreaking tech illuminates the nocturnal behaviour of living wonders of the world.

On Netflix now



07 Enter a creative writing contest

Celebrating the creativity of looked-after children and care leavers aged 25 and under, Coram Voice is seeking original stories, poems, raps and articles for their annual competition. Each of the 24 shortlisted entrants will win a voucher and be invited to attend a ceremony hosted by ex-*Doctor Who* star Peter Capaldi. The theme this year is Dreams.

coramvoice.org.uk/get-involved/voices-entry

08 Help crowdfund a documentary about universal basic income



From the same production company behind *The Future of Work and Death* – a revealing look at the impact of automation on employment – comes a documentary exploring the socio-economic state of modern Britain, and asking whether a basic income could potentially solve some of its most fundamental problems. They've already interviewed the likes of George Monbiot and Ashwin Kumar. All they need is another £4,000 by February 13, and post-production can begin.

<http://kck.st/35UvnSu>

09 Support Secret 7" and help raise cash for refugees

In its final instalment, the Secret 7" series will again take seven tracks by seven of the best-known musicians – this year including Aretha Franklin and Foo Fighters – and press each one 100 times to vinyl. The public are invited to submit artwork for 700 unique sleeves, which will be exhibited in London in May before being sold at £70 each, with profits going to the Help Refugees charity.

secret-7.com

10 Celebrate your local Big Issue seller during #VendorWeek

Every year the INSP's #VendorWeek is held in honour of the 9,000-plus vendors selling street papers in 35 countries worldwide – each of them working hard day in, day out to get out of poverty. Look out for related events, activities and social media actions. If you're reading this you've probably already celebrated your Big Issue seller in the best way possible – by buying and reading the mag!

UK-wide, February 3-9; insp.ngo/what-we-do/vendorweek



platform.

Your views on the big issues


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 letters@bigissue.com

 Editorial, 2nd Floor,
43 Bath St, Glasgow,
G2 1HW

THIS WEEK WE ASKED YOU...

Three million Brexit 50p coins have burst into circulation. What will you do with your first one?

Giving it to charity... I can't imagine the money alone spent on those coins without taking Brexit into account. The money spent on Brexit could've actually gone to make a real difference in communities in a way I don't think people realise that Brexit won't.

Emily Lawrence, Facebook

Save it and celebrate when letting my fireworks off.

Richard Wallington, Facebook

Give it to the charity that helps child refugees to come to be with their parents.

Pamela Graham, Facebook

Refuse it and ask for another!

Alison Davies, Facebook

Write I ❤️ EU on it with a sharpie.

Judith Jones, Facebook

Keep it for my son as a keepsake.

Loren Tiernan, Facebook

I plan on keeping any I get to take them out of circulation.

Chaz Cardinal, Facebook



Turn that frown upside down
Richard Layard is Mr Happy

No happiness without nature

I welcome Richard Layard's idea that happiness is a better measure of a nation's success than GDP [The man who reinvented happiness, January 20-26], including his observation that the ubiquity of competition between individuals at every level is bound to cause unhappiness.

It is surprising then to read in the last paragraph that "those for whom life is a struggle can learn better mental habits", placing the responsibility back on the individual (positive psychology and McMindfulness have much to answer for). I would have liked a definition of "struggle", because if one's struggle is created by the economic conditions of your life then it might be better to join a union. How could David Cameron's government introduce the measurement of happiness and soon after lead us into austerity, which hit the poorest the hardest and doubtless made them less happy? No joined-up thinking there.

I have just retired, finally got my state pension after more than two decades working in mental health, and live a modest life which suits me because the *meaning* in my life (and thus my wellbeing) comes from social relationships, activism, spiritual practice and creativity.

What undermines my happiness is the degradation of the environment and loss of so many beautiful creatures around our planet. I grew up in the London green belt and now live in rural Wales: where are the wildflower meadows, insects, bees and birds of my childhood? It is a green desert. It is only possible to be really happy at present if you are in denial of climate emergency, pursuing your addiction (screens, food, alcohol, sex, gambling, acquiring stuff and experiences etc), or totally dissociated from nature, which means you are alienated from yourself. No wonder we have an epidemic of depression in our society.

Dylis Pugh, art psychotherapist

Image: Nigel Rogers

Bill for all seasons

The Future Generations Bill is important for many reasons. One of them is that it provides a basis on which we can hold Boris Johnson to account.

Some have been talking about Mr Johnson as if he has such a large majority that he is as unchallengeable as [insert preferred analogy here] and can do as he wants for the next five years. But he made the Future Generations pledge to The Big Issue, one of very few pledges he made in the run-up to the election.

Anything damaging he does – from mishandling Brexit to not taking the necessary action on climate change – can be regarded as a threat to future generations, and all concerned people will have grounds for challenging him.

R Warren, email

Warning from history

Lord Alf Dubs' interview [January 27-February 2] reminds me of something a young girl told me years ago. Her Jewish grandfather insisted she must always have access to an emergency fund in case she had to "quickly pack up and leave".

Tony Trevor, Lincolnshire

How would Jesus vote?

From the recent spate of letters on Christ, Christianity or Christians it's clear many non-Bible readers have claimed Jesus as their own. The model which best approximates his words and deeds would be socially conservative and financially socialist, a balance that results in the effort to reconcile love and justice, and one reason why he and his followers are attacked by both the left and right.

Tim Cleal, Coventry

Here to help

I would like to comment on the letter published in the January 6-12 issue entitled Faith facts. I understand the sentiment but the fact is we need people in high places with a heart for the needy to do great things, to have access to people who have the sort of money that makes a big difference.

Another letter was entitled, What would Jesus do? He would not judge others but would use their skills for the sake of others, encouraging those who have lost their way to walk with him, to trust in the goodness and love of God. He disregarded manmade rules to do the right thing. He taught us to love others, regardless of their race or creed.

I for one fall short but I try my hardest to be there for everyone I come across who needs help.

I admire The Big Issue for the opportunities it gives, for the voice it gives, for giving me the opportunity to meet vendors and hear their stories.

Denise Thick, email

Empty words

Re: Holocaust memorial day, it's interesting that politicians line up to call for 'never again', but continue to put the groundwork in place to enable the thing they fear the most.

Una Devine, Facebook

@bigissue



@sortyourstuff

Satisfying trip into #Lichfield, making use of plastic free veg from Market, own containers for meat at butchers, recycling my contact lenses at Boots opticians, recycling Xmas cards @StGilesHospice and supporting our @BigIssue vendor!

@bigissue



@SharonGChiara

Bedtime reading, last week's @BigIssue This is a cracking article [The man who reinvented happiness, January 20-26] & reminds me of #EmployeeEngagement thinking of the #EmployeeExperience only on a macro level. Imagine if governments, of any political persuasion, thought about what would make people happy... Love it

EDITOR'S LETTER

When real life meets soundbites



Computer gaming has always been another country to me. I've never been taken by any aspect of it. I understand that gamers can get hooked and lose hours and days down rabbit holes. But the switch has never flicked.

I don't believe Boris Johnson is a devoted gamer either. Given his appetites and rumoured peccadilloes, I can't imagine him lost in a *Call of Duty* binge. Which is why his repeated pledge to 'level up' Britain rings hollow.

For a start, it's meaningless. I know Boris Johnson likes to roll out broad and fairly meaningless epithets, but really, what's he talking about this time? Getting a new phaser?

If we give him the benefit of the doubt and we do attach actual meaning to it, let's assume that he's insisting he can deliver a bright future lifting the nation above the current place we find ourselves in. By implication, others, some ne'er-do-wells, have left us on the rack. Given that Boris Johnson and his party have been in power for 10 years, it's a neat trick to be responsible for something, blame some other non-specific grouping, then claim you're the very boys to sort the mess out.

As Brexit has happened/is about to happen for real on December 31/will keep us lashed to the mast of socio-economic and political uncertainty for at least 10 years, if Boris Johnson is actually serious about 'levelling up', he'd best get on with explaining how, and then doing it. Because there is nobody left to blame.

If he means uniting Britain in a One Nation future, he needs to involve the devolved nations, and opposition parties, in future planning talks. He may lead the party of government, but what will be agreed goes beyond party allegiances. To keep others shut out will only increase resentment, a sense of disenfranchisement and ultimately lead to further splits. Besides, there isn't exactly a surfeit of political top rankers in the current Cabinet.

He needs to sort out infrastructure too. The debate over Huawei and its licence to operate in the UK is missing a key point. The under-investment and lack of preparedness for years at a governmental level has left Britain reliant on overseas investment, frequently from state-owned entities. There is an overplayed opposition to public ownership in Britain. The idea that it is some kind of creaking, communist means of allowing statist overlords in and that it will lead to a collapse in how we live has been ground into the collective subconscious. But we remain happy to accept it from others.

Hinkley C nuclear power station is currently under construction in Somerset. Regardless of the arguments around a nuclear source as opposed to other energy production, it's obvious we need to meet demand. However, the £20bn construction cost is being met largely by EDF, a French company owned by the French state, and China General Nuclear Power Group, owned by the Chinese government.

Northern Rail, which has failed so much it is finally coming under state control, had been run by Arriva, who are owned by Deutsche Bahn, a company part-owned by the German government.

The idea of taking back control is more complex than a simple soundbite. Who'd a thunk it?

Beyond the nuts and bolts of keeping the lights on and the trains running, there are problems with the funding of the justice system and of prisons. There are systemic issues with Universal Credit and the destructive impact on the lives of many – including, increasingly, the working poor. And it will take more to fix growing rough-sleeping numbers than untruths from Boris Johnson claiming numbers are dropping rather than rising.

If Johnson is to really direct Britain to some shining new uplands, he needs to get beyond slogans and actually do something meaningful.

The Big Issue and the Future Generations plan is ready and awaiting his call.

Paul McNamee is editor of The Big Issue

@pauldmcnamee Paul.McNamee@bigissue.com

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ON AIR!

Homeless broadcasters go live

Homeless people are getting the chance to share their stories on air after the UK's first dedicated radio station began broadcasting last week.

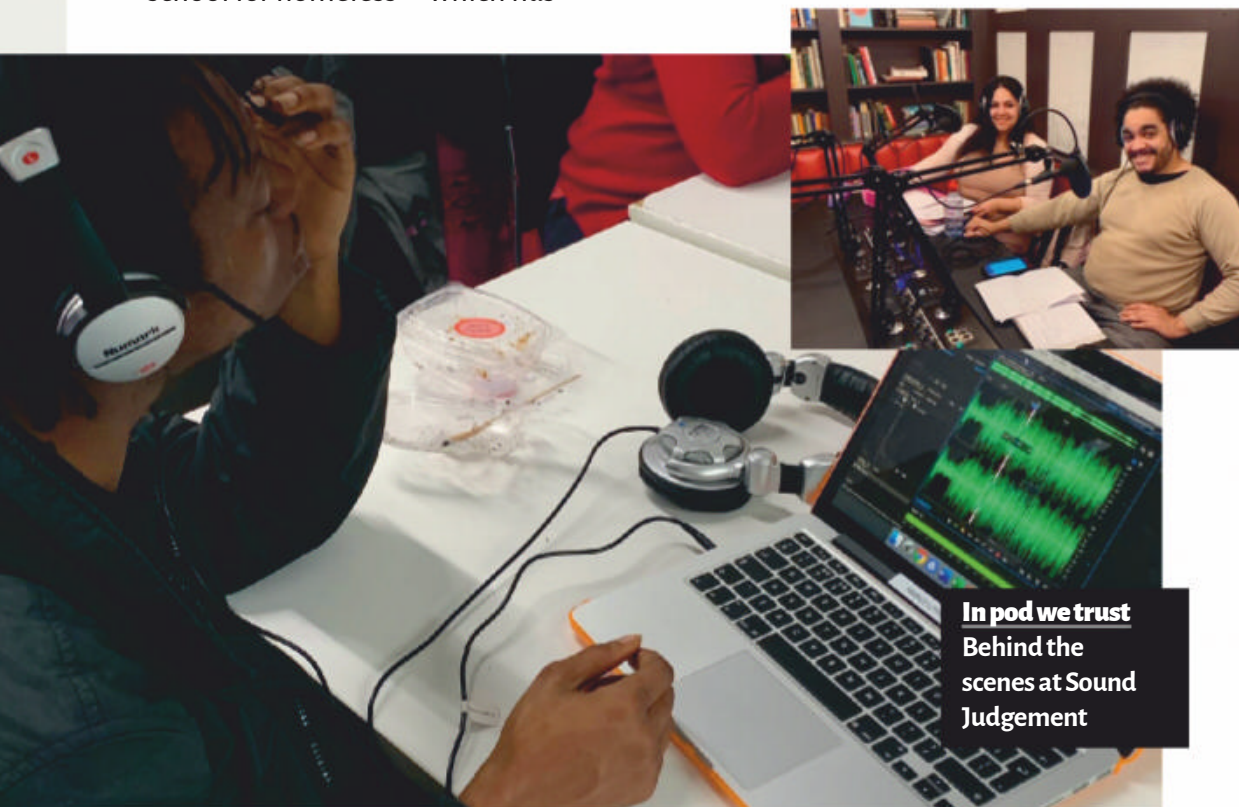
Sound Judgement, the first station in the country run by people who are homeless, is kicking off with six weekly podcasts discussing the issues facing young homeless people, ranging from mental health to education. The first episode – dubbed *Homelessness: Choice or Chance?* – is available now.

