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TOUCH

Damien Hirst on the booze, the cocaine and how money spoilt his art



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**Waitrose**

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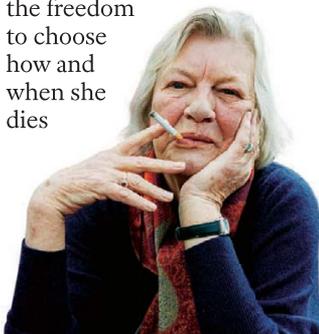
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# Waitrose

Real food allergies can be terrible — but fakers who nitpick over Christmas dinner are hard to stomach

# India Knight



**R**aymond Blanc got into trouble the other week for blasting people who have self-diagnosed food allergies. He said that up to 50 customers a night at his two-Michelin-starred restaurant in Oxfordshire claimed that they had issues with various foods. He said the situation was “horrifying”, and that naturally the kitchen had to take every claim at face value, regardless of their veracity.

But “we are a kitchen, not a hospital”, he said. “Of course, now, if you don’t have a food allergy, you’re nobody.” There is a vegetarian version of the £162 tasting menu at Blanc’s restaurant, but not a gluten-free, vegan or dairy-free option. This seems fair to me. After all, vegan restaurants don’t have a meat’n’dairy option. I have a close relative whose food allergies are such that they carry an EpiPen, and I’ve been there when we’ve had to call an ambulance because they have ingested a speck of a particular foodstuff by accident. So I get that food allergies are 100% real and 100% dangerous. You can’t muck about: if you’re a professional kitchen, you have to take every mention of allergy, or even intolerance, extremely seriously.

Ditto if you’re a non-professional person cooking Christmas dinner. If someone says, “I’m allergic to wheat,” you can’t raise an eyebrow and say: “Since when? Because you basically hoovered up a tray of cheese straws the last time you were here.” It’s not nice to put people on the spot in this accusatory way, so you just rejig the entire menu instead.

The problem is, you do so with gritted teeth, which isn’t a way to cook for people you love. Also, while obviously nobody resents accommodating a genuine allergy, it is disrespectful to people who could peg it if they ate a nut to claim that a personal preference is in fact a medical condition. Often you sense that the allergy is simply a way of swerving certain foods. People who are embarrassed saying “I’m on a low-carb diet” find it easier to claim “I’m gluten-intolerant”, which is sort of



true, in that eating stodgy gluten-based foods makes them fatter than they’d like, but also sort of untrue in that people who are *really* gluten-intolerant — coeliacs, for instance — usually have an autoimmune disorder, which is serious.

The fact is that restrictive diets are on the up. According to recent figures from the Vegan Society, veganism has risen by 350% in the past decade, with the bulk of the growth being among 15- to 34-year-olds. So are we all going to have to get used to cooking three different dinners? With the Christmas feast looming, now is the time to lay down some ground rules.

**1** If you don’t eat everything, say so the second you’re invited to someone’s house. Nobody minds provided they

have notice, and anyway vegetarians are the new normal. You may be fine with pushing your dinner around your plate and just eating the carrots, but your host will feel mortified. Don’t put them in that position.

**2** If your diet is very restrictive — “nothing from the nightshade family”, as someone once instructed me, “but Bill’s easy: he only eats white food” — then consider either bringing food with you (easily the most socially gracious option) or giving your host a clear example of a suitable dish — “I would be happy with a big plate of sprouts and chestnuts,” for instance. Don’t make your hosts have to google anything about your own particular regime. It is interesting only to you.

**3** If you’ve changed the way you eat this year, and you’re heading home for Christmas, don’t give your parents a long list of what they “should” cook for you. Turn up with an alternative meal you’ve cooked yourself. You never know, you might make a convert.

**4** If you’re the bemused parent, don’t start on the whole “that’s not a real allergy” or “you’ll get brittle bones” thing. Time for a food truce ■  
*@indiaknight*

## INDIA LOVES

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I've succumbed to the inevitable — I've started talking like an American. And I gotta tell y'all, it's super-annoying

# Josh Glancy

## in New York



**I**t happens subtly at first, usually for the sake of convenience. You ask where the bathroom is, because you're desperate for the loo. You order eggplant in a restaurant, because explaining what an aubergine is ends up making you look obscene. Then, before you know it, y'all are having a swell time out in the boonies and friends from home are berating you for sounding like an extra in *Gilmore Girls*.

The longer you spend in America, the more it seeps into your personality. I've recently started sending cold food back in restaurants when, just a year ago, I would have spooned down a lukewarm risotto in resentful silence. I talk to actual strangers in lifts or airport bars. I even asked for a tweak to a haircut recently, shorter at the back please, as opposed to just nodding in mute acceptance of my fate.

It's in language, though, where the transformation is most apparent, and alarming. Good parties are now "lit" and good salads are made with "arugula". Everything is prefixed with "super": super-hot, super-long, super-annoying. Cordial has become "syrup" and being "pissed" means being cross instead of in your cups.

At first I resisted this creeping Americanisation, behaving with the kind of cultural imperiousness that only an Englishman abroad can truly master. But after a while you realise that waddling round Manhattan tweedily explaining the merits of received pronunciation isn't a great long-term look. And anyway, once you get into a relationship, the barriers of linguistic defiance give way almost immediately. It was no less a traveller than Sir Harry Flashman who pointed out that the best place to learn a new language is in the arms of a local.

I'm still maintaining the odd atoll of resistance. I can't stand the word "smart", which makes me feel like I'm in a Silicon Valley start-up pitch. I still use "clever" instead, which to me evokes a don puffing on his pipe and reciting Chaucer from memory.

I am also still firmly committed to the near-constant use of "quite"



as a modifier, which baffles all Americans, for whom ambiguity remains a mystery. When a British person says "that was quite good" they are potentially implying all manner of things. It could mean absolutely terrible (usually high-pitched), magnificent (low-pitched), or genuinely just quite good (flat). It all depends on your tone.

The truth is, I'm now consciously choosing to adopt American diction. The hardest thing about moving country is feeling slow and clumsy in your every interaction. As the writer Lauren Collins puts it in her recent memoir, *When in French*: "I felt as though the instruction manual to living in Switzerland had been written in invisible ink."

### JOSH SAYS

**Read** *The River of Consciousness* by Oliver Sacks (Picador). A last glimpse into one of the best minds of our age

**Watch** *The Marvelous Mrs Maisel* (Amazon). Easily the best new show I've seen this year

That's true even when you all ostensibly speak English, because the nuances are so important. Properly crafted dialect is the map that gives your new home meaning. It allows you to be manipulative, delicate or insightful. You can be funny in a foreign language, but you can't be witty. You can be kind, but you can't master real empathy.

I also realised that my fetishisation of RP was basically snobbery. Recent studies have revealed that modern American is closer to how the 17th-century English would have spoken. While we've spent the intervening centuries arguing with Europe and blundering around our empire, America has existed in a more splendid isolation, concentrating mostly on developing the rules of baseball, arguably the more elaborate task.

