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DIGITAL ISSUE £2

BIG ISSUE NORTH

THE INDEPENDENT STREET PAPER | WORKING NOT BEGGING



Tala Lee-Turton
Barnsley to the Bolshoi and back

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BIG ISSUE NORTH

THE INDEPENDENT STREET PAPER | WORKING NOT BEGGING

'I knew there were more stories that needed to be told by a greater variety of voices.'

TALA LEE-TURTON

The Barnsley ballerina who took the Bolshoi, page 10



'Jake didn't believe in show business and had no intention to be famous.'

JAKE THACKRAY

Shy folk musician celebrated, page 16



'The dandy takes any change in style and personalises it, perfects it.'

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CORNEL, SAINSBURY'S, COTTINGHAM

'I don't have big plans for the future except to work until I will be 90'

Tell us a bit about yourself.

I am 60 years old and I am Romanian. I have sold *Big Issue North* since 2013, and my pitch is in a village near Hull.

Why do you sell the magazine?

I am selling it to help my family. I have five children and eight grandchildren. I like to help my grandchildren and I want them to be happy. That is why I do everything I can for them.

Do you like selling it?

Yes. I like selling *Big Issue North* because it gives me an opportunity and helps me to have something to do every day. It gives me a purpose in life – like a target to achieve every day. To help my family while I'm still able to is worth every moment spent.

What is Hull like as a place?

Hull is a very nice place to live and visit. I really like this town. I am happy here.

Tell us about your family.

Most of my children live in Romania. I only have one son with me here in the UK. His name is Florin and he also sells *Big Issue North* and he lives with us at home. He is a good son and is very hard working.

What are your hopes for the future?

I don't have big plans for the future except to be healthy as much as possible and work in this country until I will be 90 – ha ha! – and then live another 10 years back in Romania with my family.

What makes you happy?

When I am home and have time



with my wife and my son and when I call my grandchildren in Romania and most of all when I see them.

What makes you sad?

To be honest nothing makes me sad. I am very optimistic and try to think positively. I just want to be happy, drink a glass of wine and not get sad.

What do you do in your spare time?

We sometimes go for a walk around town and that is very relaxing. We also watch TV programmes for news.

Do you have a message for your customers?

I really want to thank to all my customers for supporting me and being part of my aim to help my family. I really can't thank you enough. And also thank you to the Sainsbury's manager and staff who take care of me and bring me tea and coffee when I am there. Thank you for your kindness and understanding. I wish you all what's best for you in your life.

**INTERVIEW AND TRANSLATION:
CRISITAN POLITIC**

ABOUT US

Vendors buy *Big Issue North* for £2 and sell it for £4 keeping the profit they make. As a charity, your donations enable us to provide additional support to our vendors. Visit justgiving.com/bigissuenorth to donate.

Vendors selling *Big Issue North* must abide by the code of conduct – a set of rules governing how they work. Visit bigissuenorth.com to find out more.

If you have a comment about a vendor, please call your nearest main office:

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THANK YOU FOR HELPING US TO HELP THEM

A small increase in the price of *Big Issue North* is set to help vendors face the cost-of-living crisis this winter.

From this week, vendors will buy *Big Issue North* from our regional offices for £2 a magazine, and sell it to our readers for £4, keeping the money they make. This means that vendors get £2 in their pocket for every magazine they sell – an extra 50p compared with the previous price. The price rise will stay in place throughout December and include our bumper Christmas issues.

With the cost of living rising for everyone, *Big Issue North* vendors, and people facing similarly tough situations this winter, are feeling the effects more than most. People on low and variable incomes are the least able to withstand increases in bills and food costs. By increasing their income with every sale, you can give them a greater chance of coping financially.

Thank you for continuing to buy *Big Issue North* and supporting vendors to face the cost-of-living crisis.



CASH GRANTS BEAT FOOD VOUCHERS

Struggling families prefer cash to food bank parcels

No evidence that payments lead to misuse or fraud

Leeds City Council will consider using its limited hardship funds to provide cash grants to struggling people rather than referring them to food banks or giving them vouchers, after new research suggested it would better help them survive the cost-of-living crisis.

The research follows a pilot started last year in which the council worked with three food banks in Leeds, Leeds Food Aid Network (LFAN) and the Trussell Trust to set up a cash-first scheme.

'Dignified'

In the last two years the government has provided over £2 billion in funding to local authorities in England to deliver immediate support to households facing financial hardship.

Most recently, the Household Support Fund has provided over £1.2 billion in funding to local councils in England since September 2021.

Government guidance to local authorities recommends this support comes in the form of referrals to food banks and vouchers for food, utility bills and other costs for struggling households.

Where the guidance refers to cash, according to the Trussell Trust – the largest network of food banks in the country – it mainly relates to concerns about limiting it to prevent fraud. But the trust says in some cases this has led to “people struggling to access support”.

In Leeds, this funding is channelled through the council's Local Welfare Support Scheme. The Leeds pilot scheme provided 283 people eligible for the scheme with a total of £45,450 in grants.

The research found that 94 per cent of recipients preferred a cash option to a food parcel, and 78 per cent said their ability to afford essentials improved during the grant period.

Ninety per cent experienced an improvement in overall finances during the grant period and 86 per cent did not use a food bank while in receipt of the grant.

“The cash grant really relieved a lot of stress for me at the hardest financial moment of my life,” said one recipient. “I was able to put

petrol in to get to work, and get some gas and electric, etc.”

The Trussell Trust said cash grants are a “more dignified form of support when people face financial hardship” and its research showed grants do not lead to “misuse”.

They also allow people to pay off debt or pay for a car's MOT to get to work, putting them on a more secure financial footing.

Mary Harland, Leeds City Council's executive member for communities, said the local authority was “absolutely committed” to tackling poverty and inequalities and welcomed the research.

“We want people to have choice when it comes to what they need to spend their money on and we will be looking to embed a cash offer within the Local Welfare Support Scheme, taking learning from this pilot,” she said.

“We hope that other local authorities are able to take the valuable learning which came from this pilot.”

Karen Burgon, CEO of Leeds North and West Foodbank, said: “We have worked with Leeds City Council for many years supporting the provision of the Local Welfare Support Scheme with food parcels, but we don't believe that the residents of Leeds should have to rely on a food parcel when they are at a crisis point, so we were delighted when the council suggested this pilot scheme.

“We are excited to see the positive impact embedding a cash-first approach option within the local welfare scheme could have on people's ability to afford the essentials.”

Many recipients of cash grants in the pilot told researchers that benefits were too low to sustain them, and that problems such as being in debt to the government for loans, facing benefit sanctions or the five-week wait for payment led to them being unable to afford the essentials.

“I'm in debt with Universal Credit for two loans and rent arrears,” said one. “I only get £62 a week – I've never struggled so hard.”

Another said: “Being moved onto Universal Credit last year really put me into a financial struggle for the first time ever.”

The Trussell Trust said that despite the success of the pilot, without increased benefits cash grants at a local level could only be a “sticking plaster”.

Danni Malone, director of network programmes and innovation at the Trussell Trust, said: “Food banks should never be the first port of call when people face a shortfall in their income which leaves them unable to afford the essentials.

“A food parcel is not going to help pay the gas bill, get a taxi to a hospital appointment, or support with securing a new tenancy.”

KEVIN GOPAL

NEWS IN BRIEF

YOUR BUDGET SAY

A consultation on Manchester City Council's budget for the next financial year is now open. In common with local authorities across the country, it is facing a shortfall between the amount of money required to run services and the amount of money available. There is a proposed council tax increase of 1.99 per cent. Deadline for responses: 7 Jan 2023. See manchester.gov.uk/budget.

SAFER LIVERPOOL BUSES

Passengers are set to see an increased uniformed police presence around transport hubs and on key bus routes as part of the Safer Streets Liverpool campaign focused on keeping women safe. High visibility police patrols will run at peak times to prevent sexual violence and provide reassurance to women at night, particularly on main student bus routes.

BAN WASTE EXPORTS

Researchers and MPs are calling for a ban on all plastic waste exports from the UK by 2027. Researchers from Sheffield University contributed to a report from the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Committee, which aims to reduce the country's global plastic waste pollution. “If we want to be a world leader in sustainability, we must act like a leader,” said Sheffield University's Rachael Rothman.

NEW HULL FUND

Mike Ross, leader of Hull City Council, has joined charity Hull and East Yorkshire Children's University to set up a new fund to support families of children at primary schools who are in most need. From next month families referred to the fund may be given energy-efficient light bulbs, electric blankets, hot water bottles and winter clothing.

Got an event, campaign or story from your area? Email news@bigissuesnorth.co.uk



Crop failure in Middle East's Fertile Crescent

Iraq and Turkey in conflict over river water shortages

Abbas Elwan drilled well after well in a desperate bid to find water for his family's parched farmlands in southern Iraq. After yet another attempt failed in August, he took a gun from the kitchen of their mud house and slipped into the night.

Hikma Meteab found her husband's body the next day with a gunshot wound to the head in a dried-up irrigation canal near the barren land that once produced enough wheat and barley to sustain the extended Elwan family.

Last hope

"That was his last hope, and there was no water," said Abbas's brother Ali, 56, standing in the scorching Iraqi heat by a plot of land with dead plants poking out of the baked soil.

As the Cop-27 climate summit in Egypt drew to a close, Elwan's plight highlights a crisis facing Iraq and other Middle Eastern countries that could fuel more turmoil in the region as communities fight over dwindling water resources.

A woman collects water from a tank outside her home in the village of Al-Bouzayyat, which sits on the bank of a former canal that has dried up. Photo: Alaa Al-Marjani/Reuters

A prolonged drought in at least five Iraqi provinces has only worsened in recent years and is crippling livelihoods. Farmers in neighbouring Syria and Turkey are also struggling with lower rainfall.

"Climate change is a reality in Iraq," the United Nations mission in Iraq said, adding that the country was the world's fifth most vulnerable to the fallout from global warming due to rising temperatures, lower rainfall, salinity and dust storms.

In Iraq, officials and water experts said rains had come later and ended sooner in each of the last three years.

Dams and droughts

Part of the "Fertile Crescent", an arc sweeping from the Mediterranean to the Persian Gulf where farming developed more than 10,000 years ago, Iraq has been devastated by a triple blow of lower rainfall, decades of conflict and less water flowing through its two main rivers, the Tigris and the Euphrates.

"Desertification now threatens almost 40 per cent of the area of our country – a country that was once one of the most fertile and productive in the region," Iraq's President Abdul Latif Rashid told Cop-27.