It's the brainchild of charity Accumulate – the self-titled 'art school for homeless' – which has

been running courses with the help of industry experts and Ravensbourne University London's tutors and students to boost broadcasting skills ahead of the launch.

Accumulate founder Marice Cumber said: "It has been amazing to see how far this group have come since our first taster sessions in the hostels to now, when our group are pitching their subject ideas to industry professionals.

"Each member's confidence and self-esteem has grown week on week, empowering them to have a more positive outlook."



Right on cue
Vendor Dave can't wait to start on a second playlist

In pod we trust
Behind the scenes at Sound Judgement

Big Issue vendors are also having their time behind the mic

Since December, London sellers have been swapping their pitches for The Boogaloo pub, the former stomping ground of Pogues frontman Shane MacGowan, with a weekly Tuesday morning slot on Boogaloo Radio.

Vendors take charge of the airwaves from 10am until midday, offering an insight into their lives behind the iconic red tabard. They also get the chance to handpick the tunes with a bespoke playlist.

Dave Martin, who sells the magazine outside Tesco on Barb Mews, Hammersmith, stepped into the slot last month.

"Seeing as it was my first time on the radio, I thought it was brilliant," he told The Big Issue. "You just end up wanting to do more, basically. I'm keen to put my second playlist out there."

Boogaloo DJ Jenn Crothers added: "Everyone loves music and I didn't want inviting Big Issue vendors on air to be a charity case.

"I wanted to show that someone living on the streets would still have a great taste in music."

Charity warns of 'neglected health crisis'

At least 12,000 people experiencing homelessness are missing out on vital lifesaving drug and alcohol services resulting in a "health crisis", a leading charity has warned.

St Mungo's has made a plea to the government to end deaths on the street as part of its Knocked Back report, released last week.

The study revealed the impact of spending cuts on services, slashed by a quarter since 2015/16, before pointing to the 726 homeless people who died in 2018, according to the ONS. Half of these deaths were alcohol or drug related, while the number that were put down to drug poisoning rose by 55 per cent between 2017 and 2018.

St Mungo's also wants boosted funding for drug

and alcohol services. A government spokesman responded by confirming it is investing £260m in council services to tackle substance abuse.

"This is a neglected health crisis that requires rapid action. Our research shows people who have already faced traumatic experiences throughout their lives are being turned away from lifesaving treatment just when they need it most," said St Mungo's chief executive Howard Sinclair.

"This needs urgent government action. This means a comprehensive review of every death, a personalised fund to help everyone access lifesaving treatment services quickly, and funding increases for integrated treatment, support and accommodation services."

Is Boris Johnson right to say rough sleeping figures have fallen below 2010 levels?



Illustration: Miles Cole

HOW IT WAS TOLD

We saw it in the general election campaign when he snubbed Andrew Neil's BBC interview, but Boris Johnson has been ramping up his direct communication via social media in recent months and cutting out the media middleman.

That only intensified as the UK moved closer to Brexit Day last week as the Prime Minister stepped up his People's PMQs series.

Johnson 'borrowed' *Wired* magazine's autocomplete interview format to answer burning issues on Brexit in one video – looking at whether it will make passports expire, wreck holidays, farming and fishing or whether he is multilingual (he is).

Later videos outlined the Conservative leader's response to knife crime and homelessness – we'll be looking at the latter.

In the two-minute video, Johnson calls homelessness "a scourge and a disgrace at the moment", insisting that there are "too many homeless people".

But there is "one floating glimmer of good news", according to Johnson. Rough sleeping figures are down.

In fact, he says, "the number of rough sleepers has come down a bit on the figures of the last eight years, it's lower than any time in the last eight years".

It's a big claim, but is the Prime Minister speaking the truth?

FACTS. CHECKED

No. It is not true.

Official rough sleeping figures did show a fall in rough sleeping in the last available statistics, for 2018. But that was the first drop in an eight-year period during which the number of rough sleepers has skyrocketed by 165 per cent under the Conservatives.

The total number of rough sleepers counted in England in autumn 2018 was 4,677. This was put together by combining local authority counts taken in a single night or an estimate based on outreach teams' local information.

But Johnson's assertion that this was lower than the figure seen eight years ago is completely wrong.

In 2010, 1,768 people were counted as sleeping on the streets – 2,909 fewer than in 2018. However, the Prime Minister was correct, of sorts, in saying that there had been a "floating glimmer of good news" with figures down two per cent or 74 people from the 2017 total of 4,751.

This isn't the first time that senior Conservatives have 'misremembered' rough sleeping figures. Chancellor Sajid Javid – a man who really should be up on his figures with his first Budget on the horizon – was at it in December. In a Sky News interview, Javid said that the number of homeless people peaked in 2008 when Labour were in charge in Westminster before claiming that

the Conservatives had halved the number of people in statutory homelessness.

The UK Statistics Authority cleared this up, saying that "statutory homelessness figures peaked in 2003 before falling to a low of 42,000 households in 2009. This then accelerated to 58,000 households at last count in 2017". Javid "misremembered" that, apparently.

As for Wales, their two-week count in October 2018 found 347 people sleeping rough – up one per cent on 2017. Things work differently in Scotland – they don't use the same headcount method but Crisis's Homelessness Monitor 2019 report estimates that levels have remained stable between 650 and 800 people sleeping out every night since 2011.

Homelessness is notoriously difficult to count effectively – many homeless people are hidden from view and can be missed on a single-night count and that has meant that the Ministry of Housing, Community and Local Government (MHCLG) figures are often questioned by homelessness organisations and charities.

But that is no excuse for comments like Johnson's – which were also picked apart by the *Mirror Online*.

Social media videos like this swerve the scrutiny of the media and other commentators to get across the message politicians want to convey. Take them with a pinch of salt.

WORTH REPEATING

4,677

people were rough sleeping in autumn 2018's last official count for England



165%

This is 165 per cent higher than in 2010

In 2010,

1,768


people were rough sleeping in England

Stats: MHCLG

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JOHN BIRD



We're out. So now to think of the future

It so happens that the last full day, last week, we were members of the European Union coincided with my 74th birthday.

January 30, aside from being my birthday, has a welter of historical connections, and I have been writing a book on those coincidences for many years.

Although I have said it before, the book is almost finished and threatens to be an incredibly brilliant book; or a complete pile of pony.

I have collected together about 30 January 30s of significance, but have only used 20 of them.

The very reason we have had a European Union in the first instance is to be found in the book: if one January 30 jumps out it is the day that President von Hindenburg, having listened to military and political leaders, gave Adolf Hitler the chancellorship of Germany. On the basis that he would clean up the streets, quell the violence, much of it caused by his own storm troopers, and drive out the threat from the communists.

To think, if we had not had that disastrous and debilitating war and the mass murdering, the Holocaust, then Europe might just have pootled along, not needing its unity in a federating pan-Europe form.

There are many other historical moments in my book, which ahead of its publication I will be 'performing' some time in 2020; so you may wish to come down and see me tell a very long story.

A few months ago I sat on a train with some social entrepreneurs and reeled off the chapters and the links and realised that I spoke a brilliant book. They were captivated. Needless to say, it did occur to me that like those who can 'talk a good fight', I may well be a person who can only 'talk a good book'.

I know where I was in 1973 when Parliament's wish was confirmed and we joined. I was legal after six years of hiding from the state and its enforcers. It was the first year in many that I could stop looking over my shoulder, expecting to be 'nabbed' by the boys in blue. It was the first year of my new marriage, and of getting a really serious job that would give me skills as a printer and as a small businessman; and publishing books and selling them from the back of a motorbike.

It was the year that my mother died in the hot heat of a summer, surrounded by an incredible array, even back then, of machines and medical apparatus. It was the year, because she had a Jewish doctor, of her saying that "the Jews aren't so bad after all". And was actually encouraging to her West Indian-born nurses. Her racialism, as we used to call it, seeming to disappear in the fight to keep her alive.

I was a printer for the English Folk Dance & Song Society up in London's Camden Town, living by the Grand Union Canal at Paddington basin, and a few minutes' walk from the different world of slummary I had been born into post-war. A Marxist anti-racist, anti-European – we

Ensign of the times

As Brexit becomes reality, the spotlight moves to the climate crisis



saw it as 'Fortress Europe', a more sophisticated way of drawing profits out of the working class.

I rarely go back to Paddington these days, and the station, I think named after a bear, is not my regular haunt. But last week I took a very clean and beautifully dark, dark green train to Slough. I was going to a Thames Valley educational talk that I was giving. I gave it at a Roman Catholic school called St Joseph's and I had a wonderful time. Telling people many of the lessons of my life, and warning them that if they don't pull their socks up they might end up in the House of Lords!

The Thames Valley Learning Partnership brings together a number of schools from the area, including Eton College, and it seems a wonderful mix of experiences. Certainly the idea of schools banding together to draw upon each other can hopefully bring us to a better place for our children.

I walked from Paddington Station to King's Cross for my train home. I am obsessed with my 10,000 steps a day. I passed through a wet, ever-changing London, most of it changed since I was a boy and young man. And most of that change occurring in the period of that membership of Europe. Some would say that Europe helped us rebuild ourselves

after the UK helped rescue Europe from Nazi oppression. But that is another, longer argument, some of it contained in the entrails of my new book.

What I actually did for my birthday was forget about reality, have a late breakfast and go and see the new David Copperfield with my family, and noticed how antisocial popcorn is when you're movie-watching, the rustling coming from my son beside me. We certainly didn't have those big, US-invented popcorn boxes in the days when we went to see Elvis in *GI Blues*.

Many things have changed, perhaps not all for the good. Certainly the world is more about the consumer than it has ever been.

One of the last questions asked at St Joseph's was the relevance of Greta Thunberg and her angry voice. I said we can't dodge that. That that is definitely the big, big issue of today. Do we have a future?

I trust we will all rally to ensure that, inside or outside Europe.

THIS WEEK JOHN WILL BE

READING: *The First Circle* by Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn

WATCHING: Sam Mendes' World War 1 epic 1917

LISTENING TO: *String Quartet No 1 in A Minor* by Béla Bartók

MEETING: MPs and peers to promote his future generations campaign; and stepping gingerly into the first week of Brexit

John Bird is the founder and Editor in Chief of The Big Issue.
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john.bird@bigissue.com

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Breaking down barriers with football

London is a big place. For young people, cuts to youth services have only made it bigger. Alex Baine knows it – that’s why he created London Football Journeys (LFJ). The charity brings young people from across the city together through football exchanges and filmmaking projects that build connections between postcodes.

Baine, 38, grew up in London. After seven years working on social inclusion in Japan and India – including a stint working with Japan’s Homeless World Cup team – he returned to the capital in 2011 inspired by how he’d seen football used as a tool for change. “At that point I was determined to start a project that celebrated London’s diversity and brought people together using football,” he tells *The Big Issue*.

His research coincided with the London riots. “Lots of youth workers, teachers and young people spoke to me about kids staying within their own area and group, not really venturing out, and it having to do with damaging perceptions around gang culture or postcodes,” says Baine. “As well as bringing young people together, there seemed to be growing negative perceptions of young people to fight too.”

LFJ was set up to show young people that London is theirs. “Not just their boroughs or their postcode, but the whole of London should be accessible,” Baine says. Getting the charity off the ground wasn’t easy but eventually he secured funding and launched a pilot project with Harrow and Camden youth clubs. Until 2014, LFJ did a lot of work with boys who loved football – the idea of setting positive examples for each other within the game resonated, and they examined what it meant to be a captain or leader. But in 2015 the charity moved into schools too in an attempt to target girls, who sometimes struggled to get involved at youth clubs, and for help tracking their work’s long-term impact.

The core programme lasts 16 weeks: the first five are spent

working with the group to help them create a film about their community and their experiences. They’re encouraged to interview each other, youth workers and teachers, and talk about aspects of their culture that are interesting or matter to them. The final films are sent to the other youth group they’re going to meet with to watch. “It’s the first communication between them,” Baine says. “The point of swapping films is: they might be from a different background, but a lot of what they’re saying is similar to you.”

For the football exchange, one group hosts another from a different area. The groups will mix and take part in games focused on trust and communication, as well as football exercises such as relay races. The day always finishes with full football matches, with both groups of youngsters mixed to create two teams, followed by an awards ceremony.

“Afterwards we feel it’s important they talk about their experiences, so they give a presentation to a community group or youth centre, or, if in school, to their year group or younger years that we hope will take part in following years,” Baine adds. “Difference or diversity of a person should be a learning opportunity rather than a barrier. That’s the crux of it.”

LFJ has worked with 25 groups to date, which amounts to around 1,000 young people, with another 4,000

people having seen presentations on what the charity continues to achieve.

The most crucial part of the whole operation, Baine says, is its youth board and ambassadors programme. Some who have been through the core programme stay on for workshops in leadership, public speaking, CV writing, interview skills and mental health first aid. They help plan LFJ events – including the charity’s annual celebration, due to be held at Wembley Stadium in March, recognising the nine groups currently on the programme – and play an active part in shaping the organisation. “They are crucial to the whole thing,” Baine says. “I don’t think it would go anywhere if the young people who’ve been through it don’t buy into it and help us grow.”

Now the founder is completing a course in restorative justice with a view to incorporating it into LFJ’s methods. “I’m interested in how to reintegrate people into group settings rather than punishing them,” he says, something that could be applied in schools or to the young people he works with who have been involved with crime. “It’s a cliché but we’re so divided right now. People coming together at an age when they form perceptions is crucial.”