I'll probably regret all this when I come home and sound like a transatlantic wally who doesn't know his courgette from his zucchini. But for the moment, learning American English is helping turn a strange land into a familiar one. And that's quite good ■  
*@joshglancy*

“I created this market and it was just buying and selling — no enjoyment of the art”

## Damien Hirst

*Bad boy of Brit Art*

THE  
MAGAZINE  
INTERVIEW  
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NIKKHAH



**D**amien Hirst is remarkably buoyant for an artist whose latest show was described as “the shipwreck of his career”. Breezing into his very own museum, Newport Street Gallery in Vauxhall, south London, the man famous for making a fortune from pickled sharks is as colourful as one of his spot paintings. A sporty yellow jacket over bright red-and-blue cashmere: it’s a punchy, hipster look for a 52-year-old.

Treasures from the Wreck of the Unbelievable, Hirst’s vast exhibit of 189 works spread over two of Venice’s grandest galleries, has just closed.

Ten years and about £50m of Hirst’s own money in the making, the exhibition invited prospective collectors to buy into the most expensive “fake news” show ever staged. Given the term hadn’t even been coined when he came up with the concept, it was remarkably prescient. That ability to read the future is perhaps his superpower; long before the hedge-funders piled into art as the ultimate commodity, Hirst was playing around with the links between art and money. It was almost to prove his undoing.

These latest works were “said to derive” from the lost treasures of Cif Amotan II, an imaginary 2nd-century freed slave, who amassed a dazzling hoard of sculptures and religious relics that were lost at sea and “discovered” off the east African coast in 2008. Visitors were asked to suspend their disbelief about the origins of the coral-encrusted marbles, bronzes and gold treasures “pulled from the sea” by Hirst’s personal shipwreck-recovery team. His private joke was barely disguised; Cif Amotan II is an anagram for “I am a fiction”. Prices ranged from £150,000 to more than £3m. The reviews were Marmite, which is just how he likes them. One dismissed it as a “spectacular, bloated folly” that should be dumped “to the bottom of the sea”. Our own critic, Waldemar Januszczak, was enthused, calling it “the most ambitious solo exhibition any artist

has ever mounted”. Hirst would rather divide than unite the critics: “I only ever did one show where I got slagged off and I agreed with it and felt terrible [the Elusive Truth exhibition in New York, 2005]. I think you’ve got to be in a strong position to deal with the barrage of negative press.” Surely the cushion of his £270m fortune helps? “Is that a lot?” he grins.

The show came with a large dollop of self-parody, the legendary former slave Cif described as “bloated by excess wealth”. A note to self? “I think so,” he says, fiddling with rose-gold chains around his neck. I can’t help admiring his emerald and diamond knuckle-dusters. Immediately, he whips them off and lets me try them on. He is all bonhomie, wisecracks and lightning wit.

Hirst says the Treasures show was his attempt to take a “sidestep from the gallery system”, where, for more than 20 years, he constantly fed the booming contemporary art market during the 1990s and 2000s. “When I was a student, I had this idea of creating an artist that was like a machine. So, the spot paintings, the spins, the butterflies — I created these endless series, like being immortal. I was just gonna always make these paintings and never die.”

It may have been a noble idea, but to many the factory churn grated. When, in 2012, his dealer Larry Gagosian showcased nothing but his spot paintings in all 11 of his galleries, one critic observed: “We hate this shit. Everyone hates this shit. These spots reflect nothing about how we live, see, or think, they’re just some weird meme for the impossibly rich.” Hirst concedes the work morphed into something he began to loathe: “They fit the market brilliantly, but then I created this market where they were just buying, selling, and it felt like there was no enjoyment of the art. It was about trading paintings rather than looking at them. I was giving friends gifts and they were selling them. People were selling them to buy handbags. When the market went a bit wobbly and they couldn’t sell as easily, »»»

PHOTOGRAPH  
NICK BALLON



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**IMMERSIVE DRAMA**  
**Hirst's exhibition in Venice this year, Treasures from the Wreck of the Unbelievable, purported to show priceless artefacts salvaged from a 1,800-year-old sunken ship off the African coast. It was all an elaborate hoax**

people were, like, 'What am I gonna do with my Hirst now?', and I was thinking, 'Stick it on your wall?'"

The slow burn of Treasures got the galleries off his back. "I thought, 'Once I have a 10-year plan, they won't want to know.' I remember explaining it and they were, like, 'When can you show it? Ten years? Have you got anything else?' — and they leave you alone."

Hirst says that "after the auction" he needed time to recover. In 2008, weeks before the global financial crisis reached its peak, an epic two-day Sotheby's sale of more than 200 Hirst works spanning his 20-year career raised £111m. Entitled Beautiful Inside My Head Forever, it set a record for a one-artist auction. One critic claimed that in just 48 hours, Hirst had earned more money than all the artists exhibited in the National Gallery did in a lifetime. "I couldn't really process it at the time. When they were giving me the number of what things were signing off for, I was saying, 'Is that the right amount?' I just couldn't focus on it. I thought, 'If I've made more than da Vinci, something's wrong.'"

"There was the temptation to think I'm a great artist, to think everything I make sells for huge sums and you want to think it's got nothing to do with the world. But I remember thinking at the time that something's not right. There was so much money around from the hedge fund guys, and when the market had that stumble after the auction, that was the real market. Artists just want to paint, even though I do think about a lot more things beyond." Does he mean he thinks about money? "I don't think you can make art without considering it".

He certainly considers it, a lot. Through his Other Criteria company, Hirst has expanded into the cheaper end of the market with endless limited-edition prints and art books. There are also Hirst restaurants, jewellery, even collaborations with Lalique crystal. Has he sold his artistic soul? "I wanted to make art affordable," he insists. "At an opening, people come up and say, 'I've got seven pieces of yours — the spot print, the diamond skull print, the butterfly print.' They're

**“I couldn't process it. If I was making more money than da Vinci, something's wrong”**



exactly the same as [those owned by] massive collectors. As an artist, you want to go across the whole range."

But are things really going so well? Earlier this year he closed the Other Criteria shops in Devon and New York, and shut several of his UK companies. He has also parted with his business manager, James Kelly. Has the Hirst ship hit troubled waters? No, he insists. Treasures is selling well. "We've already sold double what the auction made," he says. Double? According to Hirst, Treasures has already made £250m in sales. But what of the changes in his team? He says Kelly left for health reasons and "once he left, we shut all the dormant companies, got rid of anything we didn't need. I closed Other Criteria, but it's still online. It's a small percentage of the business, but takes up a big percentage of my employees' and my time. I wanted to draw it back to the core of what it was."

And what of Toddington Manor, the 300-room, grade I listed, dilapidated 19th-century pile in Gloucestershire that he bought in 2005 for £3m, with grand plans to renovate it with English Heritage as a museum for his own works and as a "weekend home"?