Nadhir Al-Ansari, professor at Sweden's Lulea University of

Technology, said rainfall in Iraq had declined by 30 per cent over the past three decades, with the lowest precipitation coming in the last two years. "What was once known as the Fertile Crescent started to die about 35 years ago," he said.

Lower volumes of water flowing from Turkey through the Tigris and Euphrates, rivers on which Iraq has depended most for irrigation, have left it more exposed when the rain dried up, said Harry Istepanian, senior fellow at the Iraq Energy Institute.

"Rainfall and groundwater became very important," he said.

Baghdad says dams upstream, mainly in Turkey, are emptying its rivers. Turkey says it has never changed the course of the rivers, or cut off any water.

Ankara's ambassador to Iraq said in July that the drought had hit Turkey too, and that instead of asking for more water, Baghdad should manage its supplies more carefully.

Almost 90 per cent of rain-fed crops, mostly wheat and barley, failed this season, according to the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) in Iraq.

**BY AMINA ISMAIL AND MAHA EL DAHAN.
COURTESY OF REUTERS/INTERNATIONAL
NETWORK OF STREET PAPERS**



GO FIGURE

As the austerity establishment sends us into another doom loop, James Meadway says we don't have to buckle in for the ride

Last week's autumn statement by the new chancellor, Jeremy Hunt, held out the prospect of the toughest half-decade for most of us in generations. If the forecasts pan out, and the government sticks to its own plans, we will face two years of recession, with rising unemployment, two years of wages and salaries being eroded by inflation, and then three years of sharp cuts to public spending – with additional tax rises. If you thought the decade before the pandemic was bad, the next five years are going to be worse. The pill has been (very slightly) sweetened with some higher taxes on energy company extreme profits, and some more spending for the NHS and schools over the next few years. Otherwise, nothing.

The best that can be said is that economic forecasts can be wrong, and these official predictions are better than the complete disaster that was talked up by government beforehand – quite deliberately, in order to soften the blow of eventual bad news. There is a general election due before the cuts and tax rises are due to really hit, with the possibility of a new government reversing them. And there are signs that more and more people are refusing to accept the misery handed down to them, with nurses, civil servants and firefighters set to join lorry drivers, postmen, Amazon warehouse workers and rail workers in strike action over the next few months. We've already seen hundreds of thousands pledge to refuse to pay their energy bills over the summer, in the face of skyrocketing prices. With another major bill hike due in April – even with the extra support the government has been forced to make – there is the potential for further flashpoints and protests.

Nobody should feel they have to accept what is being offered. Austerity, as it was in the 2010s, is a political choice, not an economic necessity. Its defenders, like former George Osborne advisor Rupert Harrison, now brought back to advise Hunt, make their thinking

clear. By cutting hard at public spending in the early 2010s, Harrison claims the government then found it easier to borrow for the huge costs of support during the pandemic. But this is nonsensical: it was the Bank of England printing money that paid for the pandemic. And by slashing away at public services, undermining healthcare, social care and public health provision in particular, austerity left us seriously unprepared when the pandemic struck – which is why it cost so much more. Cutting spending again will leave us in an even worse state for any future emergencies in a world that is now increasingly unstable.

What Harrison and the austerity apologists have done is trap the whole country in what the head of the Confederation of British Industry, Tony Danker, has called an economic “doom-loop”. This refers to the idea that we have been gripped by a collective madness, whereby economic underperformance and crisis leads to rising government debt and demands for austerity, which then undermine the economy, expose us to worse crisis, lead to rising government debt and so further demands for austerity.

There's a reason why Britain has recovered so unevenly from the pandemic, and why it did so badly in the years beforehand. Every country is buffeted by huge global shocks, from Russia's invasion of Ukraine to the after-effects of Covid to extreme weather damaging food supplies. It's true that rising prices of imports like natural gas make all of us collectively poorer, and it's true that interest rates are rising across the world. But Britain is worse affected by these things than other places. It's not just that Brexit has had an effect – Britain was underperforming even before leaving the EU – it's that austerity has left us permanently poorer than we would otherwise have been.

We are now on the second turn of the doom loop cycle, with the same motley crew – Harrison, Osborne himself, even (sadly) reputable organisations like the Institute for Fiscal Studies – urging government to give the wheel another crank. Never mind the 300,000 excess deaths attributed to 2010s austerity by the University of Glasgow, or the creaking of essential public services today, or the hard empirical evidence that austerity sucks the



There is potential for further protests such as October's Enough is Enough Day of Action in Manchester. Photo: Gary Roberts/ Shutterstock

James Meadway is an economist and director of the Progressive Economy Forum, an independent thinktank (progressive economy forum.com)

life out of a modern economy. The austerity establishment are back.

And yet we should detect some hesitancy here. The old guard certainly would like to push hard for cuts. But they have had to stay their hand. Claiming that spending cuts will only arrive after a general election you are widely expected to lose, preceded by a few years of rising spending, hardly speaks of confidence in your own plans. This isn't 2010, when then-chancellor Osborne took the Labour Party's own plans for cuts and threw in a load more, paving the way for the misery and failure of Britain's own “lost decade”. The old guard know how unpopular austerity is – after all, Boris Johnson was elected in 2019 on a promise to end it. So they are being forced to tread carefully.

They want to create political difficulties for the Labour Party, of course. It is essential that Labour doesn't walk into the obvious trap, repeating the mistake of the early 2010s of trying to fudge the question of cuts after the election. We need an alternative in government: tax the richest to fund our public services, invest across the country – not just in the Elizabeth Line in London – to create jobs and future-proof our economy against the shocks to come. None of us should settle for what the austerity establishment offer: the steady management of decline. We have two years to turn this around.

LAST WEEK

€4,631,538.80

"Such a large sum, I couldn't even pronounce it," is what a German man told Frankfurt media after finding a cheque for this amount payable to Hairbo confectionery company on a train platform. He returned the cheque but was disappointed with his reward – six packs of gummies. "Our standard package that we send as a thank you," the company said.

Oh Christmas Tree, Oh Christmas Tree

You're sadder than we thought you'd be. That was the unanimous feeling among residents of St Helens who said the town's Christmas tree in Church Square would make them a laughing stock. The council conceded that the wonky and wilting tree "does not meet their standards" and agreed to replace it. But a similar debacle last year suggested it was in fact in keeping with standards.

"We rise together, back to the Moon and beyond"

That was the exclamation of a space agency official as Nasa successfully launched the most powerful rocket ever – the Artemis I – from Florida last week. The rocket is key to Nasa's plan to eventually return humans to the Moon, which it hopes to do for the first time in over 50 years in 2025.



The age of Bosnian artist Nade Rudan when she held her first exhibition. A former dressmaker, the mother of two, grandmother of three and great-grandmother of four, who has survived the Second World War and the 1992-1995 siege of Sarajevo – where she lives – marked the milestone birthday with a display of the work she began as a hobby aged 87. "I am still in good health, my hands are stable, my eyes serve me well," she told Reuters.

HE HAS ISSUES



There's a gulf between Roger Ratcliffe and the World Cup

Picture the scene inside Leeds's elegant Kirkgate Market one summer's morning back in the 1980s. I was standing at a fruit and vegetable stall wearing a red tee-shirt emblazoned with a radical slogan. I was longish-haired and bearded, and as I perused a display of oranges I saw the market trader studying me. "I wouldn't bother with them, mate," he pointed to the oranges. "They're South African."

It hadn't taken him more than a second to decide I was an ethical, hippy-dippy cultural stereotype. Another customer laughed but it was a serious issue. Like many others at that time I supported the Anti-Apartheid Movement's boycott of anything from South Africa that might legitimise and sustain its hateful regime. That ended in the early 1990s after the freeing of Nelson Mandela, although I still find myself hesitating before lifting a bottle of Cape wine off supermarket shelves.

Now, boycotts are back for those of us who believe in the power of collective action. Unfortunately, Russia has been hard to boycott since few of its exports were on general sale here, although I'm told that many drinkers quickly abandoned Russian vodka for Khor, Khortytza or other Ukrainian brands. Meanwhile, some people have deleted their Twitter accounts because the platform has become a plaything of that insufferable embryonic Trump, Elon Musk.

The most immediate ethical protest is boycotting the 2022 FIFA World Cup in Qatar. I believe we all have a duty to avoid listening to or watching just one second of broadcast that might add to audience figures and be held up as proof of the tournament's success.

There are plenty of reasons why Qatar, in the words of one headline, is "blighted by a dust-storm of controversy". How this Gulf state came to be awarded the World Cup has always been suspect. Many believe it secretly bought the right to host the matches, and last week the former FIFA president Sepp Blatter said it was part of a \$14.6 billion arms deal with France. But that's not my motivation for a boycott. There are three major grounds for not legitimising the tournament.



One is that long before the first ball was kicked around 30,000 low-wage workers from countries such as India, Bangladesh, Nepal and the Philippines were brought in to build football stadia and other facilities, but conditions were so bad that between 2014 and last year, shockingly, 6,500 of them had died. Another is Qatar's abuse of human rights. According to Amnesty International, women face discrimination in every area of their lives, while laws curtailing all freedom of expression and assembly are used to stifle critical voices. And a report by Human Rights Watch says that members of Qatar's LGBTQ+ community have been detained and physically abused by police. Earlier this month the country's official World Cup ambassador made the outrageous claim that homosexuality is "damage in the mind".

I know a lot of football fans will be driven by national pride to support our home nations, England and Wales. But they shouldn't be playing. If they have any integrity, they and other participating teams from civilised countries should catch the first available flights out of Qatar. As for David Beckham's role promoting the World Cup and pocketing a much-needed £10m he should hang his head in shame.

David Beckham in Qatar following his deal to serve as an ambassador for the 2022 World Cup. Photo: Balkis Press/Shutterstock

Roger Ratcliffe has worked as an investigative journalist with the Sunday Times Insight team and is the author of guidebooks to Leeds and Bradford. Follow him on Twitter @Ratcliffe

Point of return

One of only a handful of Brits to graduate from the famous Bolshoi Ballet Academy, Barnsley's Tala Lee Turton tells **Sarah Freeman** why she is now on a mission to bring dance to the masses

Ask Tala Lee Turton what she is doing at the moment and the reply alone is exhausting.

In between juggling the final year of a degree with work as a freelance dancer, the 26 year old is also honing the pitch for her first feature film and producing a tour of her own triple bill of work.

"There is quite a lot going on," she says with quiet understatement. "But it's all good. I like to be busy."

It's that same work ethic that saw Turton realise her dreams of becoming a professional ballerina and was fine-tuned in the rigorous regime of Moscow's Bolshoi Ballet Academy.