Interview: Hannah Westwater
@hannahjtw

FIND OUT MORE
londonfootballjourneys.org



Alex Baine
London Football Journeys

Illustration: Matthew Brazier

ON THE SCORESHEET

Of the 114 young people who got involved in LFJ in 2017-18:

- **More than 80 per cent felt more confident travelling to other areas and meeting peers from other communities**
- **More than three quarters had boosted self-esteem**
- **Nearly nine in 10 had improved communication skills**
- **Thirty went on to gain qualifications in leadership**

the big picture.

A LOT OF BOTTLE

As the coronavirus continues to spread, Chinese citizens are improvising ways to reduce infection.

With several cities on complete lockdown, these children were waiting to fly out of Beijing Capital International Airport. Plastic bottle masks – or even surgical-style face masks – are unlikely to contain the pneumonia-like disease, which is most likely spread from human to human via respiratory droplets.

The number of coronavirus cases surpassed the Sars epidemic of 2003 last week, and the World Health Organisation declared a global health emergency.

The NHS is asking people returning from high-risk areas to self-quarantine and avoid hospitals and GP surgeries if cold-like symptoms appear to prevent further infection. Instead they should call 111 for advice.

So far, the coronavirus has a mortality rate of two per cent. The mortality rate for Sars, by comparison, was more than 10 per cent. Tips to reduce the chance of picking up infection: wash your hands frequently and carry hand sanitiser. Use disposable tissues, cover your mouth while coughing or sneezing. Be careful touching surfaces on public transport and avoid shaking hands or kissing cheeks if somebody seems to be unwell.

Photo: Kevin Frayer/Getty Images



letter to my younger self.

Michael Cashman

Actor, peer and tireless LGBT campaigner

1950s
'The luckiest boy' –
Southend with his mum



1962
'A smiler' – the
schoolboy EastEnders



1989
As Colin in EastEnders –
British soap gets its first
gay kiss



2013
With his late civil partner
Paul Cottingham after
receiving his CBE



At 16 years old, I was just starting out as a young adult on an acting career. I knew my own sexuality, I knew I was attracted to boys. I was really, really trying to find a place to belong. I came from the East End of London to the West End of London, this other world that I could hide myself in and fantasise in, a world of tiny gay clubs where the strongest drink you could get was a black coffee. People pushed pills towards you, and you ducked away from them. It was an incredibly confusing and brilliant time. And life threw some heavy punches sometimes, in places where I least expected them, like my school. But I was a smiler. I looked out with wide, wide eyes, smiling at the world in which I was living and which I didn't really understand.

The hard times I went through you can't, as a young person, rationalise [Cashman suffered regular sexual abuse as a young boy]. In a way you can't give them space because they would pull you down. Often when things happen to you, you find survival mechanisms and part of that is imagining that those things happened to somebody else and it's not somebody you know and face daily. Young adults are really quite imaginative about how to deal with life throwing them a punch on the chin.

I look back at my teenage self and I love him. I love his openness. I love his ability to laugh. His ability to throw himself into a world as alien as the world of showbusiness. And I love him because he dared to try to find someone. And he did; at just over the age of 16, he found somebody eight years older than him. And this guy was stunning. He was the richest straight gay guy I ever met. He swept me off my feet. And due to my perseverance and determination we were together for nearly nine years. Then he tried to pretend I didn't exist. But I love the young Michael for having the guts to commit to something, during the '60s and '70s when teenagers were pretty crazy – drugs were common currency, binges and all-night parties. Instead I opted for a love life. And it changed me because I think to be loved, and to love someone... it changes you for the rest of your life.

The relationship with my mother was very close. I was her confidant at a very early age, and in some respects perhaps that took away a bit of my innocence. We all need someone to trust and she saw me as a repository of some of her secrets. She didn't have to believe in Jesus Christ because she believed I walked on water. And she was fascinated by my life in showbusiness. When I opened an avocado pear and put oil and vinegar in it, she looked at me and said, oh you showbusiness people, you do live strange lives! I was a little glittering ball in her life and she couldn't quite understand where the electricity to power it came from, or which way that light would turn, but she was mesmerised by it.

My dad and I always had a difficult relationship because I wasn't the man he wanted his son to be. I wasn't at all athletic. I ran away from the football, I ran away from the horror of the communal cold showers on sports day. He was sceptical about my work. He liked the money it brought in, but he certainly didn't like the fact that I was living in a world which, as he said, was filled with queers.

If you told the teenage Michael how his life would turn out, he'd say: well, that's not going to happen! Because when I was 16, it was still criminal not just to try to meet other gays but to have a consenting relationship. It wasn't until I was getting into my 17th year that the law changed [and homosexuality] was partially decriminalised. So my 16-year-old self, thinking of going out there and leading the fight on gay rights [before he was a MEP and Labour peer, Cashman



1966 THE YEAR MICHAEL TURNS 16

- Myra Hindley and Ian Brady are found guilty of the Moors murders
- *Star Trek* debuts on American network NBC
- Bob Dylan is injured in a motorcycle accident and slips out of public view for more than a year

was a founder member of LGBT rights charity Stonewall] – he would have been certified as ready to be locked up. If you'd told me that when the government brought in the first anti-lesbian and gay law in 100 years, I was going to campaign against it... The 16-year-old me would have covered his head and gone: no, no, Michael don't do it, you'll end up in prison.

There were times when I was exhausted [being a high-profile spokesman for LGBT rights] and I thought, I'm waiting for somebody else to speak up. But then the voice in your head says, you can't, you have to speak up. I never once tired of challenging an injustice. I just sometimes questioned whether I had the talent to see it through. If you told the 16-year-old me that I would have ended up in politics – that again would have seemed unbelievable because I finished my education at the age of 12. I failed my 11-plus. I didn't go to university. The first thing my dad did when I was born was put my name down so that I could follow him and become a docker in the East End. If I'd passed my 11-plus my journey would have been different. But it's no use looking back.

When I was given the opportunity to make a stand in a soap in front of millions of people twice a week [as Colin Russell in *EastEnders*, who in 1989 gave British soap operas their first gay kiss], that was incredible. It does surprise me that I took that step [of becoming a famous face]. But I look back and remember that 16-year-old in a holiday camp doing cabaret. There was a man drowning in the sea off the cliff and the entire ballroom left because they thought the man drowning had more entertainment value than my rendition of Al Jolson's Mammy. But I kept singing. I had the guts and the chutzpah to stand up and tell jokes that weren't funny, and sing songs that nobody wanted to listen to at such an early age – that shows I had the confidence to walk into the lion's den, even though I couldn't imagine what a lion would do to you.

If I could have one last conversation with anybody, I would choose Paul [Cottingham, his partner of 31 years who died in 2014]. I would give every single day for one moment with him. And that's not flippant. I think about what that means, giving everything for that one moment. We would talk and I would apologise for a couple of things. But finally, at the end of the conversation, holding him in my arms. I would give up on everything else. That would be my one wish.

When someone you love as much as I loved Paul dies they give you an amazing gift. They take away any fear of death. You realise that death makes sense to the dying. It's those of us who live on afterwards who are confused by it. But to the dying, the moment when they decide not to breathe in again is the moment of amazing relief. Paul and I felt very lucky. When he had his diagnosis of the very rare cancer he said, we have to remember that some people leave home, having had a row, and expect to get home that night and apologise and make it all better. And they don't ever come back. We know, we can prepare. I do think about death now, but I have no fear of it. I am a born-again atheist so I have no expectation, other than surprise. But when I look at the life I've led so far, to wish for more is pretty audacious. I think I've had an amazing amount of wonderful life.

If I could go back and re-live any time in my life it would be when I was about seven years old, shivering with the cold on what they laughingly call the beach at Southend. It was mud. I still have a photo of that day. There I was, shivering, with a bucket and spade, my mum sat on a towel beside me and my brother, both of us so skinny. It was only for one day but it was our first holiday. I thought I was the luckiest boy in the world.

One of Them: From Albert Square to Parliament Square by Michael Cashman is published on February 6 (Bloomsbury, £18.99). Interview: Jane Graham @Janeannie
For more interviews see bigissue.com/letter-to-my-youngerself

What links George Orwell, the Ukrainian famine, *Animal Farm*, fake news and Trump's impeachment?

Steven MacKenzie unravels a twisting tale





Ukraine being used as a pawn between super states will come as no surprise to anyone who went to school with Andrea Chalupa. By the age of 12 she was giving talks to her bewildered classmates about the Holodomor, the Ukrainian famine that killed between three and five million people in the early 1930s.

Andrea and her sister Alexandra grew up in northern California hearing stories about how her family suffered under Joseph Stalin's regime and survived the Second World War.

"I knew as a child that there was widespread cannibalism in Ukraine, that when a mother was driven mad by hunger she ate her own children," she says. "All around me, people had never heard of it and that really deepened the tragedy for me."

Chalupa's parents were born in refugee camps in 1945. Her grandfather Olexji had seen the Russian Revolution fought on his farm in Donbas, east Ukraine, survived the Holodomor, and was arrested and tortured in Stalin's purges. To Andrea as a young girl, he was her hero.

"As children we all had that person who meant the world to us," Chalupa says. "My grandfather would take me out for doughnuts and hot chocolate and I would sing songs from *The Little Mermaid* at the top of my lungs and he thought I was amazing. He was my everything."

"When he died it was my first big loss in life. I took a very long time to get over it. When I graduated from university I was feeling very lost, so to stabilise myself I went to Ukraine with my grandfather's memoir."

Not long before he died aged 83, Olexji had written down his life story. Chalupa recognised parallels with what he had lived through and the events allegorised in George Orwell's *Animal Farm*, a thinly veiled attack on the risks of socialism. Napoleon the pig leads a rebellion to create a fairer society for all, but the idyllic dream becomes a nightmare as power corrupts and some animals become more equal than others.

Chalupa became determined to find out more about her grandfather – and the history of Ukraine at that time – and learned about Gareth Jones. A former foreign adviser to ex-prime minister David Lloyd George, he was also a journalist who in March 1933 had been the first to bring the famine in Ukraine to the world's attention.

Jones had a busy start to 1933. He was present when Adolf Hitler was made chancellor of Germany and flew on a newly developed aircraft with him and Joseph Goebbels in February that year. He wrote prophetically: "If this aeroplane should crash then the whole history of Europe would be changed." The following month Jones headed to Moscow to bag another great dictator. His ambition to interview Stalin was thwarted but he



Witness to history
Orwell wanted the West to see the truth of the Soviet regime

discovered on an unauthorised trip to Ukraine that the region known as the bread basket of Europe – its vast fields and fertile conditions were responsible for growing 25 per cent of Soviet crops – was being starved as new state-implemented production methods failed and successful harvests were exported to prop up Stalin's base of power in Moscow.

But, like today, fake news took over. Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist Walter Duranty, the *New York Times*' man in Moscow, rebuffed Jones's accusations, calling them "an exaggeration or malignant propaganda".

"He was very effective at muddling the truth," Chalupa says. "You don't have to deny that something happens, you have to create enough confusion so people lose a sense of urgency and interest."

Sorting fact from fiction drove Chalupa, now a writer, activist and filmmaker, to develop a script about Gareth Jones and how his reporting inspired George Orwell. It's no coincidence that the main human in *Animal Farm* is called Jones.

"There was such a strong belief that the Soviet Union was a great experiment that was helping usher in a new age of socialism," Chalupa says. "A lot of George Orwell's motivation behind his great works, especially *Animal Farm*, was to open up the eyes of the West.

"It takes all of us to get the truth out. Gareth's story is tragic [in 1935 he was killed in China the day before his 30th birthday; the suspicion persists that it was Stalin's revenge] but George Orwell and others picked up the torch. That's how you resist authoritarianism. It takes a chain of resistance, even over generations, to finally take them down."

While working on the film, Chalupa uncovered her own link to the chain. Orwell struggled to find a publisher for *Animal Farm* in the 1940s, when the Allies were relying on Stalin to defeat Hitler. Secker & Warburg printed a relatively small run in 1945 and six months later a copy was read by Ukrainian refugee Ihor Ševčenko, who recognised what the book had to say about the dangers of totalitarianism.

Ševčenko wrote to Orwell and the pair produced 5,000 copies translated into Ukrainian to be distributed in refugee camps. Only in the preface to this edition did Orwell outline explicitly his attitude to the Soviet regime:

"I have never visited Russia and my knowledge of it consists only of what can be learned by reading books and newspapers. Even if I had the power, I would not wish



Shutter fingers
James Norton plays journalist Gareth Jones

to interfere in Soviet domestic affairs: I would not condemn Stalin and his associates merely for their barbaric and undemocratic methods. It is quite possible that, even with the best intentions, they could not have acted otherwise under the conditions prevailing there.

"But on the other hand it was of the utmost importance to me that people in western Europe should see the Soviet regime for what it really was. Since 1930 I had seen little evidence that the USSR was progressing towards anything that one could truly call socialism. On the contrary, I was struck by clear signs of its transformation into a hierarchical society, in which the rulers have no more reason to give up their power than any other ruling class."

The majority of copies of the Ukrainian translation of *Animal Farm* were destroyed by American personnel fearing criticism of Stalin, but one copy was kept and is still owned by Chalupa's uncle.

The coincidence pushed Chalupa to get the film made. More than a dozen years in development, *Mr Jones* is released this week, starring James Norton, Vanessa Kirby and Joseph Mawle as Orwell. It was directed by Polish-born, Oscar-nominated Agnieszka Holland, who has helmed episodes of *The Wire*, *The Killing* and *House of Cards*. (Cath Clarke reviews *Mr Jones* on page 32).