It is currently languishing under scaffolding, and he admits it is on the back burner. "I'm looking for cash at the moment. I had that idea [Toddington] in the boom time, when there was lots of cash everywhere. And then I kind of stopped everything for Newport Street. Then I bought the house in London that I'm looking at doing, which is quite a big one." He paid £39.5m for the house overlooking Regent's Park.

"I remember saying to myself, 'I'll finish every project by the time I'm 50.' Now I'm 52 and I'm, like, 'Oh.'"

Hirst tells me he has just this month bought a studio space in Soho, and he also ploughed £25m into the Newport Street Gallery ahead of its opening in 2015. A free public museum, it exhibits pieces from his personal Murderme collection of 3,000 works by artists including Banksy, Picasso, Francis Bacon and Tracey Emin. The gallery is also home to Pharmacy 2, a revamped version of his former restaurant in Notting Hill, the scene of much of the cocaine- and booze-fuelled hedonism that surrounded Hirst and his crew back in the day.

Born in Bristol and raised in Leeds, Hirst studied at Goldsmiths college in London. While still a student, he curated the now infamous 1988 Freeze exhibition in an abandoned warehouse in Docklands, showing his work alongside Sarah Lucas, Gary Hume and several others. They became known as the Young British Artists (YBAs). A Turner prize win in 1995 and two decades of hard partying followed. "I celebrated for 20 years, had a really good run. Twenty years of drinking continuously felt amazing," he laughs, remembering a particularly wild night with Keith Allen and Robbie Williams at the Groucho Club. But he admits that, much of the time, he was "out of my mind and a complete dick".

He tried to give it all up in 2002, but "kept relapsing". He has been sober since 2006, and with sobriety come twinges of cringe at his former inebriated alter ego. "I remember talking to [the film director] Rob Altman and his wife at a party. People took loads of cocaine, it was probably falling out of my nose, and I was thinking they loved me. Years later, I'm sober and thinking, 'Oh no, one of those nightmare idiot babblers.'"

What triggered the change? "It had just stopped becoming fun and became a habit. I was waking up in the morning and thinking, 'I've got to drink, I feel so shit.' It wasn't a drink to celebrate, it was escaping. ➔

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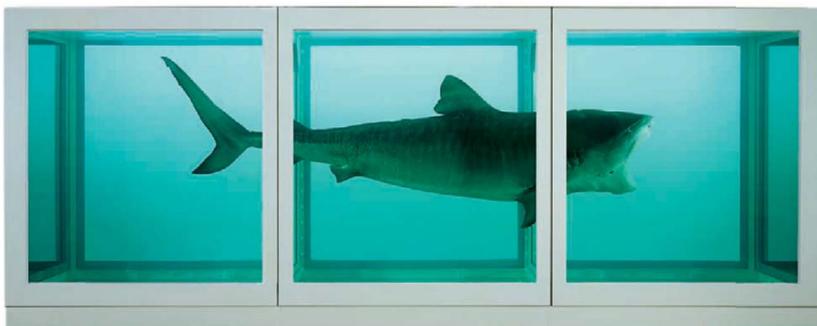
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**ART WITH BITE**  
**From top: Hirst's notorious 1991 shark piece The Physical Impossibility of Death in the Mind of Someone Living; the spot painting Amylamine, 1993; the diamond skull For the Love of God, 2007; Sinner, 1998; Disintegration: The Crown of Life, 2006; with his ex-partner Maia Norman, 2008**

Also, I was a dad, getting in a mess with that.” Hirst has three sons with his ex-partner Maia Norman: Connor, 22, Cassius, 17, and Cyrus, 12.

“I remember there was a story where I got my c\*\*\* out in a bar in Dublin, and thinking, ‘I’m gonna go to court over this and I don’t give a f\*\*\*.’ Then Maia said, ‘What about the kids?’”

We meet amid the wave of sexual harassment claims against powerful men. What does he make of it all? “Times change, so it’s difficult to know what’s acceptable and what’s not. The laws are pretty clear, aren’t they? With minors, it’s bad. I don’t know, two consenting adults? With Harvey Weinstein, it’s just a sad fact of human nature. People in positions of power abuse people with dreams to follow.”

With the hindsight of sobriety, does he feel he may have ever overstepped the mark? “I hope not,” he says. “When you’re drinking, you have periods that you can’t remember, but nothing like that. A friend said to me the thing about sex, drugs and rock n’ roll is a myth, because if you focus on one it’s at the expense of the other two. I was drinking too much to really get into a lot of anything else.”

Anyone in his life now? “Not that I want to talk about.” The shutters come firmly down. It has been reported that he recently split from the writer and producer Katie Keight, 27, whom he met at a party hosted by Weinstein in 2014.

Booze blackouts are a thing of the past for Hirst, who is now a bit of a gym bunny. “I love yoga. I started three years ago and do it a few times a week.” He’ll be drinking green juices next. “I don’t know about that,” he laughs. “I tried a bit of gluten-free, but it didn’t work. I like a KFC too.”

Hirst clearly takes pride in his role as father to three sons, who live with him in Richmond. He and Maia, who lived together in Devon before splitting five years ago, maintain a good relationship, despite the fact he was reported to be “devastated” when she left him after nearly two decades for Tim Spicer, a former British Army officer.

“When we broke up, I was the one taking care of that side of things. Maia was leaving me, leaving the family home, off travelling and doing her own thing. Connor was going to school in London, so I just made a decision: ‘I’m moving near the school.’” Cassius and Cyrus are privately schooled at the Harrodian School in west London, and Hirst says their mum recently moved to be nearer them. “They go to her two nights a week. I just say, ‘Whenever you want to see them, you work it out.’ I’ve a nanny and a teacher to do their homework with them.”

It can’t always be easy, having a household

name as your dad. Hirst says that Connor was accepted at his alma mater, Goldsmiths, to read film and English, but has deferred until next year. “It’s really good he took time out, because he was struggling with it. He thought, ‘I don’t really want to go to the college my dad went to.’”

Hirst was concerned a few years ago during a chat with his youngest. “Cyrus came up to me and said, ‘Dad, when I’m older I want to be like you, I want to be famous.’ And I remember thinking that’s a bit of a weird one — fame is a by-product, not a goal. So I remember having conversations with him about that.” Did he understand the difference afterwards? “I think he did.”

Homework is non-negotiable, but they have as much screen time as they like. “I’ve always encouraged them because my mum wouldn’t let me watch The Sweeney when I was in school. I’ve got a huge TV and I push them — ‘Play video games, you need to do it.’ Trick is, they get bored. If you let it go, they censor themselves.”

When talking about his boys, Brexit bothers him. He is “more horrified by Brexit” than by President Trump. A firm Remainer, Hirst, who shies away from political art because “you don’t want the art to get lost in the mess”, made an exception for the referendum, producing “In” butterfly posters. “It [Europe] is about freedom, flexibility, being able to travel,” he says. “I feel sad that my children won’t have that kind of access and sad we would limit our options in that way. It doesn’t make any sense. But it’s not really the people of Britain, is it? To choose something as small-minded as that. A lot of young people didn’t vote.”