In 2016, Turton, who grew up in Barnsley, was the first Yorkshire dancer to be accepted into the company's renowned academy and when she graduated four years later was only the third ever British female to complete the course.

It is perhaps not surprising. At the Bolshoi, dancers are expected to train for up to 11 hours a day, six days a week and when she arrived in Moscow as a 16 year old she found herself alone in an alien city.

"I will forever be grateful to the Bolshoi," she says, her Barnsley accent unaffected by the seven years she spent in Russia. "It was there that I really learned the discipline of my craft, but more than that it introduced me to a whole other culture.

"It forced me to learn a new language and to embrace a whole new way of life. I was young and I just did it. I didn't stop to think."

Eager to learn, Turton immersed herself in the Bolshoi's Vaganova method, in which the emphasis is on ballet's classical repertoire. It gave her, she says, the best foundation for performance but, looking back, she admits that while she lapped up everything her instructors said it took her a while to find her own voice.

"I was quite unquestioning," she says. "My roommate was a real fiery character who always did exactly

what she wanted. I really admired her, perhaps because she was so different to me.

"At the time I was so keen to learn that I never really thought about if there was another way of doing things. I don't regret anything. The Bolshoi stood me in really good stead but when I was younger I was much less inclined to experiment."

After graduating from the Bolshoi in 2016, Turton spent the next three years working for one of Russia's state ballet companies. She returned to England three years ago having secured a contract with English National Ballet and was scheduled for a series of performances at the Royal Albert Hall when the pandemic hit.

For many in the performing arts the enforced hiatus forced them to seek alternative careers. Turton never once thought of leaving dance, but successive lockdowns did give her much-needed time to think.

"By then I had danced pretty much all of the classical ballets, from *Swan Lake* to *Giselle*, and I had been lucky enough to dance every role I had wanted to do when I was a little girl.

"Even before the pandemic I had been thinking that I wanted to take my career in a slightly different direction. I knew there were more stories that needed to be told by a greater variety of voices and I started to really reflect on where I wanted to be."

While companies like Ballet Black, founded in 2001 in response to the lack of professional black and Asian dancers, and Leeds-based Phoenix Dance, which has always tried to reflect multicultural Britain in its work, continue to break down boundaries, much of the dance world remains white and middle class. As the world shut down, Turton began to hatch her own plan to chip away at those stereotypes.

"I knew that I still enjoyed dancing, but I didn't feel fulfilled creatively," she says. "When you are part of a company there is a certain

repertoire that you have to perform and by its very nature that feels limiting.

"I would hear a particular piece of music and think: 'I wonder what a certain choreographer or producer could do with that?' Then I started thinking that maybe I didn't have to wait to see what someone else would do; maybe I could do it myself."

The result was *No Time Like The Present*, which premiered this summer in Sheffield's Botanical Gardens. A collaboration between Turton and choreographer Zhongjing Fang, a soloist with American Ballet Company and award-winning director Katya Bourvis, the work, which was performed to a synth-pop score, explored what it means to be a woman in the 21st century.

As the world shut down Turton began to hatch her plan to chip away at stereotypes

"It was complete beginner's naivety that got me through, but I am so glad that I did it as it was the first stepping stone for me as a producer.

"The weather alone gave me heart palpitations but it honestly couldn't have gone better. We could have sold double the number of tickets and we got a much more diverse audience than perhaps we would have if we had staged it in a theatre.

"After the performance we held a Q&A and it was really noticeable that a lot of the audience weren't typical theatre-goers. Some said it was the first dance performance they had seen and one admitted that it was the first live event they had ever been to.

"There is no point in trying to impose culture on people, but what it taught me was that if you engage with an audience then it can be really rewarding for both you and them."



Buoyed by the success, Turton is looking to secure funding to rework *No Time Like The Present* as part of a triple bill that will open at Northern Ballet's Stanley and Audrey Burton Theatre next year before touring venues in South Yorkshire.

Splitting her time between Sheffield and London, where she is studying for an arts management degree at Goldsmiths University, Turton is in the middle of completing an application for Arts Council funding when we speak.

"The funding process can put some people off before they start. Luckily I haven't grown too tired of it. In fact, I am constantly hustling and looking for ways to get my work out there.

"I honestly think that all dancers should also train to be art managers. We should learn to be sole traders and sell ourselves as business people. I don't think that diminishes the creative element of what we do. In fact it gives you much more autonomy over the work.

"It is harder to be a producer and performer rather than focusing on just one role, but there is also something really rewarding about spinning all those plates."

As part of her mission to make the arts less London-centric and "draw some more culture out of the capital", Turton is also working on her first feature film pitch as part of Screen Yorkshire's Flex programme.

The talent development scheme was launched last year with the aim of drawing together writers, directors and producers, many of whom haven't gone through the traditional film school route, to tell stories that might otherwise remain in the shadows. Turton was encouraged to apply after producing her first short film.

Chinese Laundry was in part based on stories Turton heard from the Chinese side of her family, second generation immigrants who moved to South Yorkshire from Hong Kong, and she is now working on a pitch for a full-length film, this time inspired by her mother's

One direction: Tala Lee Turton's *No Time Like The Present*, premiered at Sheffield's botanical gardens, signals her intent to take her career on another path

experience growing up on a prefab Barnsley council estate known to locals as Cardboard City.

"Mum and I went to the site where it stood and while some of the street names are the same the old buildings have all been replaced. It's almost like it never existed.

"This isn't a dance film in the literal sense but the aim is to include movement in it. It feels like an important story to tell and I really want to do justice to Barnsley and to my mum, who I have learnt so much from over the years."

When she was at the Bolshoi, it was her mother Sara who led the drive to raise the funds Turton needed for fees, living costs and insurance. If the pitch is successful the film will be a tribute to the art of the possible.

"I suppose what I want to say is that we are all shaped by where we come from, but our background shouldn't be seen as limiting. I want to show people that all of us have a story worth telling." ■

Tide changes on sec



Visitor numbers to Whitby ebb and flow like the sea but a lack of affordable housing remains a constant, making it hard to recruit hospitality staff. **Susan Griffin** visits the coastal town, where taxing second home owners could be a radical solution

Much like our summer togs, thoughts of venturing to the seaside are often cast aside when the temperature drops and days shorten. This can have a detrimental impact on those living and working in coastal towns who rely heavily on tourism, especially towns such as Whitby that have been besieged by second homeowners in recent years.

Back in 2020, the North Yorkshire town, famous for its historic abbey and association with Bram Stoker's *Dracula*, topped a list by the property website Rightmove of the most coveted seaside locations for house hunters.

"The lockdown periods gave buyers a greater desire for areas with more space near the sea or countryside. Though some people were likely to be looking at a second home, we saw many movers relocating as their lifestyles and priorities changed. Whitby was one example of this," says Rightmove's property expert Tim Bannister.

Last year it was second in the list of coastal price hotspots with average asking prices jumping 17 per cent in a year, from £217,620 to £254,218. This is behind only Padstow, in Cornwall, which rose 20 per cent, from £548,382 to £658,588.

"At the beginning of this year, we saw demand beginning to ease in coastal areas compared with last year, with more homes becoming available to purchase as people returned to cities as restrictions lifted. However, demand still greatly outweighs supply in coastal areas and asking prices are still well above where they were before the pandemic," notes Bannister.

In response to the situation, Whitby made headlines in June when residents voted to ban new builds becoming second homes. Scarborough Borough Council has clarified it was a non-binding vote and there is no ban.

"It was a parish poll that wasn't binding on any organisation, but it was an expression of local opinion," notes a council spokesperson.

Those who voted in favour of the ban say locals can no longer afford to buy in the town. The affordable

Above: Whitby harbour. Photo: Shutterstock

ond homes



housing crisis is having a knock-on effect on the recruitment and retention of staff for businesses.

It is estimated double the number of affordable properties currently being built across the borough are needed between now and 2038 if demand is to be met.

“We have a project called Better Homes and are in the process of setting up a joint venture to build more affordable homes across the borough,” said the council spokesperson. But it remains to be seen how this might be affected by local government changes.

Scarborough Borough Council is the lead authority on housing for Whitby, but in April, North Yorkshire County Council, Scarborough Borough Council and the other district and borough councils in North Yorkshire are to be replaced by a unitary authority, North Yorkshire Council.

One of the considerations being given to this new local authority is the introduction of a council tax premium for second homeowners.

In September, a landmark decision was made by North

“The second home premium may not be popular with everyone, but that is not the key factor in this decision.”

Yorkshire County Council’s senior councillors to see a 100 per cent premium introduced for council tax bills on second homes within the next two years.

The proposals, which would effectively double council tax bills for second homeowners, were passed at a full council meeting last week.

That means North Yorkshire is one of the first areas in the country to adopt the government’s new measures, announced in May as part of the Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill, which is currently going through Parliament.

Although the premium will not come into effect until 1 April 2024, it is expected to bring in more than £14 million a year in additional revenue to finance key council priorities, such as introducing more housing in areas particularly affected by the affordability crisis.

The Scarborough district could bring in almost half of that figure due to the large number of second homes in coastal towns such as Whitby, Scarborough and Filey.

“There is no simple solution to the issue of affordable housing, second homes and the impact they have on housing for local communities. But we recognise that bold and decisive action needs to be taken to deal with the affordable housing crisis in North Yorkshire, and that is why the executive has decided to pursue the policy of a council tax premium,” said county council leader Carl Les this autumn.

“It may not be popular with everyone, but that is not the key factor in this decision. We need to act to try and ensure more local people have access to housing in their own communities, and the premium on council tax bills for second homes will be a significant step towards achieving that.”

In the meantime, life carries on, albeit quieter following the summertime madness.

“To be fair, I quite enjoy the quiet of winter in Whitby,” says Fiona Duncan, manager of the independent Whitby Bookshop, on Church Street. “It gives us all a chance to catch our breath, recharge and appreciate our town without the crowds.”

“But the quieter winter months after Christmas can be tough on

CONFLICT APPEAL

HELP US DELIVER MEDICAL CARE BEYOND THE FRONTLINES



An MSF medic treats a patient onboard the medical train. Photograph © Andrii Ovod/MSF



CHRISTOPHER STOKES IS COORDINATING MSF'S MEDICAL WORK IN UKRAINE

23 October 2022

“On 10 October I had just left the train station in Dnipro, eastern Ukraine, when the car suddenly started shaking. A second later, we heard the blast from the first missile. By the time we reached the office, we'd felt four more shockwaves from strikes. Since then, there have been regular waves of bomb attacks targeting infrastructure and civilian areas. Yesterday there were more hits close to where we were working.