"She kept commenting to me that Hollywood became obsessed with an anti-hero narrative and now you have anti-heroes in power," Chalupa says. "The world needs examples of heroes who do the right thing simply because it is the right thing. Our film is black and white because sometimes the truth is black and white."

Holland adds: "We knew when shooting this film that we are telling an important, timeless story. But only after I realised how relevant is today this tale about the fake news, alternative realities, corruption of the media, cowardness of governments, indifference of people.

"The clash of Jones's courage and determination against Duranty's cynical opportunism and cowardice is still valid as well. Today, we don't lack corruptible conformists and egoists; we lack Orwells and Joneses. That is why we brought them





Animal Farm
The first Ukrainian translation

Foreign interference in the 2016 election has dogged Trump since he took office, with Russia always being the prime suspect. Why now cast aspersions on Ukraine?

In March 2016, Paul Manafort was recruited to Trump's election campaign and in June that year he became its chairman. An endless parade of rogues have come and gone from Trump's inner circle, but Manafort was one of the more significant.

For most of the previous decade he had worked as an adviser for Viktor Yanukovich, the Kremlin-backed president of Ukraine from 2010 to 2014. Manafort was a proponent of shooting protesters, a "strategy that was to cause that, to send those people out and get them slaughtered", in his own daughter's words. Yanukovich is accused of being responsible for \$100bn disappearing from the Ukrainian budget while in power, some of it ending up in Manafort's account. Manafort is currently serving time in a Pennsylvania prison for tax and bank fraud and conspiracy to defraud the United States.

When Manafort was recruited to Trump's team, there was one person who did what they could to raise awareness of his crookedness: Andrea Chalupa's sister Alexandra.

A pro-Ukrainian activist and campaigner, as early as January 2016, Alexandra was warning that Manafort was Putin's "political brain for manipulating US foreign policy and elections". Working with the Democratic National Committee (DNC) and Ukrainian embassies, Alexandra investigated Manafort's political activities and financial dealings. By December 2016, Russia's foreign ministry spokesperson accused Ukraine of trying to sabotage Trump by exposing Manafort's attempts to hide millions of dollars paid for his work with Kremlin-backed Ukrainian politicians. It was Alexandra at the centre of this accusation, and a conspiracy theory built up around her.

She received notifications that someone was trying to hack her emails. She emailed the DNC to raise the alarm and that email became one of thousands of DNC emails published by WikiLeaks. Her phone was hacked; it would



Unearthing the truth
Andrea Chalupa with James Norton

pin forward to Donald Trump's impeachment pantomime. "I JUST GOT IMPEACHED FOR MAKING A PERFECT PHONE CALL!" he tweeted in January. Opponents hope the trial uncovers some inconvenient truths that will cripple his re-election campaign. Trump's almost inevitable acquittal will likely legitimise every shady tactic he has employed so far, just in time for him to take aim at whichever candidate wins the Democratic nomination.

The impeachment trial hinges on the "perfect" conversation Trump had with Ukrainian president Volodymyr Zelensky last July. Zelensky rose to fame in his home country playing a fictional president in the TV show *Servant of the People* (available on Netflix) before deciding life could imitate art. Some 73 per cent of voters agreed and he assumed office in May last year.

When the pair of TV stars-turned-presidents spoke, topics included Trump asking Ukraine to investigate financial dealings of former vice-president Joe Biden (and his son Hunter) and whether the Ukrainian government interfered with the 2016 US election. "Do us a favour," asked Trump on the phone call. In return, he allegedly offered not to freeze \$391m of military aid to the country.

Suspicion of overseas influence in domestic politics has been a massive concern in the US recently, so unsurprisingly, after hearing the president openly encouraging another country to dig up dirt on a potential opponent, a White House insider blew the whistle, leading to the trial.



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Gloria's stall helps her pay for her children's education



Raised: £265.00
Needed: £622.10

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Vor Thoun's farm will provide jobs for her local community



Raised: £640.00
Needed: £572.48

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Blair play
Joseph
Mawle as
George
Orwell

How seeing through Orwell's eyes changed my views

Joseph Mawle plays the writer in *Mr Jones*. He reveals how the role changed the way he looks at the world

The Big Issue: Your pinned tweet is an Orwell quote: "In a time of deceit telling the truth is a revolutionary act." What does that mean to you?

Joseph Mawle: Facing uncomfortable truths. That's something that Orwell was renowned for. There are ideas and there are facts, and they are different things. Sometimes the truth is uncomfortable, grizzly, mean, pessimistic, but it's actually about looking at those facts rather than ideas.

Is it a quote you came across while researching the part?

I can't say I was a huge fan of his beforehand. I'm not brilliantly well read until I find a purpose to read. On this occasion, it was to find out more about a man whose real name was Eric Blair. There are parts of him that can be quite repellent. He described himself as an odious little snob while he was at Eton. No one's completely clean, there's no one perfect. We are imperfect as a species and we continue to be.

Do you think Orwell's name being used as an adjective simplifies somebody who was quite complex?

He is absolutely much more complex. He felt uncomfortable in his own skin. He had this voice that people say was Etonian then, as I understand it, he tried to be a bit estuary. There's no recordings of him anywhere. From what I researched, Orwell was very conscious of a ruling-class voice suggesting someone looking down on others, and that his writing was to be for everyone. *Animal Farm* is written so a child could understand the story, just as an adult who'd been through the wars could understand what he was talking about.

Apart from *Animal Farm*, what other books did you read during production?

Homage to Catalonia, about joining the freedom fighters against fascism in Spain. That's the other thing about Orwell – he tended to do as well as write about it. But essentially, Orwell is an observer of people, of places, and he doesn't always get that right. That is the revolutionary element. He is honest about not always being right.

What was your take on contemporary events from his perspective?

Things are happening now that to a degree he predicted – Cambridge Analytica, the way we are encouraged to vote. We think we are thinking freely but actually it's somebody finding out that you're on the fence about something and subliminally adding pieces of information to the point you think that's your thought. We do go around in circles, and have to hope that the 1920s don't become the 2020s and we'll be in the same situation in 2030 as we were in 1930. We are moving away from each other. Nationalism is coming back. What will happen next? What will be allowed to happen next? Racism and xenophobia have been encouraged and people are not listening or having cohesive arguments. There's no problem with arguing or disagreeing, but it's important that we that we are able to understand and listen to each other.

What makes you optimistic?

Orwell's last words on his last published statement, relating to 1984, said: "Do not let it happen. It depends on you." That can relate to people like the amazing Greta Thunberg or Extinction Rebellion. People are activating rather than sitting there dormant and pacified by government. People have their own individual thoughts. Social media allows that to spread faster and easier. We just have to learn to use social media with a moral compass of our own.

It takes a chain of resistance to take down authoritarians

– Andrea Chalupa

randomly start to play a heavy metal song called *Regret* [by Swedish band Avatar] about a dead owl.

Some Trump supporters still believe Alexandra Chalupa acted as intermediary between the Democrats and the anti-Putin Ukrainian government that followed Viktor Yanukovich to undermine Trump's campaign. Then they all conspired to frame Russia for election interference. The proof, some conservative commentators say, is that visitor logs place her at the White House several times during 2015. A picture from one of the visits shows her standing next to a man who was later identified as the person who blew the whistle after Trump's "perfect phone call" with President Zelensky.

Trump has said plenty of stupid things, but the reason this phone call matters lies in history between Ukraine, Russia and the US that goes back decades. "There's the saying that Russia with Ukraine gives it the power of the United States, because Ukraine is so rich in natural resources," Andrea Chalupa explains. "You have an imperialist Kremlin that doesn't see any issue with openly attacking Ukraine and bombing civilians in Syria to create a refugee crisis that further divides Europe.

"Ukraine is Putin's number one target. Kiev is now a hotbed for the Russian opposition. You have a lot of great organisers living in exile keeping the flame of revolution warm for when Russia is ready."

More than a decade ago, when Chalupa started turning the story of Jones and Orwell into a film inspired by her grandfather, she couldn't have imagined themes from nearly a century ago would be rising again.

"It is so surreal that there is a parallel to today and it's the simple fact that authoritarianism is not creative. It's the same playbook – how a dictator rises to and consolidates power – it's all the same.

"Dictators come to power through *Animal Farm* and then they produce 1984. That's why Orwell remains relevant."

***Mr Jones* is in cinemas from February 7. Andrea Chalupa hosts the podcast *Gaslit Nation*, gaslitnationpod.com. @stevenmackenzie**

Get the story first. Deal with the damage later

The personal cost of reporting on conflict doesn't make the news unless someone like BBC veteran Fergal Keane speaks out. A former ITN foreign correspondent, Martin Geissler says knowing when to step back is the bravest move of all

Sometimes news just catches you cold. Especially in the age of Twitter. We've all been there, blithely scrolling down that hypnotic timeline when the torrent of words and pictures comes to rest on a story that knocks you for six.

So it was for me the other day, when I stumbled across the news that Fergal Keane, the BBC's Africa editor, is stepping down because he's suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder.

The announcement serves as a valuable reminder of the extraordinary job many journalists do and the profound personal toll it can take. I wonder how many colleagues had a quick moment to themselves when they heard the news and reflected on quiet struggles of their own.

I don't really know Fergal Keane but I've met him on the road a few times. He's a formidable correspondent and, more importantly, a lovely man. He's always struck me as kind, generous with his time and great company.

His CV is testament to his bravery. Kosovo, Iraq, Rwanda – he's reported from frontlines and genocides. But to me, the most courageous thing he ever did was to publicly admit his fears and vulnerability.

A decade and a half ago Fergal decided to stop reporting from "hot wars". He'd seen too much and, with a young family, he was frightened to go back. He did this at the peak of his career.

A lesser man would have pushed through, ignoring the fear and selfishly putting career before everything else. A lesser man like me, for example.

I spent more than a decade covering foreign news for ITN. I was never near the same level as Fergal, but I went to war zones, I saw the impact of famines and natural disasters, and I'm pretty sure the limited horrors I was exposed to must have left a mark on me.

When I first expressed an interest in taking up a foreign posting, a colleague laid out what would be expected of me: "You pick up the phone on the second ring 100 per cent of the time, and wherever they ask you to go, the answer's always yes."

You either like the sound of that arrangement or you don't. To me it sounded magnificent. I couldn't wait.

Truth be told, I'm not very brave, which was a problem, of course. But I am ambitious, and that proved to be more than adequate compensation.

In August 2003 I found myself in Baghdad. Saddam was still on the run, Iraq was in chaos and ITN had a permanent presence in the capital. Nobody with any pedigree wanted to be there in midsummer. It's the worst possible time to go, with temperatures touching 50C, but when they asked for volunteers my hand was first in the air.

The trip started badly. On the first morning our hotel windows were shaken by a blast from across the city. A plume of smoke emerged from the diplomatic district – the Jordanian embassy had been hit by a car bomb, al-Qaeda's first-ever strike in Iraq. The front of the building was destroyed. Body parts were strewn across the road. I'd never seen anything like it.

A couple of weeks later we were filming in the east of the city when another deep boom reverberated through the streets. The United Nations compound had been blown apart by a truck laden with explosives. We were there within minutes. The scene was horrific. The dead and dying were carried from the building and laid out in front of us. It sounds awful but professional instinct kicks in. You're looking at the worst imaginable horror but seeing only a story. Your mind is working out where the best pictures are and how you're going to hit your deadline; it's not processing what's actually happening. That comes much later.

It's hard to describe how happy I was to leave Baghdad. It had only been a month but the events we'd witnessed and the constant threat of violence all day, every day, made the experience simply awful. The pressure was relentless, inescapable, claustrophobic.

I'd spent the whole trip desperate to get home, yet walking through the door of my house was a weirdly joyless experience. My wife and kids were delighted to see me but I couldn't summon any enthusiasm when I was finally reunited with them. Nothing seemed real or relevant.

I had a bit of an episode in a supermarket. Everything seemed incredibly bland and banal. I watched people arguing over which cereal to buy and I couldn't cope. I started to shake and walked out. How could they even be thinking about something so unimportant when such apocalyptically awful things were happening in the place I'd just left behind? The problem wasn't with them, of course, it was with me.

Things deteriorated, briefly, from there. All the classic symptoms. I'd wake up in the middle of the night soaked in sweat. I'd rarely remember my dreams but they were evidently vivid because I'd shout in my sleep. One morning my wife was clearly worried about me. Was I OK, she asked. Seemingly, I'd woken her up in the middle of the night, sitting bolt upright, shouting and screaming. I had no idea what she was talking about.

Maybe my employers offered me help. I can't remember. I hadn't told them anything was wrong and I'd almost certainly have turned down the chance to talk things through anyway. That was, broadly, the way of it back then – get the head down, get back in the saddle, get on with it, everything will be OK. I'm pleased to say things are different now.

In the years that followed, the job took me all over the world. I went to Afghanistan, Libya and many other places I'd rather not have been. I spent long stints working undercover in Zimbabwe, which brought a different, grinding type of stress. I didn't really suffer another episode like the one after Baghdad, but I do fear the experience has left a mark. Being grumpy in middle age is a rite of passage, but occasionally a situation at work can cast a darker cloud than is normal over me.

It's nothing compared to what many others have to deal with, but it's there.

I've spoken to several colleagues about the pressures of that kind of work, people who've been exposed to far worse horrors and more danger than I ever saw. A few will talk openly about it but more often the subject is brushed aside. It's far easier to treat war stories like badges of honour than to recognise them as the dents in our psychological armour they so obviously are.