However Brexit goes, and even if Corbyn comes to power and hikes up his taxes, Hirst won’t hotfoot it to one of his many holiday homes. “It would take a lot to move me. Everyone likes to moan about tax, but you’ve just got to pay them, haven’t you? I like being British and I’ve loved being a British artist.”

Yet he winces at the YBA moniker. “I hate it. I’d prefer it to be BBA — Bad British Artist.” Why? “By the time it becomes stuck, you’re an OAP, but you still get called a YBA.” He’s not a fan of having any other letters after his name, either. He lets slip that he has been offered a gong, but turned it down without a second thought. He thinks it was a CBE. “It was a few years ago, but I don’t think it was made public. I don’t really like that stuff. I got where I was going by myself. The letters after your name thing just feels a bit uncool.”

Hirst has been invited to meet the Queen on other occasions. “I wouldn’t go. Too scary, isn’t it? Though I’d quite like a royal warrant. William and Harry, they’re good boys. We should get them buying contemporary art.” Maybe he could send a Hirst original as a royal wedding gift? “Who’s getting married?” he asks, 24 hours after blanket news coverage of Prince Harry’s engagement to Meghan Markle. He is blissfully unaware. “Maybe I’ll send that,” he says, motioning to a purple butterfly painting on the wall of his restaurant.

Hirst can’t fathom the thought of retirement any time soon, but having passed his half-century marker, finds himself in a reflective mood. One thing that has dawned on him as he looks backwards and forwards, is that less is more: “As you get older, you want your life to become simpler.” For now ■

*Call yourself an art buff? Match the Hirst artwork to its auction price at [sundaytimes.co.uk/magazine](http://sundaytimes.co.uk/magazine)*



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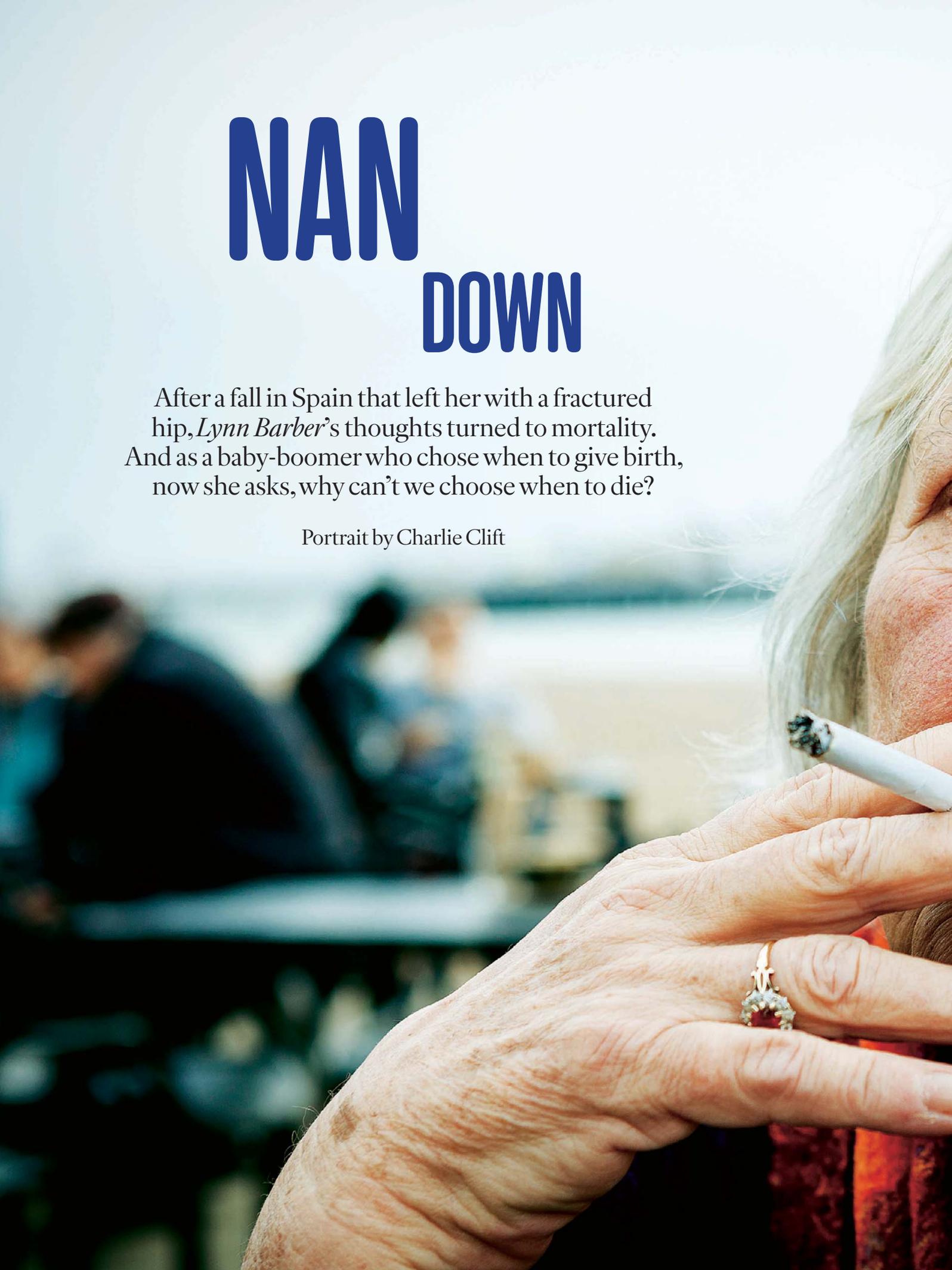
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# NAN DOWN

After a fall in Spain that left her with a fractured hip, *Lynn Barber*'s thoughts turned to mortality. And as a baby-boomer who chose when to give birth, now she asks, why can't we choose when to die?

Portrait by Charlie Clift





[THE EDIT]

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# WE OVER-70S THINK ABOUT DEATH AT LEAST SEVEN TIMES A DAY



I used to love the statistic that men think about sex every seven seconds. I would look around the Independent office, wondering which of my colleagues was thinking about sex at that particular moment. Andreas Whittam Smith? Chris Huhne? Surely not. Unfortunately, this statistic, like all the most eye-catching statistics, has since been disproved, and it turns out men only think about sex a paltry 19 times a day.

So I would like to propose my own new sensational statistic: we over-70s think about death at least seven times a day. This is not based on any research, you understand, but merely on my own observation that when I meet my contemporaries, we talk about death the whole time. We know we mustn't talk about it in front of the young — it alarms them — but in the privacy of our own covens, we talk about nothing else. Some of my jolliest conversations have been about dying. But it's fatal to let the young overhear, because they accuse us of being "morbid" and start recommending psychotherapists and antidepressants. This is so wrong. We are not depressed at all; we are simply realistic. We are old and we want to know that we can choose how to die when the time comes. After all, we baby-boomers could choose when we gave birth; why on earth should we have to wait for the law to tell us when we can die? Why can't we just go to the doctor and get a death pill when we feel like it?