We're now gearing up for the very real possibility that the electricity will go off across the whole of Ukraine as a result of these ongoing attacks. That will have drastic knock-on effects on hospitals, healthcare and people's lives. People are heading into winter with the risk there will be no electricity, heating or hot water.

We're doing our best to prepare. We're helping a number of hospitals near the frontline get ready. We're running mobile clinics in areas previously under Russian occupation where people have had no access to the medicines they need for months.

MSF operates a specially designed medical train that evacuates patients from near the frontlines of the fighting to safer areas and we're looking at ways to keep that running, even if the electricity fails. It's been kitted out by MSF and Ukrainian Railways with an intensive care unit and inpatient carriages. To date, we've evacuated 1,851 patients in 60 trips, most of them suffering from blast injuries and shrapnel wounds.

Last weekend we carried one family on the train who needed to be evacuated from the war zone. They had returned to their home in Nikopol on 5 October after having fled the war months earlier. On 6 October, just one day after returning, their house was hit by a shell. The father suffered minor injuries, but one of his daughters was badly injured and ultimately had to have both legs amputated. She was only six years old.

The Ukrainians are doing the vast bulk of the medical work in this war. Our role is about filling the gaps, whether that's supplying ambulances, running the medical train or providing medicines to people cut off from healthcare. With these latest attacks, people's medical needs are growing, and it's vital we are here.”

MSF'S WORK IN CONFLICTS

In conflicts around the world, MSF teams are working around the clock to treat trauma injuries, conduct surgeries and provide lifesaving medical care to the victims of bombings and indiscriminate attacks.

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£47 could provide a folding stretcher for transporting injured patients

£456 could cover the cost of an MSF doctor working in a field hospital for six days

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retailers, especially the seasonal ones. I'd like to see fair rents for local independent business, affordable housing for those that live, work and contribute to the fabric of the town, as well as a limit on second home purchases.

"There is no doubt second homeowners are spending money in the town and supporting our independent shops, but the demand for second homes has pushed the prices of houses and flats way out of the reach of a lot of young people and families. Many retail and hospitality jobs in Whitby pay the national minimum wage. It is nowhere near enough to be able to afford to buy a property here, let alone the rental stock."

Duncan has worked in the shop for 22 years, having relocated from London in 2000 with her partner, who is from the area.

"There is definitely a buzz about Whitby. Weekend events such as the bi-annual Goth Weekend, Musicport, Whitby Folk Week and the Fish and Ships Festival keep the town vibrant and welcome different audiences. Although great for businesses in Whitby, it can also be a strain on the infrastructure of this small town. Parking is always an issue and just the sheer numbers of people."

One of the town's biggest draws is Whitby Abbey – and the 199 steps that lead up to it. Referenced in Bram Stoker's *Dracula*, which was published 125 years ago, the abbey welcomed in the region of 130,000 visitors last year.

The famous landmark remains open throughout winter, when the colder months lend a literal chill to the town's gothic associations, but there is also a push from the Yorkshire Coast Business



Fiona Duncan says there's a buzz about Whitby

WHITBY: A POTTED HISTORY

"Whitby is a fascinating place that has been shaped by dramatic eras dominated by religion, seafaring and then tourism," says Colin Wilkinson, author of *Whitby Between the Wars*, *Whitby in 50 Buildings* and *Whitby: A Potted History*.

"Signs of its religious heritage can still be seen with the abbey and the church on the headland. And then there are the grand houses built for merchants and ship owners when Whitby was a major seaport and shipbuilding centre during the 18th century. It was an era that produced the whaling fleet, and the explorer Captain Cook," he says.

"The 19th century brought the railway and with it the opportunity to develop a holiday resort. George Hudson, who became known as the Railway King, played an important part in this until his corrupt business practices were exposed. He helped to bring about the development of the town's West Cliff with the Royal Hotel and the streets of substantial Victorian terraces providing lodgings, as they still do, for visitors."

It was during this period Whitby became a fashionable resort attracting the likes of Charles Dickens, Elizabeth Gaskell and Bram Stoker. It further flourished as a resort in the 20th century during the inter-war years.

"New facilities were developed, but fortunately the development was limited and low key and the charm of the place retained. As one journal reported in early 20th century: 'You must go in the spirit of the artist in searching for the picturesque, the quaint and



the historic or you will be disappointed. To those who want the endless round of gaiety of Scarborough, Blackpool or the Isle of Man, Whitby will be dull and profitless!

"It is still relatively isolated as three of the four rail links were axed in the 1950s and 1960s and there is no motorway or dual carriageway across the winding moors roads, and yet this has not impacted its popularity," says Wilkinson.

"But what I have wanted to do through my books is show there is more to this fascinating town than a walk along the harbour side to the beach, fish and chips and a climb up the 199 steps to the abbey ruins."

Improvement District to show there is plenty to do in the area throughout the year.

"Whitby is a very vibrant town with some incredible businesses catering to all types of people and needs. We have placed a focus on supporting events such as the Whitby Krampus Run, the Whitby Ice Rink and Winter Fest. These events allow us to help drive footfall at a quieter time of the year, ensuring businesses have a continual stream of customers and patrons," says Clive Rowe-Evans, chair of the Yorkshire Coast BID, which was created to promote towns Whitby, Bridlington and Hornsea, and the villages in between.

"Being an attractive and much-loved town means that at times Whitby can attract a very high footfall during peak season, but face a lull during the quieter months. This can place a strain on businesses that are dependent on footfall all year round," adds Rowe-Evans.

To combat this, the BID is focusing on investing in projects that are less event oriented.

"One of the projects in Robin Hood's Bay for example was funding

a new defibrillator in an area that didn't have it, to ensure it is as safe and accessible as possible. In Bridlington, we have been working on a security scheme that helps connect businesses to the police for efficient crime reporting, bringing attention to crime in more rural areas," he says.

"We want the Yorkshire coast to be a destination that attracts people both long term and for short visits, and the key to this is ensuring it's an accessible destination with all of the relevant and needed infrastructure in place."

But there is a careful balance to be managed in order to attract inward investment while retaining the sense of community.

"We hope the charm and uniqueness of Whitby is retained for future generations," says Rowe-Evans. "The key to our mission is driving awareness of these brilliant destinations not only during the peak summer season, but also highlighting the beautiful locations you can visit during the quieter autumnal and winter months when you get to experience a totally different atmosphere." ■

ALONE IN THE SPOTLIGHT

The son of a Leeds policeman, singer-songwriter Jake Thackray was seen as Britain's Leonard Cohen before fading into obscurity. Now a new biography finds out what happened to him. Roger Ratcliffe talks to one of the authors

He didn't want to be a star, yet his name and face were familiar to most TV viewers from the 1960s to the 1980s. Despite this reticence to embrace celebrity, though, Jake Thackray has been described as "one of the greatest and most original artists of the 20th century".

Perhaps the incident best illustrating his rejection of fame came in 1977 just moments before he was due to perform to a sell-out audience at the 1,800-seat Fairfield's Hall in Croydon, which had previously hosted concerts by David Bowie, Pink Floyd, Queen, Stevie Wonder and Elton John.

Minutes before curtain-up, Thackray tried to sneak out of the building with his guitar and stage clothes. Alerted by a door keeper, his agent Alex Armitage rushed into the street and threw himself in front of Thackray's green Renault 18, which was already in motion.

"It was the closest I've ever come to getting run over," Armitage

recalled later. "Jake really didn't want to do the show. He thought it was too big for him. He thought the audience wouldn't like him."

Armitage calmed his nerves by arguing that when the house lights went down and he was alone in the spotlight Thackray wouldn't be able to see all those faces. It would feel no different to performing in a folk club, as if he was in front of just 100 people.

Still reluctant, Thackray was coaxed out of the car, and he eventually took to the stage later than billed, his audience unaware of the drama outside. "And of course he was sensational," said Armitage. "He had 1,800 people absolutely in the palm of his hand."

The story is told in a new book about Thackray, which traces his life from a difficult upbringing in the red-brick terraces of Leeds, which featured constant battles with his abusive father, a constable in the Leeds City Police force. It chronicles

his years as a teacher in France and Algeria, then at a secondary modern school in his home city, followed by his fame through records, TV and radio shows, and final years spent out of the public eye.

His career began with a regular slot on Bernard Braden's BBC TV show *Braden's Week*, which led to weekly appearances on Esther Rantzen's *That's Life* and *The David Frost Show*. Later he was given his own series on both the BBC and ITV.

"He was still a very self-effacing man," says Paul Thompson, who wrote the biography with John Patterston. "He didn't believe in show business and never had any ambition to be famous. He didn't want to be put up on a pedestal. He distrusted authority and hierarchies. He thought we should all be on the same level."

The incident at the Fairfield's Hall, the authors discovered, actually replicated something that had happened seven years earlier. He was about to record a live album at the Queen Elizabeth Hall in London, and on that occasion the producer also had to persuade him to go through with the concert.

"It wasn't stage nerves," says Thompson. "He was questioning whether he had any right to be there. There was a bit of Jake that felt he had sold out."

Thackray was unique among UK singer-songwriters in that his guitar had nylon strings, which produced a highly distinctive sound. Together with his rich baritone voice that encouraged comparisons with Leonard Cohen, who also used nylon strings and had a similar guitar style.

But it was Thackray's lyrics that brought him such a wide audience and made him popular with TV



Left: Thackray at the Big Window Hotel in Burnley. Right, in 1968
Photos: Burnley Civic Trust, David Magnus/Shutterstock





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With French singer-songwriter Georges Brassens, 1973. Photo: Colin and Carol Evans

producers. He seemed to be able to write a witty take on the week's biggest news in just a few minutes, and according to Thompson one of his influences was the great music-hall singer and comedian George Formby.

"There was that same innuendo side to Jake's writing, but I'd say that an even greater influence were the chansonniers [a music-hall and cabaret tradition in France], particularly George Brassens but also Jacques Brel. Brassens was his idol, his role model. They shared the same outlook, both being anarchists on the side of the underdog, interested in poetry and storytelling with a bit of vulgarity and irreverence in the humour. So he's this odd mixture of British and French traditions with a bit of Yorkshire in the melting pot."

Another inspiration sometimes identified in Thackray's songs was the work of Flanders and Swann, an English duo popular in the fifties and sixties who wrote and composed comedy songs. The biography cites their influence on Thackray's *The Bus Conductor Song* with the words: "At going slow we pride ourselves, we really do excel, But if you're sprinting after us we drive like merry . . ."

Perhaps his most famous song is *Lah-Di-Dah*, in which a man who's about to get married assures his bride-to-be that he's so much in love with her he will try to be nice to her dreadful family. It is still a popular watch on YouTube.