Alcohol's an important ingredient in all of this. Seeing off the demons with a bout of self-medication in the pub. The old notion



Conflicting emotions
Martin Geissler during his time as a foreign reporter

Alcohol's an important ingredient. The old notion of beer and bravado

that beer and bravado will get you through seems daft these days, but there's catharsis to be found in company. Some of my happiest memories are of big nights, hanging over bars, laughing like a drain at gallows humour and slapping the backs of the colleagues who have become my best friends. I drank too much for quite a while. Maybe that had nothing to do with the job, but it certainly didn't help.

Fifteen years after stepping back from the frontline, it seems the ghosts still haunt Fergal Keane. He's taken another big decision in an effort to exorcise them once and for all. He's giving up a job he loves. I'm sure he's still ambitious and still hungry to tell that big story, but he's putting his health and his family first, and that's not as easy as it sounds. He has my undiluted admiration.

I switched jobs a year or so ago, not for the same reasons as Fergal, but the change is doing me good. These days I spend my time in the studio rather than on the road. I loved being a reporter, right up until the last day I did the job, but I don't miss it as much as I'd feared.

I'm still ambitious, I still love a challenge and I relish the chance to challenge authority. My new job as a presenter indulges all of that but I devote more time and attention to my family these days and I think I'm a better person for it.

I really hope Fergal finds the peace he's looking for. He deserves it. And I hope his latest act of professional courage might inspire others to look after themselves a bit more carefully too.

Martin Geissler presents *The Nine* on BBC Scotland
@mmgeissler



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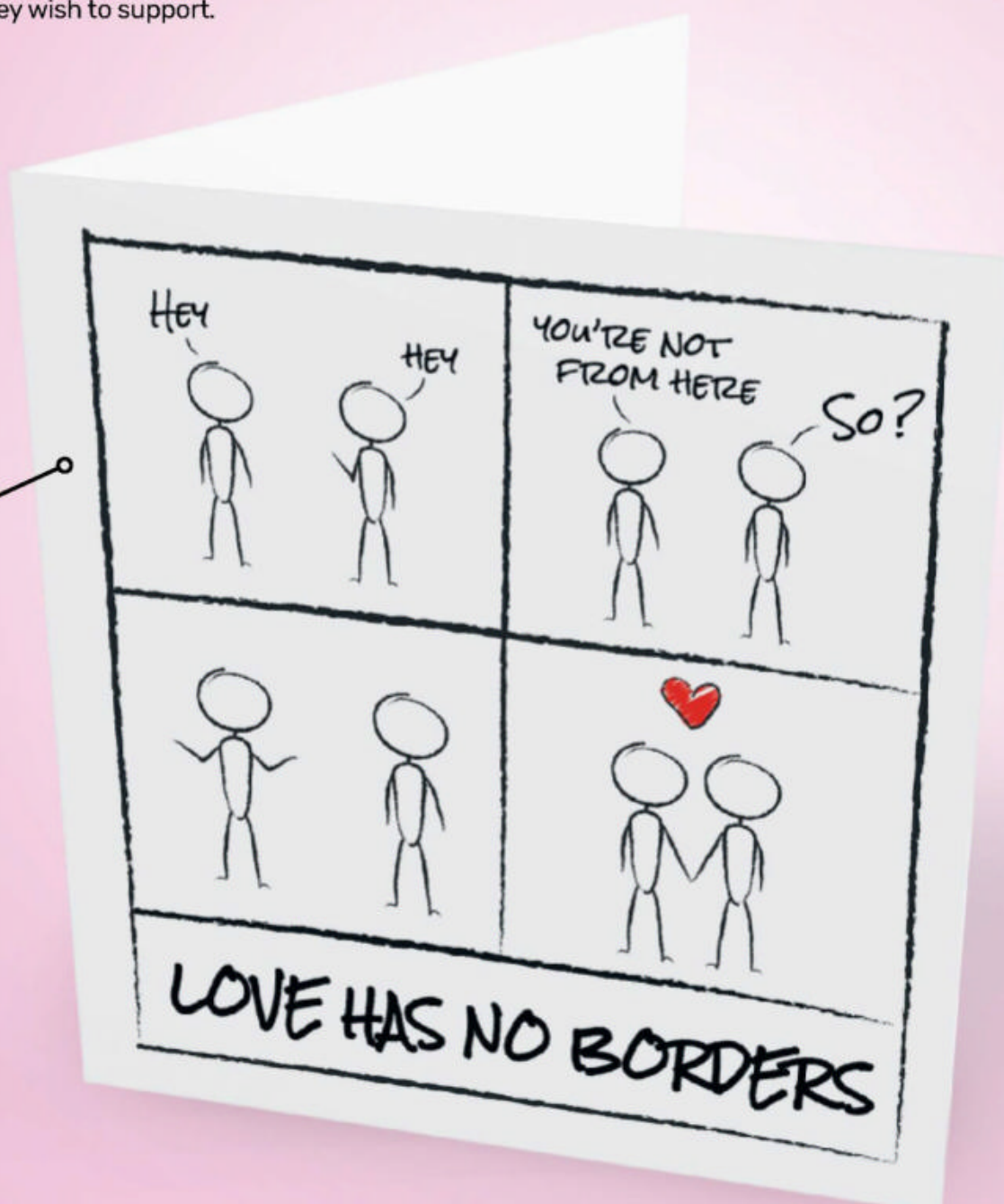
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BOOKS

Drones are pushing the boundaries of the possible
Andy Miah

FILM

Parasite is a sly take on the master/servant relationship
Cath Clarke

BROADCAST

How I stopped worrying and learned to love *Love Island*
Lucy Sweet

STREET ART



Regeneration

By Christie Cassisa

Frequent Street Art contributor Christie came from an abusive childhood, and as an adult has struggled with depression, alcohol and drug problems and homelessness. Her latest painting is her largest canvas to date. "It's a depiction of how I feel at this stage," she says. "My past being the barren cracked earth and dark skies and my future being the bright sun over the sea. They are merging, and making me feel as if I am rediscovering the energy and life that I felt I had lost."

Regeneration is on show at the Centrepieces pop-up gallery in Bexleyheath, London among other works Christie has contributed to The Big Issue over the years, as well as works by fellow artists from the margins.

The Broadway, Bexleyheath;
centrepieces.org

The work on this page is created by people who are marginalised. Contact **street.lights@bigissue.com** to see your art here. To see more and buy prints: **bigissueshop.com** At least half of the profit goes to the artist.

AUTHOR FEATURE

Our eyes in the skies

In a few short years drones have redefined what's possible. And their evolution is just beginning to take off, says **Professor Andy Miah**

I remember my first encounter with a drone vividly. It was 2013, the year before drones really hit the big time in consumer terms. And, from the moment it blasted into the sky, I felt that this would be a game-changer.

I had heard about drones before, of course. Everyone had. The US Predator drone was etched into the public consciousness. This superweapon signalled a new kind of warfare which removed the combatant from the field of conflict. The Predator was not just another new weapon, it was a device that would completely transform the means by which conflicts were resolved. It was the perfect metaphor for modern society, lived at a distance through remote, digitally mediated devices.

However, the drones that really gained prominence in the years that followed were those we now see around us all the time, in streets, at parks, at events, and whose remarkable film footage we see now in reporting of all major events, from natural disasters to epic fantasy films. They range in size, but some of the most powerful examples are no more than 60cm in diameter, with rotating blades smaller than pencils. They can fly to extraordinary heights and distances and even figure out how to avoid colliding into objects or people.

The most amazing thing about these drones is that we can all fly them. Not only are they pretty easy to fly technically, there have also been nearly no rules to forbid such use. In fact, for five years, the UK – and many other countries – allowed the public to fly drones high into the sky with nearly no regulatory limitations.

This is changing now, with new laws brought in from November that require drone operators to register their drone and pass an online test to prove competence. We have these new rules because consumer drones, which can be found in high street stores, have also been used in ways that have created widespread disruption. From airports being brought to a standstill to injuries to people and property, drones are seriously dangerous when used with intent to harm. Concerns abound also about their impact on personal privacy, as such drones are all equipped with the latest cameras. In fact, they became so popular precisely because they gave us an eye in the sky, a perspective that had never been held before.

And it is in this capacity that we also

celebrate their power. Drones allow everyone to feel like they are flying and their agility allows them to access places that even piloted vehicles cannot go. From collapsed buildings to active volcanoes, drones have taken people into new places, creating entirely new possibilities. They are even replacing fireworks, as large-scale choreographies of more than a thousand drones are pre-programmed to create three-dimensional sculptures in the sky, forming any pattern from the outline of an actual aeroplane to the Olympic rings at the last Games.

All of these achievements speak to the essence of what our drone society is all about – creative innovation. The drone is an empty vessel, into which any number of applications can be poured. From scientists attaching a petri dish to a drone and flying it over a whale as it blows snot out of its blowhole to the worldwide phenomenon of drone racing, drones have created something completely new.

It is in these senses that they are world-changing devices. Not only that. They are world-saving and people-saving platforms. Drones have been created to rapidly replant areas that have suffered from deforestation and they have even been used to save human lives. With a

life-ring drone to assist in ocean rescues and dedicated drone police units that monitor criminal activity from the sky, drones have become crucial components of social organisation. In some countries, they are even used to hold governments to account, for instance, by verifying numbers of political protesters at rallies where official figures provided by government-managed media seek to underplay their significance, so as to control public order.

What's most remarkable to me is how early we are still in the development of drones. Some of the most wacky ideas we've seen may actually become real-world applications, from drone passenger vehicles to floating drone warehouses in the sky that deploy mini-drone delivery services, anything seems possible. But we should still remember that those companies whose patents fuel drone innovation within the military cross over into civilian life and we may not be able to have the brilliant without embracing the bad.

***Drones: The Brilliant, the Bad and the Beautiful* by Andy Miah is out on February 28 (Emerald Publishing, £16.99)**



Illustration: Joseph Joyce

Sunshine and showers

Swinging between comedy and dread is a touching tale of a woman's struggle with passing time, says **Jane Graham**



Weather; it's a clever name for a novel about one woman's daily battle to stay sane and upright in the face of swirling storms, dark clouds, and killer lightning (only some of them metaphorical). Every aspect of librarian Lizzie's world is under threat; her health, her food supply, her access to medicine, her marriage, her son's future, her requirement to fill a hole in someone else's life. And there are times during Jenny Offill's new novel when it reads almost oppressively, like the blackest of blackhole comedies. But like a great, wry Ali Smith novel, or that exquisite bookshop scene in *Annie Hall* ("you only gave me books with death in the title"), it's that second part of the equation that keeps it gleefully alive; this paranoid wreck of a book is very funny.

It's been six years since Offill's *Dept of Speculation* basked in its rapturous celebrity-making reception, and a more fanciful reviewer might suggest that the allure of a shadowy retreat has influenced the setting of its follow-up. Lizzie's attention-eschewing day job in whispering academia suits her countenance as an observer, contemplative, fretful and kind, the unofficial shrink to her God-fearing mother and ex-drug addict brother. When the broadcaster of the famous *Hell and High Water* podcast employs her to reply to listeners' emails, it does little to soothe her own constantly nagging brain.

The podcast's dystopian vision of the Trumpian future has made it a lightning rod for catastrophists. Their email headings neatly summarise a zeitgeist obsessed with endings; inbuilt technological obsolescence, species extinction, pet heaven, The Rapture. Out in the real world young tech experts are waiting for the generation who remember the past to "age out of the conversation" so that the transhuman future can properly begin. The value of old-fashioned human beings – destructive, contradictory, self-fixated, vulnerable – appears to be diminishing. (Chris Packham will be pleased, I couldn't help thinking.)

Worst-case scenarios plague Lizzie's daily life. Her son Eli is a worrier who screams at the sight of a knob of ginger, imagining it's a mouse skull. A request for reassurance from her husband Ben about a click in her knee returns a playfully teasing diagnosis of knee cancer. She is addicted to advice about survival in the face of the apocalypse. But, rather like the protagonist of Anne Tyler's *Ladder of Years*, what's really bothering her is "acceleration of days". Ultimately this is the poignant story of an ageing woman – a besotted

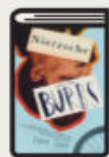
mother, a greying wife, a low-achieving worker – afraid of blurring out of meaningful existence. Told in Offill's trademark style – a series of mental Post-its, seemingly plucked from the air the way Keith Richards grasps at passing guitar riffs – it hits so many chords it makes a music of its own.

Staying on the theme of despairing nihilism ("come on in, there's coffee and doughnuts for everyone"), Lars Iyer follows up his sublime 2014 *Wittgenstein Jr* with another high school-set novel, ***Nietzsche and the Burbs***. Philosophy academic Iyer has created his own little sub-genre – a combination of enlightening philosophical discourse, adolescent chatter and smartass (in a good way) humour. *Nietzsche and the Burbs* is the metal band fronted by the new sixth form boy, nicknamed after Friedrich due to his bleak outlook and extreme cleverness. The kids hang out and talk about life, the future, why everything is fucked, and how they can change the world. Think *The History Boys* with (loads of) added philosophy. Completely delightful.

@Janeannie



***Weather* by Jenny Offill is published on February 13 (Granta, £12.99)**



***Nietzsche and the Burbs* by Lars Iyer is out now (Melville House, £10.99)**



Illustration: Dóra Kistelegi



Sophie Hannah

Top 5 books on domestic crime

01 See Jane Run by Joy Fielding

A perfect thriller. A nameless protagonist finds herself in a shop wearing nothing but a bloodstained coat. She has lost her memory and has no idea who she is, so when a man comes forward claiming to be her husband, and armed with proof, she has no choice but to let him take her home.