My editor, who is inevitably half my age (though that's good going — I've had editors who were barely out of nappies) asks why I think the over-70s are so obsessed by death. Duh. Perhaps it's because we were taught a subject called mathematics at school that enabled us to calculate that 70 is not middle-aged unless you predicate a life expectancy of 140. We know that we are much nearer the end than the beginning, and we've never fallen for any of that crap about 40 being the new 30 or 60 being the new 40. We know that 70 is the same old three-score years and 10 at which you are supposed to die.

My editor also asks why we want to control our deaths rather than let nature take its course. Again, duh. By the time you're my age, you will have seen friends die in many different ways, and you know that some ways are a damn sight better than others. Massive heart attack, good; motor neurone disease, bad. (Though I notice that I still take my heart pills every morning, so perhaps I am not so keen on heart attacks after all.) But I hope that when I am diagnosed with lung cancer, as I so richly deserve to be (30 cigs a day for 50 years), I will have the guts to refuse to board that conveyor belt of



chemotherapy, radiotherapy, experimental drugs, knowing that the end will still be the same, just further off. I'd like to drag some of my acquaintances, eg Howard Marks, Christopher Hitchens, AA Gill, back from the grave and ask, was it really worth going through all those horrible treatments? Wouldn't it have been better if the doctor who gave you your diagnosis had given you a death pill at the same time and said, "Take this when you feel you've had enough"?

I know from experience that death is capricious. My husband was incredibly fit, young-looking, didn't smoke, barely drank, ate a brilliant diet, took loads of exercise — and died at 59. A routine blood test revealed he had a disease called myelofibrosis (degeneration of the bone marrow) and he was told the only cure was a stem-cell transplant. So he had it — and died in hospital. Conversely, my parents, who were never fit, never ate fruit or veg, barely stirred from their armchairs, both lived to 92. This makes me very resistant to all the current government propaganda about how we can live longer by improving our lifestyles. (Incidentally, why does the government *want* people to live longer? We can't afford all those pensions even as things stand.) What the propaganda is really about is *blaming* people for their ill health. And I don't plan to improve my lifestyle.

Thoughts of death have been much on my mind since I suffered what ambulancemen call a Nan Down. On holiday with the family in Malaga, I skidded across the bathroom floor, crashed into the shower and fractured my hip. My daughters wanted to call an ambulance, but I begged them not to. I had a terror of being stuck in hospital in Spain: please just get me home. We managed it — thank you, easyJet — with wheelchairs and those airport golf buggies I've always wanted a go on. One of the buggy drivers was so kind, he let the grandchildren ride on the buggy and toot the horn.

Kind. Now there's a word I find myself using an awful lot since my fall, whereas it's one that rarely crossed my lips before. But being disabled means your whole life depends on the kindness of strangers. After the kind buggy driver in the departures lounge, I was left at the mercy of a hard-faced bitch who parked me about a mile from the boarding gate and told me, "You walk now." I dream of returning to Malaga airport ➤➤➤



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and spraying her legs with bullets. That's the other thing that's happened since my fall: my emotions seem to have gone to extremes. A kind stranger can move me to tears, whereas an unkind one can drive me into lurid revenge fantasies.

Anyway, we got on the plane, the plane was on time, a kind (again) wheelchair man collected and decanted me at Gatwick Cars, who kindly agreed to drive me home to Highgate for a mere £120, which seemed a snip at the time. The daughters were very insistent that I should go straight to our nearest hospital, the Whittington, to have an x-ray. But I refused; I needed to catch up on all the wine and cigs I'd missed since my fall, so I promised to go first thing in the morning.

I assumed we could forget about it, but my elder daughter woke me at six saying we had to go to the Whittington immediately. I don't like to criticise the poor old NHS, so I will pass over the squalor, the drunks still sleeping it off in reception, the filthy cubicle with overflowing rubbish bin, and merely record my annoyance that you have to lie for four hours on a trolley even though you'd be more comfortable in a chair. Or, to be precise, just under four hours so they can tick a target box to say what a good A&E they run. So I lay around for the statutory 3 hours 50 minutes, and was then wheeled to an x-ray machine and lay around for a few more hours till the doctor came to tell me the result. It was inconclusive, he said; because of my arthritis (what arthritis?), he would have to send me for a CT scan. I couldn't face it. I've been here all morning, I wailed, I'm leaving. He was terribly upset, but gave me a present of two brand-new aluminium NHS crutches to hobble on my way. So kind!

He also told me something that cheered me up no end. He handed me a packet of strong painkillers, but I said I couldn't take them because they don't go with alcohol and I drink like a fish. "How long have you been drinking?" he asked. Oh, years and years, decades, I told him. "That's fine then," he said. Huh? "It means your liver will be used to it." So that's *some* good news at least.

For the first few days, I assumed I would soon be better and was making plans for what I would do next week. I was meant to be going to the Venice Biennale and continued accepting invitations for all the parties there. I even — insanely — told the office I could fly to New York to interview John McEnroe. But by the end of the week, I was still lying on the sofa and, if anything, was in more pain because now my knee had started hurting as well as my hip. So finally I agreed to



have a scan, which produced a diagnosis: "Non-displaced left greater trochanter fracture." The doctor said that was good, because it meant I would not need a hip replacement and, as long as I rested, it should mend on its own in three months. *Three months?* I'd been thinking three weeks max. Now I was seriously depressed.

Meanwhile, all my friends who've had hip replacements — a surprisingly large number, it turns out — ring to tell me about them. I don't like to say I'm not having a hip replacement, because they seem to enjoy talking about it so much. One friend is very insistent that the *only* place to go is King Edward VII's Hospital, because "the food's brilliant and you can order your own wine from Berry Bros & Rudd. I loved it so much I had three hip replacements there." Three! How many hips has she got? "Don't be silly. One went wrong." I would have thought that was a bit of a contraindication, but anyway I agree that if I ever have a hip replacement, I will rush to King Edward VII's and order a limitless supply of Berry Bros claret.

In theory, lying on a sofa for three months means I can do some

**"I TOLD THE DOCTOR I COULDN'T TAKE PAINKILLERS FOR MY FRACTURED HIP AS I DRANK. 'THAT'S FINE,' HE SAID. 'IT MEANS YOUR LIVER'S USED TO IT'"**

serious reading — perhaps I should give Karl Ove Knausgaard a whirl? In fact, I spend my time flicking through old magazines and looking up methods of suicide. I found some wacky options, but many of them are completely impractical. There are no venomous snakes around Highgate, nor is there a convenient volcano to throw myself into. Realistically, when

you're my age (73) and lazy, reluctant to travel and therefore unlikely to encounter funnel-web spiders or man-eating crocodiles, it boils down to doing something boring at home. What, though?

I asked a friend who knows about these things. "Ah well," she said, "it's complicated." She said I should be researching "self-euthanasia". When the time comes, it would be reassuring to know how to self-euthanase at home safely, but I would still rather have a death pill from the doctor.