Towards the end of his songwriting career in the late 1970s he penned another song considered one of his best, and which inspired the biography's title, *Beware of*

the Bull. "His songs were getting more sophisticated by then," says Thompson. "But then he almost stopped writing. There was very little after that."

What happened to Thackray? After his TV career had peaked he hit the folk club and small venue circuit, and although he felt more comfortable performing to small audiences it meant he was out on the road almost constantly. In the book Thompson quotes from Thackray's gig diary, which, he says, gives a flavour of what it was like to "slog your guts out round the country four or five days a week".

Around this time, he hired a stand-up bass player, Alan Williams, to accompany him, and Thompson suggests a factor in the decision may have been to counteract the loneliness of solo performances. In the book the folk singer and songwriter Ralph McTell is quoted as saying that touring on your own can be a very dark place at times.

Thackray's popularity declined in the late 1980s, and with still smaller and more irregular audiences he could no longer afford the luxury of a bassist. An increasing drink problem was one outcome, and now living in the small Welsh town of Monmouth, his marriage collapsed in the early 1990s, forcing him to move into a flat above a greengrocers.

Around the same time he was dumped by his booking agents, Acorn Entertainments. This slow decline led to severe financial problems, and an accident in 1999 left him with two broken wrists. He would never play guitar in public again. He died of a heart attack on Christmas Eve 2002 at the age of 64.



COMIN' AROUND AGAIN

Jake Thackray's aversion to the spotlight is not the only example among English folk musicians.

Despite three classic albums to his name before his suicide at age 28, Nick Drake (pictured above) was under-appreciated in his lifetime because of his dislike of playing live.

According to eyewitnesses, his live shows were torturous, compounded by his shyness and his disapproval of crowds talking. It didn't help that many songs had a different guitar tuning, which meant long intermissions between each.

Leicestershire-born Davey Graham became a cult figure with his "folk baroque" style of complex fingerpicking and ornate North African influences. But he remained little more than a musician's musician.

Graham became, in his words, "a casualty of too much self-indulgence". This was a polite way of describing his heroin addiction, which he claimed to have sought out in homage to his jazz heroes. Whether because of his substance abuse or another reason, he stopped performing. Graham's seminal piece *Anji* became a hit in the hands of one of his devotees, Bert Jansch. He died in 2008, after a latter-day revival in the mid-2000s.

Another reluctant performer who experienced a renaissance is Vashti Bunyan, whose *Just Another Diamond Day* is now a rare and much sought after album, having performed poorly on its first release in 1970 and prompting its creator to ditch her musical career. Some 30 years later it was re-released, thanks to artists such as Devendra Barnhart and Joanna Newsom championing her music and her delicate style, and she finally enjoyed success.

Alexander Garvey Holbrook

Thompson, a guitarist, and his co-author, John Watterston, a stand-up bass player, now keep Thackray's songs alive by performing them around the country.

"We often find that Jake played these places too," Thompson says. "There is very much an appetite for his work, and I love that so many younger people are coming to the gigs."

"Jake may have gone but his songs haven't. I think many of them are timeless and works of genius, things which should be part of our cultural heritage." ■

Beware of the Bull – The Enigmatic Genius of Jake Thackray by Paul Thompson and John Patterson is out now (Scratching Shed Publishing)

This should be front page news

**Almost 30,000 young
people are facing
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**Young people like Simon are
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The odds are stacked against young people like Simon. Leaving the care system, Simon found himself homeless and alone in an adult world. He could barely scrape together enough money to survive and would often go to sleep hungry. With support from Centrepont, Simon has since made strides to independence, but the cost-of-living crisis is making even the smallest steps feel near impossible for him and thousands of other young people. So will you help a young person at breaking point find their way forward? Sponsor a room at Centrepont, and you'll give a young person safety, stability, and life-changing support.

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*Based on Centrepont's estimate on the number of young people presenting as homeless to a local authority in England from October - December 2022, using Centrepont's Databank data from 2017-2022. Simon's story is based on the real experiences of young people at Centrepont. We change names and use models to protect identities.



Your donation will go towards funding Centrepont's vital work all year round with young people, providing accommodation and support. © Centrepont 2022. Centrepont Soho, operating as Centrepont, is a charity registered with the Charity Commission of England and Wales under number 292411 whose registered office is at Central House, 25 Camperdown Street, London, E1 8DZ and a company limited by guarantee registered in England and Wales under number 01929421.



RB2A



Manchester

Greater Manchester and Liverpool metro mayors Andy Burnham and Steve Rotherham are going head to head in a **DJ battle**, with proceeds and bar sales going to the Greater Manchester Mayor's Charity for A Bed Every Night, providing shelter and support to homeless people.
 2 Dec, Archive, Mayfield Depot (depotmayfield.com)



London indie band **Sea Girls** are coming to the North (also playing Manchester and Liverpool) on their UK tour, with support from Lauren Hibberd, following the release of their second studio album, *Homesick*, which reached number three in the UK album charts.
 28 Nov, University Union Asylum (hullunion.com)



Sheffield

Sheffield Cathedral, home of *Big Issue North's* Sheffield office, is opening its doors for its annual **Christmas Tree Festival**, in which local organisations display their festive efforts. Visitors can vote on their favourite tree, with the winning organisation receiving a cash prize.
 29 Nov-2 Jan, Sheffield Cathedral (sheffieldcathedral.org)



Sale

The night before Christmas, Ebenezer Scrooge feels little in the way of seasonal spirit... Olivier Award winner Guy Masterson presents Charles Dickens' classic festive tale **A Christmas Carol**, bringing to life multiple characters in an adaptation by Nick Hennegan, featuring original music by Robb Williams.
 2 Dec, Waterside Arts Centre (watersidearts.org)



Bridlington

Former Housemartins frontman **Paul Heaton** and **The Beautiful South** vocalist **Jacqui Abbott** are joining forces for a UK tour (also visiting Blackpool, Sheffield and Manchester) following the release of their collaborative album **N.K-Pop**. Singer-songwriter and activist Billy Bragg will join them at every show.
 1 Dec, Bridlington Spa Centre (bridspa.com)



Liverpool

Ma Boyle's Alehouse and Eatery and Parrjazz have unveiled this year's final run of free **Jazz Saturdays**, featuring favourites Baiana and The Manouchetones, a debut from Sandcastles and a special guest appearance from Rob Stringer (pictured) on Christmas Eve.
 Saturdays from 26 Nov, Ma Boyle's (maboyles.co.uk)



Leeds

When pop-rock band **Scouting for Girls** released their self-titled debut album in 2007, it reached number one in the UK albums chart. Fifteen years and five more albums on, they are touring the UK (also playing Liverpool and Manchester) with their greatest hits.
 3 Dec, O2 Academy (academymusicgroup.com)



Blackpool

To celebrate pantomime season, Blackpool Libraries is hosting a **panto family workshop**, with a panto-themed story time followed by an opportunity for participants to make their own puppets with staff from entertainment museum Showtown, learning crafting skills in a fun and festive environment.
 3 Dec, Mereside Library (showtownblackpool.co.uk)

TELEVISION



AGATHA CHRISTIE: LUCY WORSLEY ON THE MYSTERY QUEEN

BBC Two, Friday 25 November 9pm

If you want to tell a compelling story about someone, hire a historian. That's the thinking behind this three-part exploration of the life of Agatha Christie, the author who has shifted more books than anyone in the world, if you don't count Shakespeare and the *Bible*.

Perhaps it's because her work is still being adapted, her mysteries still fresh and able to confound readers and film and TV audiences alike, that it feels a little weird to consider her worthy of a "history" programme. This isn't one of the long-dead Tudor figures that Worsley usually covers on telly. Indeed, the relative recency of Christie's life is brought home when the very first person she speaks to is her subject's great-grandson. You definitely can't do that with Henry VIII.

As with all of Worsley's shows, this is a spirited and compelling jaunt through time. She's a natural storyteller, which makes her perfect to detail the life of one of our greatest authors. It's also why she has more in mind than simply running through the chronological events that shaped Christie. She dips into a little psychology, recounting a recurring nightmare of a spectral "Gun Man" who terrified the young Christie and influenced her very first stories.

Worsley also helps us reconsider Christie's life and work against the larger backdrop of a changing Britain too. Born in the Victorian era in 1890, and passing away in 1976, Christie was one of a generation that saw Britain evolve more than any other. One of Worsley's most compelling threads is the idea that Agatha bucked the system in her real life and used her stories to rather scandalously suggest that behind the well-manicured stately homes of Edwardian society lurked darker impulses, infidelity, blackmail and, of course, plenty of murders. At a time when the order of such things was rigidly enforced, Christie took great delight in thrilling her readers with colonels, vicars, lords and industrialists who were all just one pistol in the drawing room away from criminality.

Much like Dickens, there's a cultural tendency to freeze an author's work in place, to abstract it into an inert time capsule for nostalgic comfort, rather than consider their words in the context of their era. By showing us what Christie was like as a person, Worsley helps remind us just why her books remain so vital and popular.

DAN WHITEHEAD

GAMES



GOAT SIMULATOR 3 (PlayStation, Xbox, PC)

POKEMON VIOLET & SCARLET (Switch)

THE DARK PICTURES: THE DEVIL IN ME (PlayStation, Xbox, PC)

Goat Simulator 3 is a game that sets out its stall quite plainly even before you begin to play. The title itself is a joke. There was no *Goat Simulator 2* – this is the first sequel to the game that came out in 2014. That flippant approach will be familiar to anyone who played the first game, which was announced as an April Fool gag by Swedish studio Coffee Stain Games until the positive response convinced them to make it for real.

For anyone new to the "franchise", such as it is, the premise is simple: you are a goat and must wreak havoc in a series of sandbox environments. You can smash things with your head, grab them with your elongated sticky tongue, or prance and bounce on stuff until it breaks. That's pretty much all you need to know. The rest is discovered as you play, and your chaotic mucking about quickly reveals bonus objectives, quirky easter eggs and unlikely challenges.

The game now boasts multiplayer for up to four people, so you can form an anarchic mini-herd with your friends or enjoy optional activities like "hoofball". Your goat can also now be customised with dozens of costume items, many of which offer offbeat abilities ranging from fun but obvious benefits such as flight, to very specific such as firing a Captain America-style shield which ricochets around the scenery, demolishing all in its path.

There's also more longevity this time, since the first game kept its amusements short and sweet. You now have a goat castle, which can be decorated, and as you beat challenges the chains blocking a sinister door are removed one by one, until you reveal... well, as strange as it may sound, this is a game where spoilers are best avoided. The pleasure comes from discovering each ludicrous punchline for yourself.