02 House Rules by Rachel Sontag

A real-life domestic memoir about a psychologically abusive childhood and a girl who saved her own life with very little help from anybody. Sontag describes her journey from thinking her father was a little strange and difficult to realising that he was a dangerous narcissist. Absolutely brilliant.

03 Broken Harbour by Tana French

French's masterpiece, about a family annihilation murder. The Spain family are found dead in a house on a ghost estate in Ireland. Strange family dynamics, secrets and lies are explored in fascinating detail.

04 The Memory Game by Nicci French

An engrossing mystery about family ties and childhood loyalties. Psychologically sophisticated, intelligent and beautifully written, this novel explores the theme of memory and the tricks it plays upon us.

05 After the Funeral by Agatha Christie

One of the Queen of Crime's best murder mysteries, featuring an unforgettably vivid and complicated family with all kinds of resentments and seething undercurrents. Clues and red herrings aplenty, and an incredibly satisfying solution!

***Haven't They Grown* by Sophie Hannah is out now (Hodder & Stoughton, £16.99)**



REVIEW

Life below stairs

The familiar master-servant dynamic is brought bang up to date in this brilliantly dark and caustic comedy from South Korea, says **Cath Clarke**



With *Parasite*, a horribly delicious black comedy the South Korean director Bong Joon Ho (*Okja*) gives us the bits of the upstairs-downstairs dynamic that *Downton Abbey* scrubbed clean: namely the seething resentments and mutual contempt inherent in the master/servant relationship. Bong's film is set in modern Korea, the tale of a family of scammers who worm their way into a wealthy household but don't know when to stop scheming. Using industrial-strength social satire, he strips the veneer off the myth of classlessness, giving an outrageously entertaining instant classic.

Bong has assembled excellent actors. Woo-sik Choi is Kim Ki-woo, a bright kid who can't afford university fees, so lives at home with his family in a scummy basement flat earning a pittance folding pizza boxes for a local takeaway. The family's fortunes take a turn for the better when Ki-woo blags a job tutoring English to a tech entrepreneur's teenage daughter, sulky high-schooler Da-hye (Ji-so Jung). When he arrives for his interview you can see the stab of shame Ki-woo feels, cheeks flushing, as he walks around the family's modernist architect-designed house. His boss's wife complacently gives him the job, breezily announcing, "We'll call you Kevin."



EASTERN TRAGEDY

Mr Jones is a gripping biopic about the brave Welsh journalist said to have inspired George Orwell's *Animal Farm*. In 1933, Gareth Jones travelled to Stalin's Soviet Union, where he uncovered the horrors of the Holodomor – the terrible manmade famine that ravaged Soviet Ukraine leaving millions dead. The director is Agnieszka Holland, and James Norton, an actor I have previously been on the fence about, is outstanding as Jones.

★★★★☆

Mr Jones is in cinemas from February 7



Pizza the action
Folding boxes for pennies can't compete with a slice of the good life

His feet under the table, Ki-woo cracks a plan to insinuate his entire family into the house. He wangles his unemployed sister Kim Ki-jung (Sodam Park) a job as art therapist to his student's spoiled little brother – the boy's mum is convinced his challenging behaviour is the sign of an eccentric genius. All that's left now is to bring down the housekeeper and chauffeur – and somehow inveigle mum and dad into their roles.

Upstairs and downstairs, each is contemptuous of the other. The rich Parks smugly look down at the hired help. Mr Park (Sun-kyun Lee) complains to his wife that his new driver smells of turnips. And he's always banging on about the staff "not crossing the line". Forelock tugging might be a thing of the past, but the modern master likes the help to know their place. On the other side, the Kim family cheerfully con their bosses with not an ounce of guilt. "If I had that much money I'd be nice too," says Ki-woo's sister. Director Bong's sympathies, you suspect, lie with the poverty-stricken Kims rather than the irritating Parks, who've got the learned helplessness of the rich, unable even to boil a packet of noodles.

This virtuoso black comedy whips up into a violent slapstick thriller,

The modern master likes the help to know their place

which perhaps has a few too many loose threads of plot but is always brilliant nasty fun. Underneath the laughs is some unsettling biting social commentary from Bong about social mobility, the lie capitalism feeds us that our future is in our own hands, anyone can make it. *Parasite* has been a foreign-language hit at the box office in the US and broke the subtitle barrier to pick up six Oscar nominations, including Best Picture. Naturally, an American version is in the pipeline – a TV adaptation for HBO. But it's difficult to imagine a remake giving this much malicious enjoyment.

★★★★☆

Parasite in cinema from February 7
@CathxClarke



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INTERVIEW

NUN OF A KIND

Need a menacing cult leader or cold-hearted oppressor for your high-class television series? Or an abusive co-worker for a thriller, or a devil-worshipping psychic for your horror film? In recent years, there has been only one woman for the job.

Ann Dowd has cornered the market in disturbed and disturbing characters – on the big screen in *Compliance* and *Hereditary* and her Emmy-winning turn as Aunt Lydia in *The Handmaid's Tale*. It's no surprise then that her fifth on-screen nun, Sister Margarita, in new series **Lambs of God** soon has blood on her hands (and all over her face).

The Big Issue: You've been very busy in recent years – are you working at the minute?

Ann Dowd: I've just come home to New York from the Screen Actors Guild Awards in Los Angeles. I took my mother, which was quite lovely. It was heaven. She is 89 and had a lovely time. I'm not working again until we begin *The Handmaid's Tale*.

What drew you to your new drama *Lambs of God*?

I'd never seen a world like this one, or characters like these – everything was so original and strange and mysterious. It sparked the imagination immediately.

Why do you think you've you been cast as a nun so often?

I was educated by nuns and had the privilege of two aunts who are Catholic sisters, so I'm very familiar with the world. But I don't know why. My best friend told me very early in our careers, "You're gonna play nuns." And I said, "What?" I was furious.

Do you find their devoutness admirable?

I have tremendous respect for sisters – their complexity, their intelligence, their service to the poor and disenfranchised. It is true service. Nobody's making their beds or making their dinner, you know? They're down in the trenches, hands-on – and you can't always say that about priests.

The Blue Mountains of Australia, where you filmed *Lambs of God*, have been hit by the recent wildfires. Have you been following the story?

I can't even imagine so much devastation. I've been in touch with the director a little bit. And it's catastrophic. The beauty of Australia is remarkable.

What draws you to religious or quasi-religious characters such as Aunt Lydia, Patti Levin in *The Leftovers*, and now Sister Margarita?

In *Lambs of God*, Sister Margarita is hiding tremendous grief and rage and they're all fleeing a world of trauma they could not manage, so came to live a life of solitude in nature and honouring God.

Away from the flock

Dowd plays one of three nuns living on a deserted Australian island in *Lambs of God*

The reasons for being there are extreme but there is true devotion. Whereas Gilead [the totalitarian state in *The Handmaid's Tale*], in essence, has nothing to do with God. They can pretend all they want, but it is about power – not true devotion. Not for one second. You don't take over other's people's lives, young women in particular, and rape them and call that devotion to God. That's a great big lie.

There are things about *The Leftovers* that haunt me to this day if I spend too much time thinking about it – the way we were dropped into levels of grief. It's written in a way that doesn't give you the answers but encourages you to keep thinking about it. I loved it.

What do they all have in common? I would only say what every human being has in common. Look at one's past, own one's injuries and one's grief, then face it and let go. That is when we move on to a new and better life. As an actress, one just says one's prayers in the hopes of knowing a character without judgment.

How do you feel when you see women protesting and defending their power over their bodies dressed as handmaids?

I want to get down on my hands and knees in praise of them. That is so exceptional. You can only hope that something you were part of has an effect in the world that is positive, and it thrills me. I am filled with gratitude to them for getting out there in the street, in those costumes. Nothing but greatness is what I feel when I see women who have the courage to step out and speak up.

When we do work that puts words and an image to what is going on or what could happen, it gives people a chance to see it from one step back and say, "I don't want this. I have to speak up." It puts a visual to the plain old truth. You watch and think, "No, no, no, no, no – that's not OK."



A ring of truth
The actress is proud women use
The Handmaid's Tale to protest

Do you get involved?

I've given speeches and I would be out on the street. My schedule at this point has not allowed it. Actually, that sounds like a complete cop-out and you should call me out on that – say: "Find the time and get out there." But I make phone calls to senators and that sort of thing – especially what's going on here with the impeachment. It's criminal. A travesty.

You found success later in life than some. Has that been a blessing?

It's been a profound blessing. It's funny: when you're in the early years of your career, you have to have a very strong sense of denial – denial meaning, "I will not consider that this will not work." I think back to being pregnant at 35 years old and working in a pet shop with no money in the bank – and not worrying one bit. Now I look back and the anxiety just shoots up. What was I thinking?

And how does that contrast with now?

Now I'm so grateful. I'm almost 64. My oldest boy lives in a beautiful community for adults with disabilities, my daughter is going to graduate from college. I was able to pay for that. I'm very proud of that young woman for never giving up or even considering it. Which is not to say there weren't moments of profound frustration. I'm proud of her for the stamina. It sounds sentimental, but your love for the work you do, your belief in the gifts you were given – if you keep that love story alive, you will have what you need to persevere.

Lambs of God is available on BritBox
Interview: Adrian Lobb @adey70

BROADCAST

Semi-naked ambition

Lucy Sweet wasn't always a fan of **Love Island**. But things have changed, and now she's hooked on the bare flesh shenanigans



Photo: ITV Plc/ITV2 Love Island



Line of booty
The *Love Island* crew enjoy
each other's company

Last summer, I wrote about how I couldn't understand anything about *Love Island*. Clinging on to the last vestiges of common sense 2019 had to offer, I dug in my heels and refused to have anything to do with the brazen, oily skinned Neanderthals, whose greatest achievement in life was ordering the correct size of pink teddy bear jacket from boohoo.com.

However, thanks to an almost full term of the gonk in the White House, the introduction of a slightly smaller troll doll at Number 10 and the inexorable rise of idiocy, I now find myself unable to resist. I have been helplessly swept along on a slipstream of sunscreen, bumhole bleach and cries of "it is what it is".

It would appear that the 'trick' to the show is to watch it from the beginning. Start watching it even at episode two and you will invariably flounder, wondering why someone with giant boobs is being dunked in a giant cup of tea and encouraged to snog a scantily clad Mancunian scaffolder who can't string a sentence together.

This series is slightly different in that it's on in winter and filmed in South Africa, in a villa with a baffling amount of stairs. Male contestants are either called Connor, Connagh or Connaaaaaargh. The girls are called Paige and Leanne and there's also the gloriously monikered Siánnise Fudge, who regularly ricochets angrily around the garden in a neon-string bikini shouting "It's pronounced SHONICE!" Intellect is scarce, although I am warming to Shaughna (or possibly Shaunaggggh) who describes the boys as "like sumfink out of David Attenborough, puffing up their chests". There are also some blonde twins that look like a bad drawing of Diana Dors (Google it, kids!).

I can't be bothered going into details, but it's a revolving door of temptation, with an ever-shifting cast list of identical buff lads. If I take my eyes off it for one minute, I have no idea what's going on. Yet underneath it all is a steadfast moral code and a courtship dance akin to a Jane Austen novel, albeit one of her unknown ones set in the Stockport branch of Jumpin Jaks. You have to get to know each other. Loyalty is prized and game play is despised, which is strange considering they're playing a game that involves getting off with everybody in sight. You have to always tell people when you're gonna swoop in and steal their bird. And even though nobody is ever knowingly wearing any clothes, coy attachments form that are rather touching. At least that must be why I find myself crying like a granny at a wedding any time a couple gets together. Oh well, what does it matter? We're all idiots now.

Love Island is on ITV2 nightly at 9pm
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Romantic hero

He's hardly an unsung genius of the classical canon, but there's a case for celebrating Beethoven more than ever in this, his anniversary year, says **Claire Jackson**



Out of all composers (dead or alive), Beethoven needs the least promotion. His quotes are on mugs, Lego has created a figure in his honour – there's even a film series featuring a St Bernard named after him. Most people who may claim not to know anything about classical music would recognise the 'da, da, da dum!' opening figure from Beethoven's Fifth. And those who think they don't like Beethoven usually fall for his 'Pastoral' symphony – the one made famous by Disney's cupids, rainbow goddess and centaur couples in the 1940 animation *Fantasia*. Nevertheless, as 2020 marks the 250th anniversary of Beethoven's birth – and because the arts world loves a date to commemorate – we'll be hearing even more of the great German composer's work over the coming months.

"Should we celebrate someone who is celebrated every day?" asked Alfred Brendel, the Austrian pianist and internationally renowned Beethoven specialist, at a recent event held at the German Embassy in London. It's a provocative point, but one worth making: there are hundreds of composers whose work would benefit from a fraction of Beethoven's fame. However, it's not only the quality of Beethoven's music that makes him so special – that these works of genius were created by a man who was losing his hearing is astonishing. Malte Boecker, director of Beethoven-Haus Bonn, also highlights Beethoven's role in history as a thinker and social activist. A recently unearthed letter that was written when the composer was 24 wonders: "When will we see that all people are treated as human beings?" It's no surprise that Beethoven's *Ode to Joy*, taken from the ninth symphony, has been used as a protest piece throughout history. It's also the music that's often used to represent the EU and has become the unofficial Remain theme in the UK. (Russian-German pianist Igor Levit prompted headlines after he performed Liszt's transcription of the work during the 2017 Proms, where audience members had been asked to refrain from flying EU flags.)