**M**y birthday fell while I was still on the sofa and a friend brought me a choice of three walking sticks. Two were antique and very beautiful, with silver chasing. The third was modern, dull, charmless, but with a non-slip plastic ferrule that the others lacked. I chose that one. Actually, what I really craved was a Zimmer frame with a little shopping basket in front, but nobody offered me that.

It took me three months to recover, just as the doctor predicted. It happened so slowly, I almost didn't notice, but one day I realised that I had walked to the kitchen without my stick and was using both legs to walk upstairs. Soon afterwards I dared to drive my car and it was fine. Physically I am 100% recovered, but emotionally something has changed: fear has entered my heart. I am scared of slippery pavements, I inspect unfamiliar bathrooms nervously, I cling to handrails when going downstairs. I suppose this is what people mean by a *coup de vieux* — I think of myself now as vulnerable and frail.

I no longer crave a Zimmer frame, but I remain very attached to my stick. I take it to parties as a sort of comfort blanket and to lean on when standing still. (For some reason, I find standing still harder than walking — is that a well-known thing?) I'm aware that taking a stick to parties seems passive-aggressive, and I normally loathe passive-aggressive behaviour. But I feel I'm entitled, and also I value the stick as a sort of public declaration and symbol. It says: "Look, I am old, you ought to take my arm, you ought to offer me a seat and, above all, you ought not to be upset that I don't remember your name." (I don't remember *anyone's* name — it's a push sometimes even with the grandchildren.) Anyway, I now won't go to parties without my stick, and am thinking of investing in a glamorous one, like Bianca Jagger's. So this is my new look: old lady with stick. Self-euthanasia can wait ■

*For confidential support in dealing with feelings of distress or suicidal thoughts, contact the Samaritans on 116 123 or visit [samaritans.org](http://samaritans.org)*



**YOU ARE**

**WHAT**

**YOU EAT**



**What do children across the planet eat in a typical week? Daily Bread, a new and astonishing photographic study, has the answer**

**Portraits by Gregg Segal**



**T**he UK is the most obese country in western Europe. Children as young as 10 are having hips replaced because of the damage caused by their excessive weight. Should we change our highly processed, high-fat diet?

The photographer Gregg Segal is on a mission to show what children around the world eat. In Sicily and the south of France, for example, the focus on seafood, olive oil and fresh vegetables explains the very low incidence of heart disease. In Japan, where fresh fruit, vegetables, soy and seaweed are in abundance, cancer rates are significantly lower than ours. Over the following pages, we show eight of Segal's 50 subjects. Each child documented what they ate in a week before being photographed surrounded by it. We've also asked the nutritional scientist and chef Toral Shah (theurbankitchen.co.uk) to give her expert verdict. Compare and contrast with your own children's diet — and then make them finish their sprouts ■

**PREVIOUS PAGES, LEFT:**  
**CHETAN MENGE, 10, Mumbai, India**  
**The verdict: "Chetan's diet is relatively balanced. His protein intake is lower than some children in other countries, but still adequate. As with many of the other children, he is consuming a lot of sugary drinks and chocolate every day"**

**PREVIOUS PAGES, RIGHT:**  
**AMELIA GAIA, 12, Catania, Sicily**  
**"A really healthy, incredibly balanced vegetarian diet packed with nutrients. My only concern is that she might not be getting enough protein and omega-3 fatty acids"**



**THESE PAGES, LEFT: SITI KHALIESAH NATALIEA, 9, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia**  
 “Siti eats lots of traditional Malaysian food, which is quite balanced, but has lots of sugary drinks and fried snacks. I would recommend adding more fruit and vegetables and swapping the chocolate drinks for water. This is a healthier way to go”

**CENTRE: BRADLEY CHOI, 9, Temple City, California**  
 “A typical American diet where most food is bought ready-made, or eaten out, rather than prepared at home, and often lacking in fresh ingredients. Lunches are relatively healthy, but he could have more fruit and vegetables”

**RIGHT: ISAIHA DEDRICK, 16, Long Beach, California**  
 “A really mixed diet with some incredibly healthy meals and lots of junk food — typical for a teenager. It’s high in saturated fat and sugar, which contributes to being overweight. I would recommend eating more lean protein and, as always, more fruit and vegetables”





**LEFT: JUNE GROSSER, 8, Hamburg, Germany**

“Generally, June has a balanced diet with lots of fruit and vegetables at each meal. She eats a little more sugar than recommended, but apart from that it’s pretty healthy”

**ABOVE: GRETTA MOELLER, 7, Hamburg, Germany**

“Greta eats more sugar than recommended, particularly at the weekends when she substitutes doughnuts for lunch. The calorie intake is probably too high for a seven-year-old, although she does have a good balance of fruit and vegetables”

It's not just  
me freeriding.

**My skis  
are too.**

**Free ski  
transport**



**MEISSA  
NDIAYE, 11,  
Dakar,  
Senegal**  
“Meissa has  
one nutrient-  
dense meal  
a day,  
packed with  
protein and  
vegetables,  
but he has  
lots of  
condiments,  
which can be  
packed with  
sugar.  
I wouldn’t  
recommend  
children this  
young drink  
coffee  
regularly”



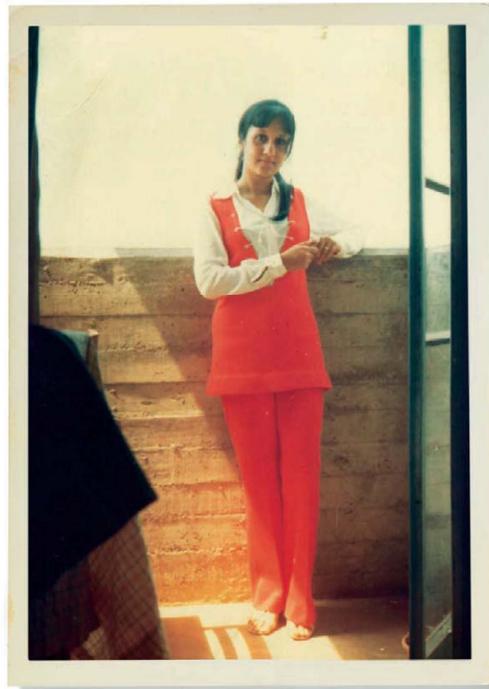
Forty-five years ago, Idi Amin expelled the Asians from Uganda — and they became Britain's great immigration success story. *Yasmin Alibhai-Brown* was among them. Now, she takes an unflinching look back at the bloody ethnic upheaval of 1972 and asks to what extent Ugandan Asians were culpable

# We were the sinners, too



**TURBULENT TIMES** Above left: Yasmin Alibhai-Brown (centre, holding hands) at Makerere University in 1970

**UNCERTAIN FUTURE** Above right: Brown during her student days. She hoped to become a university lecturer



**F**orty-five years ago this autumn, planeloads of my fellow Ugandan Asians arrived at Stansted airport in Essex after being expelled by President Idi Amin, an archetypal baleful, devious villain who also had animal magnetism and told great jokes. When President

Mugabe was finally forced out of power in Zimbabwe last month, it brought back memories of populist African leaders who grab power, become dictatorial and fail their nations. That story never ends. Exile, for us, proved to be a blessing.