Also out this week are the new twin **Pokemon** games – *Violet* and *Scarlet* – which offer an open 3D world, a whole new menagerie of creatures and the ability to evolve them into super-powered crystalline forms. And if that sounds too whimsical, there's always **The Devil In Me**, the latest in the episodic interactive horror story series. In this one, you'll control a disposable documentary crew investigating a bloodcurdling "murder castle" hotel. Yikes.

DAN WHITEHEAD

MUSIC



WIZKID

More Love, Less Ego (Starboy/RCA)



Back in 2016, Wizkid spent 15 weeks at the top of the UK singles chart when he guested on Drake's ubiquitous hit single *One Dance*. Since then, the Nigerian artist, real name Ayodeji Ibrahim Balogun, has cemented his status as afrobeat's (an upbeat hybrid of dancehall, pop, hip-hop and R&B) biggest global star, selling out three nights at London's 20,000-capacity O2 arena, racking up billions of streams and recruiting A-listers like Justin Bieber, Skepta and Burna Boy to feature on his own songs.

More Love, Less Ego, the 32 year old's follow-up to 2020's *Made In Lagos*, builds on his success with another smooth collection of genre-blending songs about romance, passion and companionship.

Like its predecessor, the album fuses bouncing party tracks with melodious mid-tempo grooves, underpinned by skittering beats, luminescent synths and jazzy flourishes, topped by Balogun's seductive soft warble.

Pristine production finishes off a nourishing musical meal, further heightened by guest appearances from Arya Starr, Naira Marley, Don Toliver and Caribbean superstars Skillibeng and Shenseea. The latter's turn on *Slip N Slide* is a filthy slow-paced highlight.

Another standout moment comes in the bright form of *Plenty Loving*, infused by amapiano, the currently prevalent derivation of South African house music characterised by shuffling percussion, high-pitched piano melodies and chant-like vocals.

RICHARD SMIRKE

BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN

Only The Strong Survive
(Columbia)



On Springsteen's second covers set the 73 year old pays homage to his favourite soul songs from the 1960s and 1970s, delivered with characteristic sweaty vigour. Veteran soul great Sam Moore guests on *Soul Days* and a stirring *I Forgot To Be Your Lover*, the latter underpinned by warm brass and swooning orchestration. A note-perfect version of northern soul classic *Do I Love You (Indeed I Do)*, originally sung by Frank Wilson, sits alongside lesser-known cuts like William Bell's *Any Other Way* and The Commodores' *Nightshift*. Faithful production by Ron Aniello gives the source material room to breathe.

LOUIS TOMLINSON

Faith In The Future
(78/BMG)



"I lived a lot of my life already/But I gotta get through the rest," sings former One Directioner and teenage superstar Louis Tomlinson on his patchy second LP. Much like his 2020 debut, *Faith In The Future* is rooted in formulaic indie rock and over-earnest balladry, clearly written with a live audience in mind. A lot of it is instantly forgettable, although the odd catchy number does cut through. A strutting *Written All Over Your Face* is built on a snappy guitar rhythm and the 30 year old from Doncaster strikes a nice balance between anthemic synth-pop and *Wonderwall*-lite acoustic strumalong on *The Greatest*.

JANICE BURNS

& JON DORAN
No More The Green Hills
(Self-released)



Meeting at Newcastle University, Anglo-Scottish duo Janice Burns and Jon Doran have quietly made a name for themselves in the folk world through their unhurried arrangements and crystal-clear harmonies. Their debut album demonstrates their natural chemistry over 11 traditional tunes that veer from sombre Irish ballads to campfire singalongs, played with panache via a rootsy mix of mandolin, acoustic guitar, fiddle, harmonium and double bass. A billowing take on *The Corncrake*, evocatively sung by Burns, and foreboding *Four Loom Weaver* embody the record's bittersweet air.

INDIE CINEMA



Comedy drama *Three Day Millionaire* (28 November, Vue Cinema, Hull and other dates and venues) is set and filmed in and around Grimsby, and written by Hull-born Paul Stephenson. After weeks at sea working on the town's last remaining trawler, three friends return home to enjoy a three-day binge before heading out again. But after blowing most of their wages they discover their livelihoods are under threat since the trawler company is due to shut its doors. Teaming up with some friends, the three cash-strapped and desperate lads attempt the heist of a lifetime to preserve the docks. This showing of the film is organised by Hull Independent Cinema (hullindependentcinema.com) and will be followed by a Q&A session with cast and crew.

A short season of films showing under the banner Pre-Code Hollywood (from 26 Nov, Home, Manchester) looks at the movies that came out before Hollywood censors decided to enforce rules on scenes of sexuality, violence, and drugs. This includes the 1932 film *Red-Headed Woman* in which Jean Harlow plays Lil Andrews, a tough, wise-cracking woman whose desire for an opulent life leads her to breaks up couples and tempt wealthy men to attend to her desires.

On the Manor was a four-part documentary from 1987 focusing on the Sheffield housing estate, and to celebrate its 35th anniversary, Sheffield's Showroom Cinema and Yorkshire Film Archive are showing highlights from the series (1 Dec, showroomworkstation.org.uk). Filmed over six months against a backdrop of industrial closures, high unemployment, and a looming general election, the documentary was a fascinating snapshot of the community that lived on the troubled estate, which was under threat from a massive council house rebuilding scheme.

Yorkshire-based Reel Solutions (facebook.com/reel.solutions) offers one day film schools exploring various directors or specific films. It is focusing on the work of FW Murnau (3 Dec, Mechanic's Institute Library, Bradford) one of the key filmmakers of the silent cinema and director of *Nosferatu*, which is celebrating its 100th anniversary. The day will include a look at several of Murnau's films and include a full screening of *Der Letzte Mann*, in which a proud hotel doorman is shocked to find out that he has been demoted to washroom attendant and struggles to carry on with his life.

CHRISTIAN LISSEMAN



Fine and dandy

The sartorial concerns of men over the last 250 years have been charted in a new exhibition. **Antonia Charlesworth** talks to its curators, who say you don't have to look further than the streets of Manchester to find dandyism alive

“Manchester is full of dandies!” says Miles Lambert. “We all know when we see a well-dressed – perhaps a tad over-dressed – man, often self-assured, immaculately groomed and interestingly scented and posed. It’s all in the delivery.”

Lambert’s co-editor of the book *Dandy Style: 250 Years of British Men’s Fashion*, Shaun Cole, helps give the peacocks strutting the streets of Manchester some historical context.

“Traditionally a dandy has been a purveyor of a restrained men’s style with particular attention to detail.”

“The dandy takes any change in style and personalises it, perfects it, and presents himself to the world after a good deal of care and attention,” adds Lambert.

The pair have co-curated an eponymous exhibition at Manchester Art Gallery’s newly launched Fashion Gallery exploring how concepts such as elegance, uniformity and spectacle have evolved for men over the last two and a half centuries.

The exhibition highlights a range of examples from Manchester’s

collections and will be composed of two main sections – Tailored Dandy and Decorated Dandy – combining the historic with the contemporary, the provocative with the respectable.

Alongside never-before-seen pieces from the gallery’s collections and significant loans from other institutions and private lenders, the exhibition also features fine art depicting the dandy from Thomas Gainsborough, Thomas Lawrence, David Hockney and Peter James Field, and photography from David Bailey, Olivia Rose and Jason Evans. Designers highlighted in the collection include Tommy Nutter, Vivienne Westwood, Alexander McQueen and Oswald Boateng.

“For me the highlight of the exhibition is seeing historic and contemporary British menswear juxtaposed with each other and represented in historic painted and contemporary photographic portraits,” says Cole, an associate professor in fashion at Winchester School of Art who has written extensively on menswear and gay men’s fashion and style. “Having

suits worn by Gilbert and George, the tromp l’oeil printed jumpsuit by young designer Charles Jeffrey and the modern take on a men’s suit represented by Nicholas Daley’s tracksuit collaboration with Fred Perry are particularly significant.”

For Lambert, curator of costume at Manchester Art Gallery since 1985, being able to showcase pieces from the gallery’s own collection that he has worked with for over 35 years is the real feather in his cap.

“They have sometimes never been on view before and now they are having their moment,” he says. “The two marvellous smoking jackets from the 1880s, one with embroidered and one with hand-painted decoration, are so suggestive of Oscar Wilde’s fashion choice.

“The early 19th century woollen coats from the 1820s and 1830s are so immaculately tailored and perfectly figure-fitting, and the spitting image of coats worn by men in the portraits which are shown.

“The 18th-century banyan and the 1840s reversible gown show what the fashionable man would wear in a domestic context and relaxing at home. There are many other examples too.”

The evolution of men’s style charted in the exhibition, Cole says, goes from highly decorated luxurious fabrics to a more sombre, restrained palette. We see the development of the tailoring industry in Britain, from traditional bespoke Savile Row clothes to high-street tailors making it more accessible, and recent “rebellious” designs from the likes of Boateng.

Meanwhile, the development of casual dress is charted from the

Dandy Style: 250 Years of British Men’s Fashion is at Manchester Art Gallery until 1 May 2023. The book, edited by Shaun Cole and Miles Lambert, is available at the gallery shop both in person and online (manchesterartgallery.org)



Main image: the exhibition features both costumes and portraits.
Above: Thomas Carill Worsley of Platt by John Astley

18th century nobility's country style, through late 19th century sporting clothes to tracksuits and athleisure of the 20th and 21st centuries.

"But many of the preoccupations of style recur," points out Lambert. "In our chosen period, 1760-2022, there have been many moves from extravagance towards simplicity and plainness."

Individuality, he adds, can also be traced through the centuries. Comfort, casualness and a freedom from artificial restraint are crucial to the modern man, he says. "But it's a rare man who doesn't occasionally like to dress up, exhibiting a different aspect of his persona."

Cole agrees that while men have loosened up on one hand, they display restraint through their clothing on the other.

"The codes of men's style may still be about attention to detail but the ways in which that detail is manifested and put together now allows for a greater fluidity and flexibility in what is fashionable and stylish."

Dandyism was perfected by Oscar Wilde and Edward VIII but it is Beau Brummell (1778-1840) who is credited as the original. In a 2013 interview with *GQ*, American designer Tom Ford commented that the Regency figure still lives on in Britain.

"British men are peacocks. You see a lot more style on the streets here than you see anywhere else, on every level."

Do Cole and Lambert agree with his assessment that British men are sartorial leaders, in comparison to, say, men on the continent?

"There is a long tradition of particular street style in Britain," says Cole. "It can be seen in gangs of young men in the late 19th century and in the subcultures of the late 20th century, which originated on the streets of Britain."

"That we are such a multicultural country has particularly impacted on the ways in which cultures come together to produce a particularly innovative and varied British menswear style."