Listen to...

Sheku Kanneh-Mason, who featured on this page recently, has become the first solo cellist to make the Top 10 in the UK Official Album charts with his latest **Elgar** recording (available on Decca Classics). The 20-year-old, who performed at Meghan and Harry's wedding in 2018, was a new entry at number eight. Kanneh-Mason's version of the Elgar cello concerto is performed with the London Symphony Orchestra conducted by Sir Simon Rattle.



Ahead of his time
As well as his astonishing compositions, Beethoven was also a thinker and activist

Brendel and Boecker were in town to launch the **Oxford Beethoven Festival** (running now until December 13), curated by artistic director Marios Papadopoulos and the Oxford Philharmonic Orchestra. Oxford is the ideal place for the UK's biggest Beethoven event: the city is twinned with Bonn, the composer's birthplace. The orchestra will be performing all of Beethoven's symphonies and concertos throughout the series, and are hosting an impressive array of pianists (including Sir András Schiff on June 18) to perform all the piano sonatas. Principal players from the orchestra will be covering the complete violin and cello sonatas. As part of the ensemble's residency at Oxford University, there will also be lectures and masterclasses, plus a symposium (February 6 and 7; £25 for non-students).

For all that we know and love about Beethoven, unsolved mysteries remain. His famous letter to his Immortal Beloved – featuring the words "Ever thine.

Ever mine. Ever ours." – has left historians trawling through archives for centuries in a quest to find the composer's unknown love. The recipient, if indeed there was one, is the subject of a new novel by Jessica Duchan, who brings a narrated concert to Oxford's Holywell Music Room (November 6).

It's that time of year when we celebrate our own beloveds. A special Valentine's celebration of music and dance brings together a selection of favourite pas de deux, including *Romeo and Juliet* (naturally) and *Swan Lake*. Birmingham Royal Ballet opens the show at Birmingham's Symphony Hall on V-Day itself (February 14), before visiting Warwick Arts Centre (February 15) with the Royal Ballet Sinfonia. BBC One's *Midlands Today* presenter Nick Owen compères in Birmingham, while Dr Ranj Singh, *This Morning* doctor-in-residence (and former *Strictly Come Dancing* contestant), hosts in Coventry.

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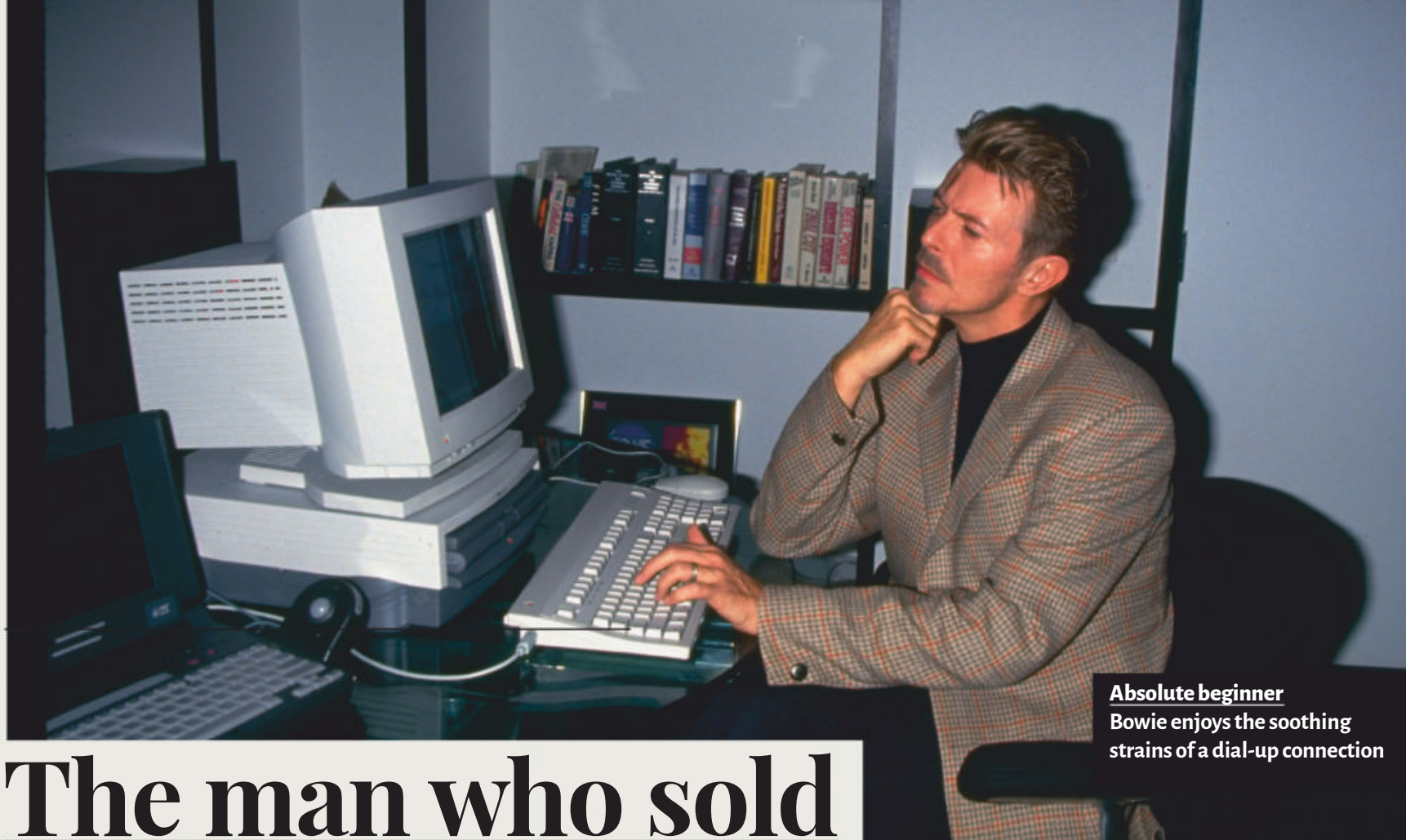
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Absolute beginner
Bowie enjoys the soothing strains of a dial-up connection

The man who sold the world wide web

Twenty-one years ago the original wired rock star David Bowie spoke to The Big Issue about his love of a new craze called 'the internet'. After transforming our culture musically and artistically, Bowie saw the potential of the world wide web, helping to pioneer an online revolution. This is an abridged version of the interview from 1999, starting with him telling us what he gets up to in chatrooms...



Mr Plod spends each morning in his Bermudan hideout, chatting away to thousands of other internet addicts around the world.

"I like Mr Plod – he's very popular," explains David Bowie of his latest net pseudonym. "Panda was big too, and I once used a hyphen – but I got tired of the Prince joke very quickly," he says. "I get one that I like, then get bored after a week and change it. I even used 'David Bowie' as an online name a couple of times, because that's the one name no one would expect me to use. The trouble is I'm always so big-mouthed that people suss me out after about 15 minutes. I say some damn stupid thing and people say, 'Oh we know who you are!'"

But Bowie is more than just an avid net surfer. He liked the medium so much he set up his own internet service provider, BowieNet, a glorified Bowie fanclub complete with rare photos (Bowie in a pair of tight white underpants playing the saxophone), a discography, online interviews, news about tours and records and a regularly updated personal journal full of his thoughts and reminiscences.

Recent entries include memories of Sunday lunch with his family in the '50s, and the first 45s his dad brought home. There are also book reviews (he's been reading Thackeray) and Bowie's own thoughts on other websites (he's a big fan of pages dedicated to William Burroughs). You can even get that much closer to the star with your own David Bowie email address (yourname@davidbowie.com). There's access to Bowie's paintings too: prints for £75 a throw or signed copies for £200.

It does look like he takes pride in the site's appearance. The 51-year-old says he's online for the first few hours of every day, and logs on to 'chat rooms' about four times a week, lured by the humorous exchanges as much as anything else.

He relishes the anonymity of cyberspace, where he can indulge his whimsy for silly names. When asked about his favourite sites, he's as puerile as most other net addicts.

"I'm the first one to pop off to Slap a Spice Girl or Punch a Hanson," he giggles. "And I really like the site called virtual autopsy. You get to take an entire body apart," he adds with gusto, before suddenly changing tack when he realises how this might sound. "But there are some nice serious ones as well. My missus told me to go and look at 10 Downing Street, which is very good," he says in a mockingly stern tone.

In recent years Bowie has shown himself to be the most financially astute of rock stars, catapulting himself to the top of the list of wealthy pop stars with some cunning

marketing. Last year he issued bonds on the stock market on the basis of sales of his back catalogue – which put £30m in his pocket. BowieNet has already been valued at £300m, although, like many internet-based businesses, it's not generating any profits. "It won't even keep me in cigs," he says.

Even so, this is just the sort of thrusting entrepreneurial spirit that's led to invitations to dine at Number 10 with the Blairs. There, Bowie argued – among other things – about the merits of political websites. "I told Blair that I didn't like the Labour site, that it's still stodgy," he says.

So where is the artist in all this? "It doesn't affect me as Jonesy," says Bowie, referring to the name – David Robert Jones – he was born with. "Bowie was always a poster boy. He's this thing that goes out there in the entertainment world, and Jonesy can stay at home.

"Anyway, I have this very ambivalent feeling about the public figure/private figure idea. I really don't give a fuck. The site doesn't present itself as a marketing tool for my records, and I don't want to ever reduce it to that."

Unlike many of the corporate predators on the internet, Bowie seems to have much the same attitude as the average user. Whereas online music cops now exist to track down pirated recordings and unofficial sites, Bowie is happy to see them flourish.

"I am absolutely not into shutting them down. In fact, quite the reverse," he says. "I like the idea of a network community. If I was 19 again, I'd bypass music and go straight to the internet. When I was 19, music was still the dangerous communicative future force, and that was what drew me into it. But it doesn't have that cachet any more. It's been replaced by the internet, which has the same sound of revolution to it."

This interview by Andrew Davies was originally published on January 11 1999 – read the full version at bigissue.com. See what Bowie's internet presence looks like today at davidbowie.com



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News from the Intrepid Shepherdess

A Date with Merl

I maintain that the creation of the Internet and ability to share information electronically, was an innovation of importance on a par with the invention of the engine and industrial revolution.

I also believe that it was created with good in mind and the vast majority of what is available on the www represents the collective wealth of the best human innovation and thinking. Further, the digitalisation of archives, making history accessible from my desk opens worlds that otherwise would remain hidden and beyond my reach.

My niece copied me on a tweet from Merl – the Museum of English Rural Life, showing a most delightful picture of a Lincoln Longwood ewe. Rebecca added the comment: "Jessica, have you met MERL? It makes me happier every day."



I confess I had yet to encounter Merl so I immediately honed in on their website. And a gem it is too! Run by the University of Reading, MERL contains the most extraordinary array of British rural and agricultural archives, where you can access information about landowners' incomes going back to 1760.

Far from being merely a quaint record for historians, the archives bring home just how important farming and agriculture has been for not just the UK, but for every economy in the world. And even more importantly, it still is. To date I have kept out of the argument raging in the British media about how bad farming is for the environment. My point is we all might need, for example, a dentist, lawyer, accountant, bank manager etc perhaps a couple times of year, but never lose sight of the fact that we all need a farmer three times a day – everyday of our lives.

To the anti-farming brigade I say: what are you going to do if, one day, you waltz into your local supermarket and find the shelves void of milk, butter, bread, grains, soya, meat, veggies, fruit? Imagine the outrage! I go on to say, support your local UK farmers and seasonal stuff. Question the environmental validity of buying avocados and almond milk. Think twice about buying blueberries flown in from Chile and packed in single use plastic before you knock the descendants of the families that appear in the Merl archives.



Jessica



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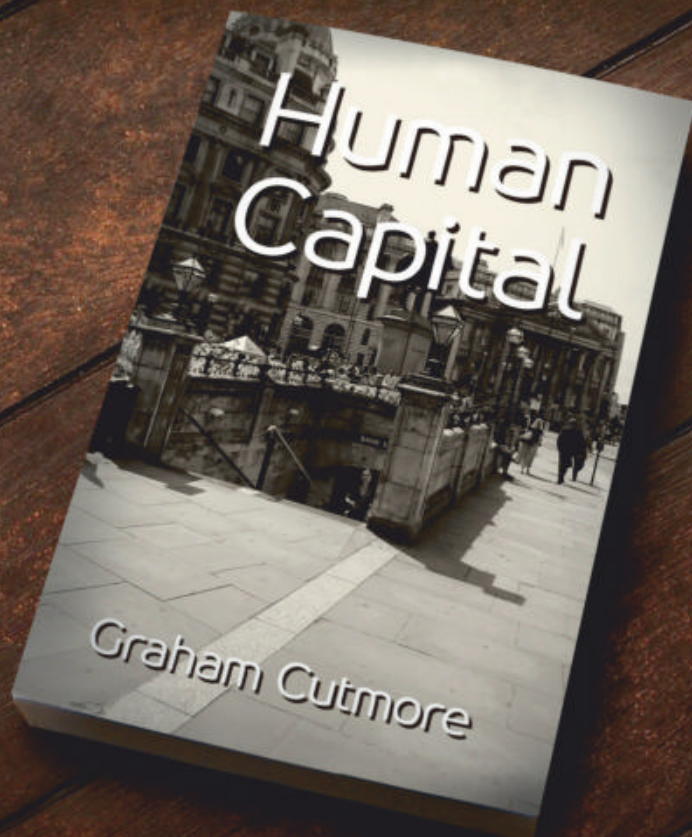
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Home Study Course Started A 21-Year Writing Career



Heather Burnside took a home study Creative Writing Course with The Writers Bureau in 1999. 21 years on Heather is still writing and has recently signed another three-book deal with *Aria Fiction* at *Head of Zeus*.