Ted Heath's government had to resettle 28,000 disorientated children, women and men from the former British colony, while Enoch Powell stirred up populist fury against this "influx". The years that followed were hard. But look at us now. Haven't we done well? David Cameron pronounced us Ugandan Asians "among the most successful migrants anywhere in the world". Even Nigel Farage extols our virtues. We are judged to be exemplary incomers who turned tragedy to triumph. Smug Ugandan Asians still boast that Uganda never recovered after our banishment. Some are so grateful to Britain, they have framed pictures of Heath and the Queen on their walls.

When we arrived, the UK was in a sorry state. The upbeat 1960s were over. In 1972 the economy was diving, industrial disputes were raging, cities and towns were bleak, doped hippies symbolised the state of the nation — disorderly, spent and purposeless. This was not the Great Britain we had imagined. Awe was replaced by shock. But Ugandans are pragmatic, canny, ambitious and audacious. I remember going to an army camp where some of the accidental migrants were temporarily housed. Some men seemed unusually hearty. They had walked around town and seen infinite possibilities. Mr Shah, an

experienced exporter, said: "They close shop at five. Lazy, losing all that money. We will be rich, my friends." Much mirth.

And a large number of them did just that. They revived the nation of shopkeepers, pioneered 24-hour shopping, diversified, got rich, very rich. My nerdy maths teacher bought a chain of pharmacies, other acquaintances ran lucrative care-home companies, my late brother and cousins set up profitable travel agencies. As Lord Dolar Popat once said in the Lords: "Many of us encountered racial tensions, jobs were not plentiful, it was a very difficult time initially... [but] we started over again. Ugandan Asians have helped to transform the fabric of British society."

At a recent wedding party thrown by Ugandan Asian friends, every other car in the car park was a Merc, Jaguar or big BMW. Our Toyota Prius looked like a poor relative. Among the many Ugandan Asian business legends are the property magnates Zul and Nazmu Virani, the manufacturer and retailer Mitesh Jatania, the global investment manager Rupin Vadera and Lord Rumi Verjee, who founded Domino's Pizza. Some of them are also big donors to aid organisations and political parties.

Like Jewish Britons, Ugandan Asians are trailblazing in politics and other areas. Priti Patel became the first elected female Asian Tory cabinet minister. Though forced to resign over unauthorised meetings in Israel, hard Brexiteers still see her as a potential future prime minister. Her father, Sushil, a self-made businessman, newsagent and former Ukip candidate, was from Uganda. As were Shailesh Vara MP and Lord Popat, both Tories, the Lib Dem peer Rumi Verjee and Labour's Baroness Shriti Vadera, sister of Rupin. Our children and grandchildren are rising stars in the media, law, medicine, the City, think tanks and the charity sector.

This neat narrative, well known and oft told, makes everyone feel good — the receiving nation and the incomers. But it buries inconvenient truths, leaves out much of what happened. Those untold stories, like the restless undead, haunt many of us as we get older. Distorted histories inhibit the future and impede reconciliation. Uganda's President Museveni, who has been in power since 1986, handed back Asian properties, invited us back. But that did not bring closure. There is too much unfinished business.

Old photos have faded, but my memories remain vivid: the red earth, green, green grass, fecund mango and banana trees, hills and lakes, markets, schools, my alma mater Makerere University, black friends lost for ever, relatives and Asian mates scattered around the world. Or dead.

I can't forget the street-food stalls, the blind man who made metal colanders, young Johnny, the cook next door, who once slashed himself badly while grating a coconut. His mistress, a tough Muslim matriarch, berated him for dripping his inferior blood on her white coconut. Japan, my buddy, our servant, helped my mother to prepare wedding feasts and ironed the clothes she sewed for customers. Both sang Bollywood songs as they worked. He told me spooky stories in Swahili while pulling jiggers from my toes. Even as a child, I hated the way many Asians treated black Africans. Some of the cruellest were in my own family. ➔

Independence from Britain in 1962 came bringing promises, soon broken. One evening in 1966, at a birthday party, we were bopping to Mustang Sally by Wilson Pickett when special forces kicked the door down and demanded alcohol. By 1970, the country had become lawless and feral. Three Asian sisters in our neighbourhood were raped by soldiers. The youngest became mute. Asians were intimidated and robbed at roadblocks.

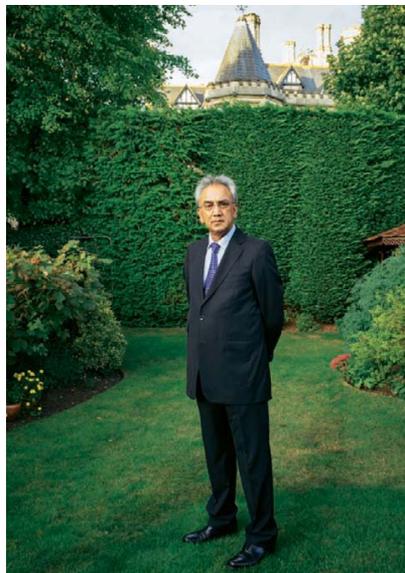
I met Idi Amin in 1968. I was a school prefect and he was the head of the army, appointed by Milton Obote, Uganda's first elected leader after independence, a good socialist with bad autocratic instincts. The bulky general told me: "You Asians are no good people. Weaklings and crooks, all of you." Three years later, following a coup, Uganda had a new leader, Field Marshal General Idi Amin, VC, DSO, MC, president for life of Uganda, conqueror of the British Empire in Africa, last king of Scotland, doctor of political science.

Twenty months after that, he expelled the 75,000 "weaklings". Some Asians had British passports, others were Ugandan citizens and became stateless. After completing my degree at Makerere, I got a place at Oxford. I arrived in May 1972 and never went back. Exiles left behind homes, businesses, temples, mosques, graves, hearts. Bakul Vyas, who retired recently after a long career at British Airways, still misses "the big house, servants, the landscape, all the good things". His anger remains raw as he recalls the hellish last days, the humiliation and terror. His father — stateless, broken-hearted — died only three months after the deportations.

Jasmeen Houssen can't forget "coming home to the aroma of fried cassava, splashing in Lake Victoria, climbing Mount Elgon in skimpy shoes, the joy, the friends". She recalls the poverty of Africans and the conspicuous wealth of many Asians. The only female to

he turned on them. Vyas was one of them. "I went out to celebrate. Obote had gone. He wanted to nationalise 51% of our businesses and impose big taxes on properties. I was young. I didn't know any better," he says.

Vincent Magombe, a black Ugandan journalist and refugee, thinks Asians need to be more honest and less solipsistic: "The suffering of Asians is nothing, nothing. I have nothing against them. But fewer than 20 Asians died. More than 750,000 black people were obliterated." That tragedy is passed over. Black Ugandan dissenters have been persecuted by all their leaders. Those who could fled to the west. More than 180,000 of them are in the UK. Belinda Atim, a black Ugandan who works for international health and human rights organisations, came to Britain in the 1990s. "My life has been about loss," she says. "I have witnessed and survived appalling atrocities. My family members suffered from abuses, torture and extrajudicial killings. Not just my family, but



people from the entire northern region, Acholis. Our suffering has not ended."