Lambert is unequivocal.

"Tom Ford is one of the most respected designers of recent times. He is clear that British men often exhibit innate fashion sense. This is why Paris fashion houses so often appoint British head designers, like Alexander McQueen and John Galiano."

Clothing, whether we like it or not, says Cole, reveals something about our identity. "It is one of the first things people see about us and begin to make assumptions and judgements from. How men style themselves can be used to reveal or hide particular aspects about who they are, who they want to be, who they aspire to be and how they want other people to see them."

"But it can also be a reflection of collective identity, showing us how men fit within their peer groups, as well as wider society and culture."

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Father of lies and laughs

Melvin Burgess tells Christian Lisseman why he's turned the Norse cheek

Melvin Burgess, author of award-winning young adult novel *Junk*, delves into Norse mythology for his debut adult novel *Loki*. Told from the trickster god's less than reliable point of view, this is a brilliantly original take on the mischievous mythological figure, detailing his life, many adventures and numerous romantic entanglements. Starting with his fiery birth in the hollow of a tree trunk, the book charts Loki's life in Asgard and beyond, retelling many Norse myths.

Tell us about Loki and why you wrote about him.

I think we all know someone like Loki. He's fun – there's no better company anywhere. He makes you laugh, he entertains you. Although he's likeable in so many ways, you know in your heart that he's deeply untrustworthy, but he's paid you so much attention and you've had so much fun together you like to think that his relationship with you is different. You're mates! He's got your back. He's a liar, you know that, but somehow you think he's your liar. He's clever, talks a lot about loyalty and decency and about how important you are to him, so when you turn round one day and found he's gone with your bank card in his pocket, or dropped you for someone else and just made a huge fool of you in public, you're both surprised and unsurprised at the same time.

As I say, we all know someone like that – they're all around us. But Loki is the chief of them all, the archetype – the actual god of mischief, father of lies and laughs. Despite everything, all his antics, his treachery, his deceit, his faithlessness, somewhere along the line he utters truths that no one else does. A trickster himself, he sees through all other tricks, all other lies. He can change your life, offer you opportunities that no one else can, make you see the world in a different, clearer way. I'm a great lover of mythology and Loki is my favourite character out of them all. I did think about writing about him, but in the end, he took over the story himself. Once his voice came, the book took off my hand. It was one of the best writing experiences I've had.

What was the research process for this book like?

This was something where I'd done most of the research long before. When I was a boy, my dad used to work for Oxford University Press and he used to bring me home books of folk tales, myths and legends. My favourite by a long way was *Tales of the Norse Gods and Heroes*, by Barbara Leonie Picard. I loved that book, particularly the stories of the gods, and of course particularly the stories involving Loki. I knew them pretty well off by heart already. Also, some years ago, I wrote two books based on one of the Norse sagas, the Volsunga saga, called *Bloodtide* and *Bloodsong*, so I was already steeped in this mythology. I did go over the original sources as well – *the Younger Edda*, *the Elder Edda* and other bits and pieces. But most of the groundwork had already been done. I just had to let Loki tell the old tales from his point of view – which, unsurprisingly, turned out to be very different from the versions that were handed down to us from other sources.

How much does Loki's take on events like the creation of man and woman diverge from "traditional" myth?

Loki's view is that the stories that have come down to us are little more than propaganda, told to paint the



Loki as depicted in an 18th-century Icelandic manuscript. Photo: Creative Commons



warrior gods Thor and Tyr to the best advantage, and that he is being used as a scapegoat to take the blame for all the problems they caused. How much you believe is a matter for you to decide – but Loki does have a take on less political areas of mythology, and the creation of man and woman is one of them. The traditional view is that the first man and woman were created out of logs of wood that Odin found when he was out with his brothers, Villi and Ve, walking in Midgard, the Middle Earth, one day. Loki's version is less complimentary. It seems that the substance the gods used was not as attractive as wood, and that what the gods found that day was – how shall I put this? – the result of one of the giants visiting that part of the world being caught short.

In an interview with *Big Issue North*, Madeline Miller, who used Greek mythology as the basis for her first two novels about Achilles and Circe, said she thought myths are "containers to hold all of our big emotions, to give us a sense of catharsis for them". What can myths offer modern readers and writers today?

I've read Madeline Miller's work and I like it a lot. I like what she says about myths as well. They seem in many ways to provide a kind of baseline, a fundamental statement about all sorts of things that we think and feel. Emotions certainly, but I think it goes deeper than that. For me, stories can be something to do with the roots of meaning. The universe itself has no meaning in it – we are the makers of meaning, both emotional and intellectual. So I think that myths are expressions of the basis of meaning. Carl Jung called them and the characters in them archetypes, and although I'm



Loki by Melvin Burgess is published by Coronet

not sure that that's entirely true, I do think that they lie close to the roots from which meaning springs. It's for this reason that we keep going back to them, reinterpreting and making them work for our own times. A good story – and a good storyteller – taps into the places where meaning itself begins.

Loki is keen to establish a new “Golden Age... if only the right people could get their hands on the wheels of power”. What does this novel have to say about the politics of power and those who are in charge?

Basically it's reminding us that people who are attracted to power are very often greedy, selfish shitheads who are only interested in themselves and in spreading their own power. All too often they make the stories and myths – the narratives, as modern parlance has it – that govern our lives; and the quality of those lives is not usually not very high up their lists of priorities. We see them all around us at the moment, self-righteously ruining our lives and the world we live in for their own satisfaction, all the time proclaiming that they're doing it for our good. What bullshit it is.

Loki has become a well-known figure in popular culture thanks to the Marvel Cinematic Universe. How much did you write into or against the way this character has been represented on screen in recent times?

I knew the Norse myths long before Marvel came along. I enjoy Marvel – it's fun, and of course these stories and characters belong to us all and are available for anyone to interpret as they wish. Having said that, the Marvel versions of Loki and co don't tickle me up much – the originals are much wilder and get their teeth far deeper into the roots of things, for me, anyway.

You're known for your young adult novels. What compelled you to write for an adult readership?

For me, YA is not so much about writing “for” young adults as writing about being that age. It's a very exciting period of life to write about, because it's a period of change – the biggest change of all, from child to adult. It's all about becoming. But I've written many books about that subject now, and I just feel there's nothing much more for me to say. And when you run out of things to say, what's the point in saying it? I'd never say never, but for now I'm more interested in writing books for an older readership.

Are there any other mythological figures that you'd like to explore in fiction? And what are you working on next?

I have a crazy dream about working my way through the Norse pantheon and writing in the voice of each god and goddess. In reality, that's not going to happen. Not many of them have such complete stories around them as Loki does. Most exist in only a few separate tales, and the goddesses in particular are badly served, only really coming down to us in dribs and drabs. It seems that a great deal has been lost over the ages, which is very sad. I don't really see the point of making the whole thing up from scratch.

But one or two do have enough. At the moment I'm working on the story of Volundr, the smith god. He exists in the old stories sometimes as a man, sometimes as a god, so clearly he's a case of a man who turned into a god – that's interesting. Change is always a thing I love to write about. That's well under way now. Volundr is interesting, but the golden egg in the nest of Norse myth is definitely Odin. I've not got stuck into that yet, but I think I'm beginning to see a way of doing it. Now, there's a challenge!

OFF THE SHELF TRAVELLING THROUGH FICTION ARUN SOOD



There are many ways to travel, especially in fiction. Travelling could mean the narrative account of a place, involve great leaps forward and back in time, or even be void of all movement at all, whereby the voyage is through the psyche of a single character as they sit at a breakfast table eating eggy bread.

My novel *New Skin for the Old Ceremony* travels in many ways. On one hand, it draws on conventional travel accounts, as four motley friends traverse the hills of northern India on motorcycles, marvelling at landscapes amidst mishaps, fights, crashes and moments of revelatory bliss. Yet it is also about the passage of time, and how mentally revisiting the past can be a difficult journey. The characters simultaneously pine for the irretrievable past, but also hold grave concerns about who they once were. These tensions come to a head after a series of events lead them to reunite 14 years after their travels in India, as they try to reconcile with themselves and each other on another road trip up the Isle of Skye.

For the moments in which my characters journey into their past selves, Fernando Pessoa's posthumously published *The Book of Disquiet* (Penguin Classics) was a consistent inspiration. It is a fragmentary account of an individual coming to terms with the kaleidoscopic facets of their own existence over time.

As my novel hinges on a temporal slit between two different periods, Virginia Woolf's *To The Lighthouse* (Collins Classics) was also on my mind. I am mesmerised by her treatment of time and memory, and she gives licence to the idea that narrative can be driven by internal imaginings as well as external events.

Although I wasn't reading Jack Kerouac's *On The Road* (Penguin Classics) whilst writing, its legacy seemed to pervade my thinking. The youthful wanderlust, music, poetry, and countercultural angst are certainly something all four of my characters relate to in their youth, only to see their rebellious spirits wane. Rather than sex, drugs, and enlightenment, they seem happier to indulge in small talk around a campfire, which turns out to be more illuminating to them than the grander gestures of soul-searching they did in their youth.



New Skin for the Old Ceremony: A Kirtan by Arun Sood is out now, published by 404 Ink



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LETTER TO MY YOUNGER SELF

I had no idea what I wanted to do when I was 16. I went to a girls' boarding school and we weren't encouraged to be ambitious or get a job. We were just left to our own devices, and when you're young without any direction it's very difficult.

I was an optimistic, happy-go-lucky girl. I think that's part of my DNA. All my brothers and sisters are very similar. It was difficult growing up with my mother and my stepfather, who we didn't like, and they were having a tough time together, so we as children were like a little gang. We knew life had to be better than what we were going through. I think that childhood, what I had to go through, gave me the belief that there's always something sunny on the other side.

I don't know why I didn't think about my future. There was a thought then that girls should be brought up to find a nice husband, then stay home to look after the children. I looked at my mother's life and I knew I didn't want to do that, so I was always a bit rebellious. Whatever my stepfather's views were, I disagreed with them. He was too, too conservative.

When I started modelling, every day was a huge adventure. [She began modelling for magazines like *Vogue* and *Vanity Fair*, posing for photographers like David Bailey and Terence Donovan, when she was 18.] I was full of excitement. I would take my portfolio to photographers' studios to see if they liked my photos and find out whether they could use me for a job. It wasn't like working in an office, where everything would be the same every day.

For a while it felt perfect, but then I started to want something more challenging, so I thought, right, I'll give up modelling and do something else once I've been on the cover of *Vogue*. Once I've done that I can go off and learn how to do something else. In the meantime, I saved up enough money to buy a camera. When I was working I started asking photographers for their advice on how to take photographs, what I should look for, how to set the camera up. So I was learning something when I was working.