Can creative writing really be taught? Manchester based author, Heather Burnside, is proof that it can. She says, “the skills I gained on The Writers Bureau’s course have been invaluable. During my studies I learnt writing techniques that have stood me in good stead as an author and copywriter. It gave me the knowledge and confidence to pursue writing as a career.”

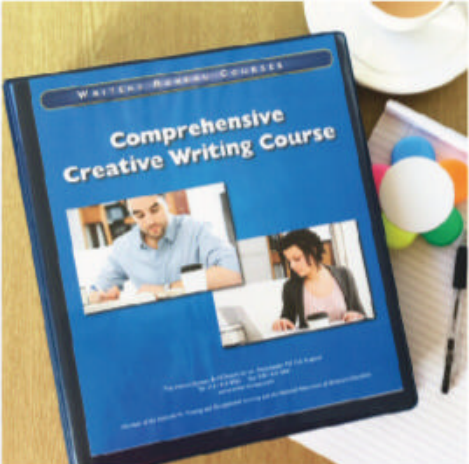
The course is very practical and students are encouraged to submit work to publications as soon as their tutor feels they are ready. This means students can start earning from their writing very quickly. The Writers Bureau take this side of the course very seriously and even offer an amazing money back guarantee if students don’t earn their fees back from published work by the end of their studies.

“The flip side to this is that I became inundated with work at various points in the course,” explains Heather. “This is because, if you have an article accepted by a magazine then it makes sense to follow it up with another while your name is fresh in the editor’s mind.”

During the course Heather wrote the first three chapters of her book, *Nightclubbing*, drawing on her experiences of growing up on one of the toughest estates in Manchester. At the time she approached several publishers but no offers were forthcoming. Undaunted, she continued writing articles as well as setting up a writing services business offering proofreading and copywriting.



Even though she was enjoying her work, Heather’s heart lay with writing a novel. So, after a while, she dusted off her original manuscript, reworked it, changed the title and her first gritty crime novel, *Slur*, was created. She independently published it on Amazon in 2014, shortly followed by two more books making up the *The Riverhill Trilogy*.



In 2016 Heather was signed to *Aria Fiction* at the *Head of Zeus*. They published her second set of books, *The Manchester Trilogy* as well as republishing *The Riverhill Trilogy*. She’s just recently signed another three-book deal with them.

“I’m sure that without The Writers Bureau I would never have had the confidence to self-publish my first novel. They taught me valuable skills, which I put to good use every time I write. I am now lucky to be earning a living doing something I love, and it all started when I studied the Creative Writing Course.”

For those wanting to explore creative writing as a career option then The Writers Bureau Comprehensive Writing Course is a good place to start. It covers all types of writing from articles to short stories, novels to scripts so people can discover what they’re good at and where their passions lie. Information is free and you can enrol on a 15-day trial to make sure the course is for you. Visit their website or call them today! You never know where it will take you.
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AWARDS

PPA Scotland consumer magazine
of the year, 2019, 2017

Paul McNamee

PPA Scotland editor of the year 2019,

BSME British editor of the year 2016

Ross Lesley-Bayne

PPA Scotland designer of the year 2019

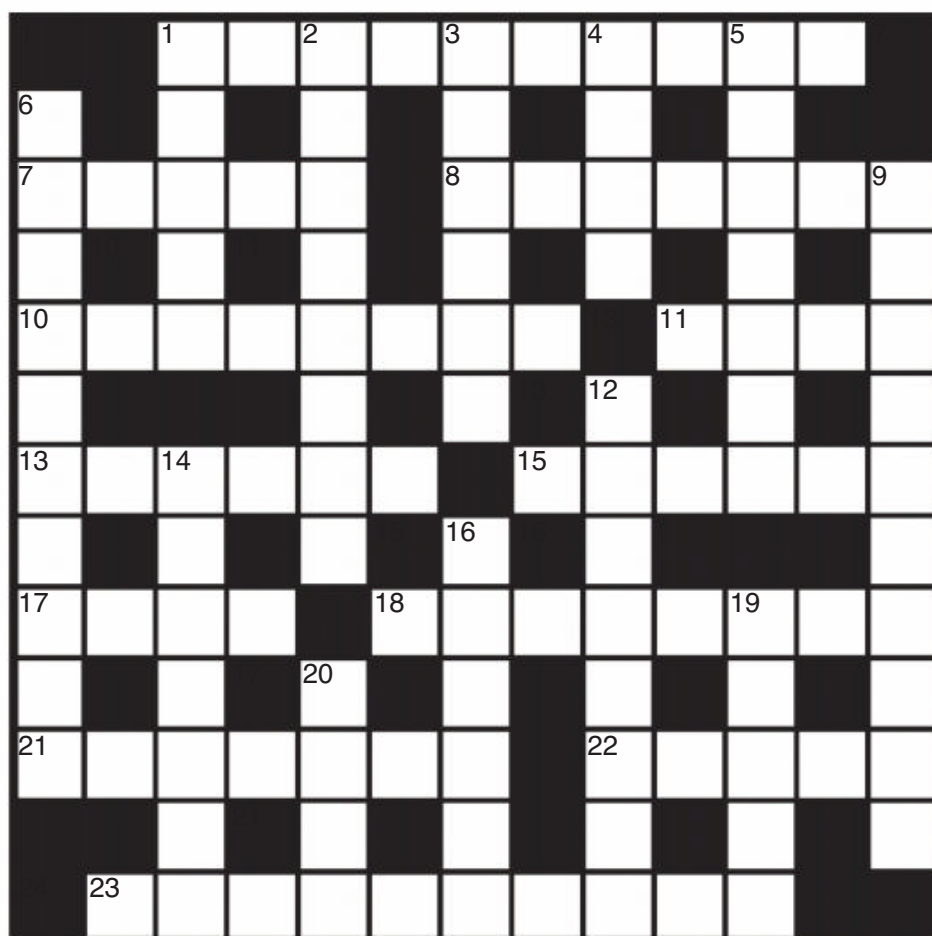
Jane Graham

PPA Scotland writer of the year 2018

BSME cover of the year 2017



CROSSWORD



QUICK CLUES

Across

1. Dangerously (10)
7. Inn (5)
8. Crushed rock (7)
10. Small light vehicle (8)
11. Prima donna (4)
13. Roman battalion (6)
15. Asian river (6)
17. Empty space (4)
18. Huge (8)
21. Diminish (7)
22. Execration (5)
23. Moderation (10)

Down

1. Communion plate (5)
2. Volume of regulations (4,4)
3. Toil (6)
4. Hideous (4)
5. Ahead (7)
6. Ephemeral (5-5)
9. Carried on business (10)
12. West Indian islander (8)
14. Cartilage (7)
16. Sour (6)
19. Short (5)
20. Distort (4)

CRYPTIC CLUES

Across

1. What the leader will do to determine the going rate for others (3,3,4)
7. I'm taking a lot of time to produce a likeness (5)
8. Remove the censored bits and make a lot of money (5,2)
10. As a result of a fault Edward crossed over to the other side (8)
11. Fruit for the conference? (4)
13. Footman found resin essential (6)
15. Fruit some Harlequin celebrated with (6)
17. Teak, would you say (4)
18. The majority are in a star role (4,4)
21. Beat it! (7)
22. Mostly limit the relationship (5)
23. Mistake already made in the field? (6,4)

Down

1. It's worn in John's car for warmth (5)
2. One digging into a plate? (8)
3. Game shock eyewitnessed by some (6)
4. Pair you brought up of hunted animals (4)
5. Anxiety for the business (7)
6. Daisy perhaps needs taming in the field? (4,6)
9. Ideal charge for Utopia perhaps (10)
12. Artistic group on the river in Russia (8)
14. Large number right in a predicament give a gleeful chuckle (7)
16. Ran very quickly while being bombarded (6)
19. Behave badly when part of play has finished (3,2)
20. Vote out (4)

To win a **Chambers English Dictionary**, send completed crosswords to:
The Big Issue Crossword, second floor, 43 Bath Street, Glasgow, G2 1HW by Feb 11.
Include name, address, phone and issue number.

SUDOKU

	5		9	3				
8					1			
					2	1		
			3			7		6
		9					5	
			4	6			1	8
7			1	5				
	6	8	2					9
	4		6			2		

Issue #1394 answers

CRYPTIC: Across – 1 Doldrums; 5 Used; 8 Traduced; 9 Clan; 11 Ukelele; 13 Elope; 14 Assassinate; 18 Blanc; 19 Scruple; 21 Ewer; 22 Very same; 24 Tidy; 25 Apologia.
Down – 1 Detour; 2 Leave; 3 Route march; 4 Mae; 6 Sell-out; 7 Dented; 10 Pennyroyal; 12 Eases; 15 Seaweed; 16 Object; 17 Hedera; 20 Prang; 23 Esp.
QUICK: Across – 1 Gamesome; 5 Espy; 8 Gemstone; 9 Cain; 11 Layered; 13 Halve; 14 Participate; 18 Toxin; 19 Root out; 21 Mood; 22 Epilogue; 24 Nose; 25 Vendetta.
Down – 1 Giggie; 2 Mummy; 3 Saturating; 4 Men; 6 Starlit; 7 Yanked; 10 Shopsoiled; 12 Decor; 15 Anxious; 16 Stamen; 17 Athena; 20 Ought; 23 Poe.

9	8	6	5	3	7	1	4	2
1	2	7	4	9	8	6	3	5
5	3	4	6	2	1	9	7	8
4	1	5	7	6	9	8	2	3
8	6	9	3	5	2	7	1	4
2	7	3	8	1	4	5	6	9
6	4	8	2	7	5	3	9	1
3	5	1	9	4	6	2	8	7
7	9	2	1	8	3	4	5	6

MY PITCH

KRIS DOVE, 28 (29 ON FEBRUARY 8!)



Marylebone station
Mon-Fri, 11am-7pm
Marylebone farmers' market
Sunday, 10am-2pm

I'm trying to get some theatre work – behind the scenes stuff

I became homeless about 10 years ago due to a relationship breakdown in my family and I was out on the streets of Newcastle at 18.

I was in and out of work on the markets but I wanted to get myself a steady income. I got talking to a Big Issue vendor and he said, "Why don't you give it a try?" I went to the office in Newcastle and I was out selling the same day. It was difficult. I didn't know any banter, I wasn't sure what to say to people. But once I got an understanding of how to sell it picked up.

After selling the magazine all over the country for a few years I moved to Birmingham on the spur of the moment, looking for an adventure. I was there for around two years but I got fed up and couldn't get any work. I moved back up north for a bit and I got myself a flat. But about a year and a half ago I woke up one day and there had been a serious assault outside my front door. I opened the door and it was a crime scene. It left me feeling really on edge and I tried to get the council to move me, but they wouldn't because Universal Credit had left me with massive rent arrears. I'd been told to claim the old housing benefit as well, so I did that. I did everything the council asked me to, but it turned out I was getting the wrong advice.

So a friend in London said, "Why don't you come down for a couple of weeks?" I decided to get badged up again on The Big Issue and, I'm not kidding you, I walked into the London office after being away for eight years and one of the guys said, "Good to see you, Kris!" He remembered me just like that. It was amazing to be welcomed straight back. I started in

Victoria but just after Christmas I thought I'd try Marylebone because I do the market on a Sunday. It's been all right, it's kept us ticking over. London is much faster paced. I greet everyone but people are so focused on getting where they're going to they just walk past with their head down, switched off. It's difficult to get used to. But the stall holders at the market are so generous. They help me out with food and give me some nice goodies at the end of the day so I want to thank them for that. If you're well off the market is a good place – it's so relaxed and chilled out.

I've got a room in a house out in Ealing Broadway, but it's absolutely miles away from my pitch. I'm going to try to get some part-time theatre work, behind-the-scenes stuff. When a new musical comes to London there's a company that provides crew to build the sets. One of the guys at my market pitch works for them so I'm trying to get an interview. I haven't seen any of the West End shows but I've met some of the stars. A couple of years ago I met Sheridan Smith when I was selling the magazine outside the Theatre Royal in Newcastle. There had been loads of people waiting for her but they gave up, and we were about to go and get a bus as well when she came out the front and stood there having a pint and a cigarette. I asked her to sign a mag for me and she said she was more than happy to. She's an absolute legend.

Interview: Sarah Reid
Photo: Louise Haywood-Schiefer



THE BIG ISSUE MANIFESTO



A hand up, not a handout...
Our sellers BUY the magazine for £1.25 and sell it for £2.50.

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Which is why we ask you to ALWAYS take your copy of the magazine. Our sellers are working and need your custom.



Poverty is indiscriminate...

That is why we provide ANYONE whose life is blighted by poverty with the opportunity to earn a LEGITIMATE income.

The right to citizenship...

The Big Issue Foundation, our charitable arm, helps sellers tackle social and financial exclusion.

Prevention...

Big Issue Invest offers backing and investments to social enterprises, charities and businesses which deliver social value to communities.



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