I remember the day I found out I'd got the UK *Vogue* cover, my agent



Shutterstock

PATTIE BOYD
Model and
photographer,
aged 78

phoned to tell me. I was so excited. I could hardly sleep the night before and I didn't eat anything that day either. I was always worried about looking fat. You see, when you have a photograph taken, it always adds a couple of pounds. But the photo was just a big close-up of my face. In those days there were no make-up artists, so I did my own. Luckily, on the day I didn't have any spots or anything naughty coming up on my face. It looked lovely. It looked gorgeous.

George [Harrison, whom she married when she was 22] and I were very young when we met. I was 19 or 20 and he was a year older than me. In a way it was wonderful because we were growing up together – we still had so much to learn. London was exploding with creativity and in the fashion world we had all these wonderful designers appear, like Mary Quant and Ossie Clark, and great painters like David Hockney. And spirituality came into our lives as well. George discovered this wonderful Indian instrument that he was fascinated by, and that took us to India where we met Ravi Shankar. I loved him. He was the most generous man and so beautiful and intelligent and articulate.

In my twenties I was in that lovely heady atmosphere of being with The Beatles and everything was fabulous. We were meeting gorgeous people and fabulous musicians and I thought life would always be living in that big bubble – one party, one nightclub after another. I thought oh, this will be my life. This is it forever. [When I met Eric Clapton] I probably thought, oh great, he loves me so much. Why not get married? [After separating from Harrison she entered a turbulent marriage to Clapton, whom she divorced, citing his alcoholism and affairs.]

If I could have one last conversation with anyone, it would be with George. He died in 2001 and every so often in my life something will happen and I'll think, George is the only one I can talk to about this. George will know the answer to this. We were such good friends and only he would understand so much of what I'm thinking about or remembering, because we experienced such a thick amount of life together.

Reproduced from The Big Issue UK
INTERVIEW: JANE GRAHAM

Pattie Boyd: My Life in Pictures is out now (Reel Art Press, £39.95)

CROSSWORD AND SUDOKU SOLUTIONS

Hard

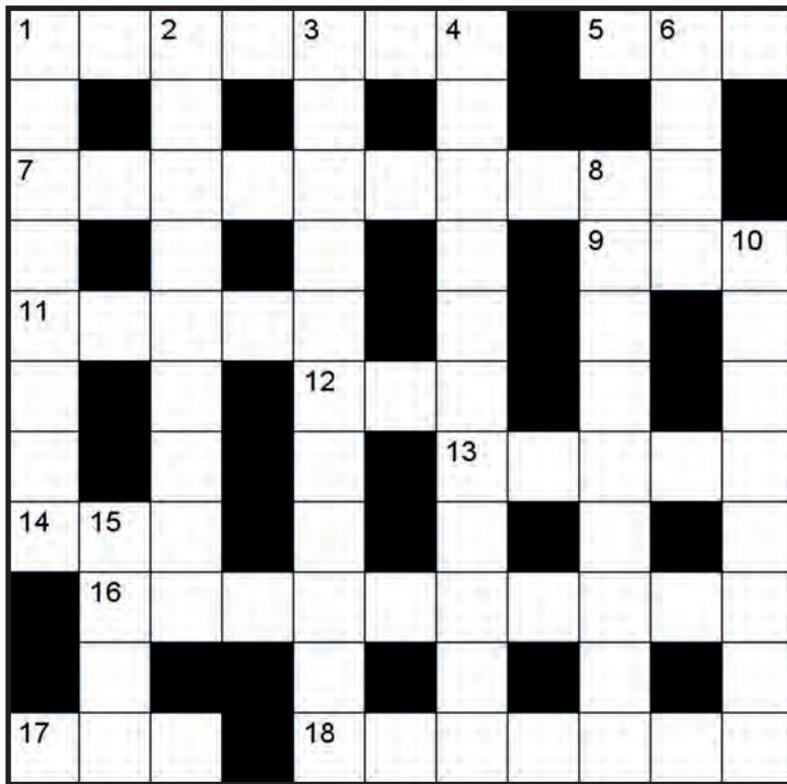
6	4	2	7	5	8	1	9	3
7	1	5	6	3	9	2	8	4
9	8	3	1	4	2	6	5	7
4	5	8	2	6	7	3	1	9
2	7	9	5	1	3	8	4	6
3	6	1	9	8	4	5	7	2
1	9	7	3	2	5	4	6	8
8	3	6	4	7	1	9	2	5

Easy

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

- DOWN:**
- 1. Walkover
 - 2. New Yorker
 - 3. Out of the ark
 - 4. Song Dynasty
 - 6. Lose
 - 8. Indigence
 - 10. Write out
 - 15. Oboe
- ACROSS:**
- 1. Windows, 5. Ill
 - 7. Lawn tennis
 - 9. New, 11. On off
 - 12. Tay, 13. Night
 - 14. Roe
 - 16. Breaks into
 - 17. Vet
 - 18. Key West

CROSSWORD 1459



SUPPLIED BY PANTHES

CRYPTIC CLUES: ACROSS

1. Relicts name inserted in computer software (7)
5. Taking life force from chilli could make you sick (3)
7. Rule is around three numbers played at Wimbledon (4,6)
9. Modern overcrowded city returning (3)
11. Singular example of half hearted switch action (2,3)
12. Scottish flower found in West Ayrshire (3)
13. Take thing apart in the dark (5)
14. Deer or tier, by the sound of it (3)
16. Divides in half, say, like a burglar does? (6,4)
17. Five go to science fiction film to see surgeon (3)
18. Sky tweet nearly breaking on island south of Miami (3,4)

CRYPTIC CLUES: DOWN

1. Easy victory in battle, Eros to take king (8)
2. Inhabitant of big apple is 9 to bee with head change (3,6)
3. Not quite antediluvian (3,2,3,3)
4. Air on empty day, to horrible Chinese emperor's time (4,7)
6. In Jello series, fail to win (4)
8. Wanting means at home, turn over garden, fenced inside (9)
10. Sounds like all left will put pen to paper (5,3)
15. Instrument of bad smell in dictionary (4)

QUICK CLUES: ACROSS

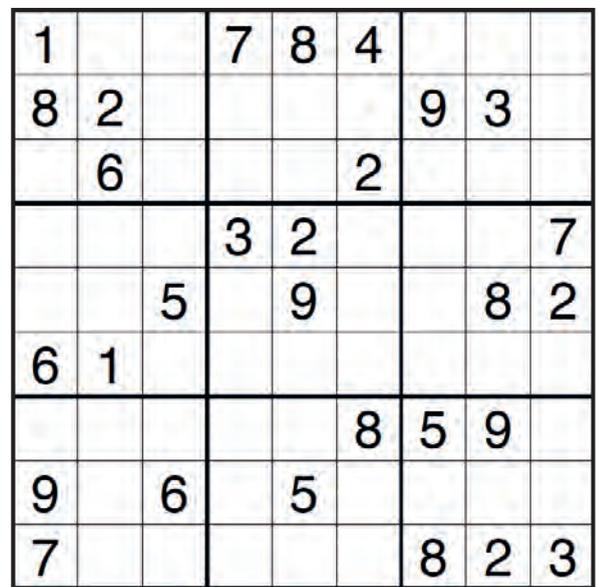
1. Lights (7)
5. Not well (3)
7. Game played with racquets (4,6)
9. Fresh (3)
11. Like an unstable relationship (2,3)
12. Northern river (3)
13. Opposite of day (5)
14. Caviar, say (3)
16. Enters illegally (6,4)
17. Animal doctor (3)
18. Most southern city in US (3,4)

QUICK CLUES: DOWN

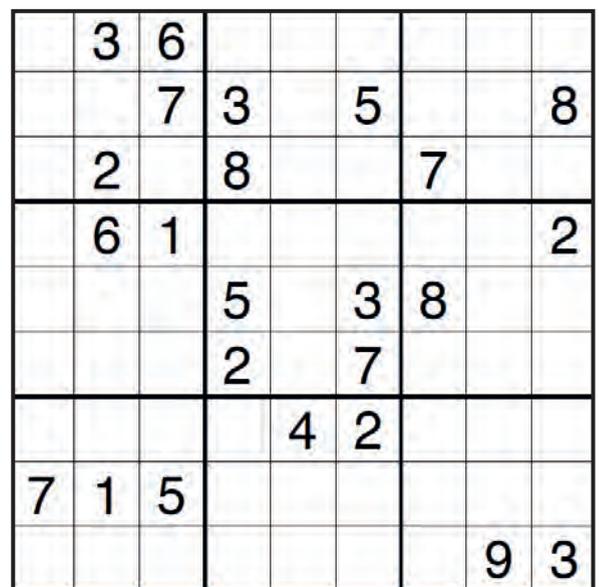
1. Whitewash? (8)
2. American literary magazine (3,6)
3. Sadly dated (3,2,3,3)
4. Period in Chinese history starting in 960 AD (4,7)
6. Mislaid (4)
8. Impecuniosity (9)
10. Copy by hand (5,3)
15. Wind instrument (4)

SOLUTIONS ON PAGE 29

SUDOKU EASY



SUDOKU HARD



Complete the Sudoku puzzle so that each and every row, column and region contains the numbers one to nine once.

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News from the Intrepid Wool Grower

Cats Rule

According to professionals at UCL (ucl.ac.uk), there is evidence at an archeological site dating back 9,500 years, of the domestication of cats. Other sources cite a similar date. I was quite surprised by this, given that it is generally thought that man's relationship with dogs is known to be a lot older.

I am not going to argue the toss. Does it actually matter since both species hold such important yet divergent places in our lives? What's done is done as they say. But the difference in the timeline of domestications might be explained by the remarkably dissimilar role these creatures originally played in the history of Mankind.

Our modern day relationship with cats is indeed complex, curious and, at times, utterly exasperating. Having lived with them all my life, I acknowledge that they have always been firmly in control. I have long accepted that I am around to see to their every need at their convenience.

Ignoring for a moment the feline put down metered out to me on a daily basis, their disdain and aloofness and their contrarian disregard for anything other than themselves, what is so awesome about cats is their elegance, beauty and lithe dexterity.

I am good company in my awe and for all those readers who have a similar appreciation for our feline masters, I share with you (presuming, of course, you haven't already beaten me to it), the work of surrealist, Richard Saunders. His website *The Topiary Cat* is well worth a visit, a joy guaranteed to raise your spirits, no matter the weather or the current state of the world. It's visual confirmation that yes, cats rule.

© Richard Saunders



Jessica



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