One of my black interviewees had a mini-breakdown while we spoke. She couldn't carry on.

Patience, the daughter of a fellow Makerere student, wrote to me recently: "My father was killed by Idi Amin's soldiers. After you left, my mother was raped. She was your friend. I am the daughter of the rape. You don't know me. Ugandan Asians keep talking about their property. Why is no one interested in us?" I felt deep shame and guilt when I read the email. She is right. These lives should matter.

Asians first arrived in Uganda in the 1880s. They were indentured labourers — pitifully low-paid workers legally tethered to employers — brought over by the British to build a railway. They were followed by entrepreneurs and chancers who'd heard there was money to be made. The wayfarers opened shops, learnt local languages, made themselves indispensable. In time, they became cautious, nifty, middle-class, more supportive of the British Empire than against it. Immigration numbers grew, so too the ethnic gap.

In 1972, the anthropologist and Hindu monk Agehananda Bharati wrote: "What Africans can't forget is the disdain in which the Asian has been holding the African. They know Asians detest their darker colour and physiognomy... The Asian males had a few concubines, but no African could approach an Asian woman."

He was right. In 1961, a family friend almost kicked his black cook to death just because he told the man's daughter she was beautiful. In 1968, I played Juliet to a black Romeo and was beaten up by my male relatives and disowned by my father for ever.

The Ugandan blogger Stephen Kamugasa thinks it was a cunning British plan: "In keeping with the principle of divide and

## "My family suffered abuses, torture and extrajudicial killings"

get into the law faculty at Makerere, Houssen wanted to be a constitutional reformer: "That dream was blown away by Amin's anti-Asian tsunami. There is a well of bitterness in me. I will never forgive Amin."

Ugandan Asians still talk of a paradise lost, but it was never that simple. We Asians were grossly sinned against, but we were not blameless. Inward-looking and selfish, we did not care enough about the sufferings of black Ugandans.

The writer Joseph Ochieno is a black Ugandan refugee living in London. He knows other Ugandans who believe what Amin did to Asians was heroic. Ochieno doesn't share this view. But this thoughtful man can't forgive those Asians who were only interested in their own good lives, not the future of the country. They subverted "the elected socialist and internationalist government" and supported Amin before



rule, Asians were quickly subsumed into the official colonial government, in which they played the role of being a buffer between the whites and black natives. They were above local natives and had access to better services and opportunities. It bred much resentment."

The divisions were most palpable in Kampala, where I was raised. Some city Asians were good people. Vyas's father, a cotton exporter, ensured fair pay for producers. I knew businessmen who trained black staff and paid school fees for their children. But they were a minority. Lord Popat accepts that "there was prejudice. A class divide. We may have been selfish, didn't integrate, did not get involved in democracy. But we learnt lessons. Here in the UK we are integrated and engaged."

Popat was born and raised in the countryside, where, unlike Kampala, people

mixed, trusted and helped each other. His mother became an informal midwife and delivered African babies. That may be why he is refreshingly candid about our mistakes. The Madhvani plantation tycoons were also based outside the capital. They built schools and hospitals, understood reciprocity. There were a few other enlightened individuals, most now forgotten. In 1957, some Asian intellectuals came together, a band of principled political brothers who dreamt of a rainbow nation, equal and truly independent. Those hopes were dashed. One of them was Anil Clerk, QC, who was abducted and murdered in 1972 by Amin's thugs.

There is another side to this complicated story. Corrupt and unworthy black politicians routinely scapegoated Asians in East Africa. The novelist Paul Theroux, who was one my lecturers at Makerere, wrote



## “The suffering of Asians is nothing. Black people were obliterated”

a passionate essay about this blame game: “[Asians are held] responsible for flagrant racism, the failure of African socialism and progress, all bad driving and motor accidents, sins of pride, envy, scandal, gluttony and lust, monopoly business, African neurosis, subversion of ruling parties... a high birth rate and bad food.”

Amin was not our only enemy, he was just the worst of the lot. My niece's nanny, Teresa, used to say Obote was a hyena that waited for kills and then feasted on the flesh: “Me, I like a warrior, I like a buffalo. Uganda needs a buffalo, not a hyena.”

Uganda got its buffalo. I was at uni then. The transition was seamless and soundless. On that morning, January 25, 1971, I opened the curtains in my small room in the hall of residence and a dead baby bat fell on the floor, a bad omen. The radio played My Boy Lollipop all day, interspersed with announcements by military men of curfews and the new order. The next day there was rejoicing, dancing in the streets. Obote had become unpopular. But our university was suddenly full of sinister unknown men. Meetings and debates were banned. One day in May, we gathered on campus to protest. Tanks appeared at the main gate. Tear gas was released, shots were heard, students were abducted. In a photo, I am running away in a checked minidress, a scarf round my head, knee socks.

The persecution of intellectuals and experts gathered pace. Amin knew the country would be easier to subjugate if he could rid it of academics and lawyers. He also suffered from a



pathological inferiority complex. He turned up at Makerere that June. Dressed in full academic gear, he conducted the graduation ceremony. Horror and comedy, as always with him.

Our vice-chancellor, Frank Kalimuzo, was murdered by soldiers using hammers. A bright law student, Paul Serwanga, was also slain. Women were found decapitated in the grounds. One was pregnant. Night after night, jackboots came into our hall of residence, looking for women from certain tribes. Some hid in the rooms of Asian students, which the soldiers did not enter — strange but true.

Susana, a roommate, was one of Amin's concubines. She gave me the recipe for his favourite stew — I still have it. He had her killed and enslaved her younger sister. African Ugandan refugees here

have their own horrific tales. Ochieno's adopted brother was murdered, his body never found. Old Samuel, a priest, had his genitals hacked off. Mary Namusisi, 70, told me: “Amin hated my tribe. So his soldiers smashed my baby boy with their boots. They mashed him like a vegetable.”

All this was going on while the US, UK and Israeli governments were backslapping the tyrant. He came on two state visits in 1971 and 1972. The Telegraph described him as “a welcome contrast to other African leaders and a staunch friend to Britain”.

In his book *Unpeople: Britain's Secret Human Rights Abuses*, the historian Mark Curtis proves that the British government helped Amin into power. Obote wanted to nationalise key big businesses and strongly opposed the sale of arms to South Africa. Officials acknowledged Obote's policies

were good for Ugandans, but bad for British interests. Amin would be their man. This is yet another example of British foreign policy that left a terrible legacy.

Magombe was 18 when Amin was toppled in 1979. He had written a play titled *The Fall and Trial of Idi Amin*. It was performed at an arts centre. Amin's defeated, marauding soldiers turned up, trashed the place, assaulted the youthful players. Magombe left. Unlike most Asians, people like him have found no peace.

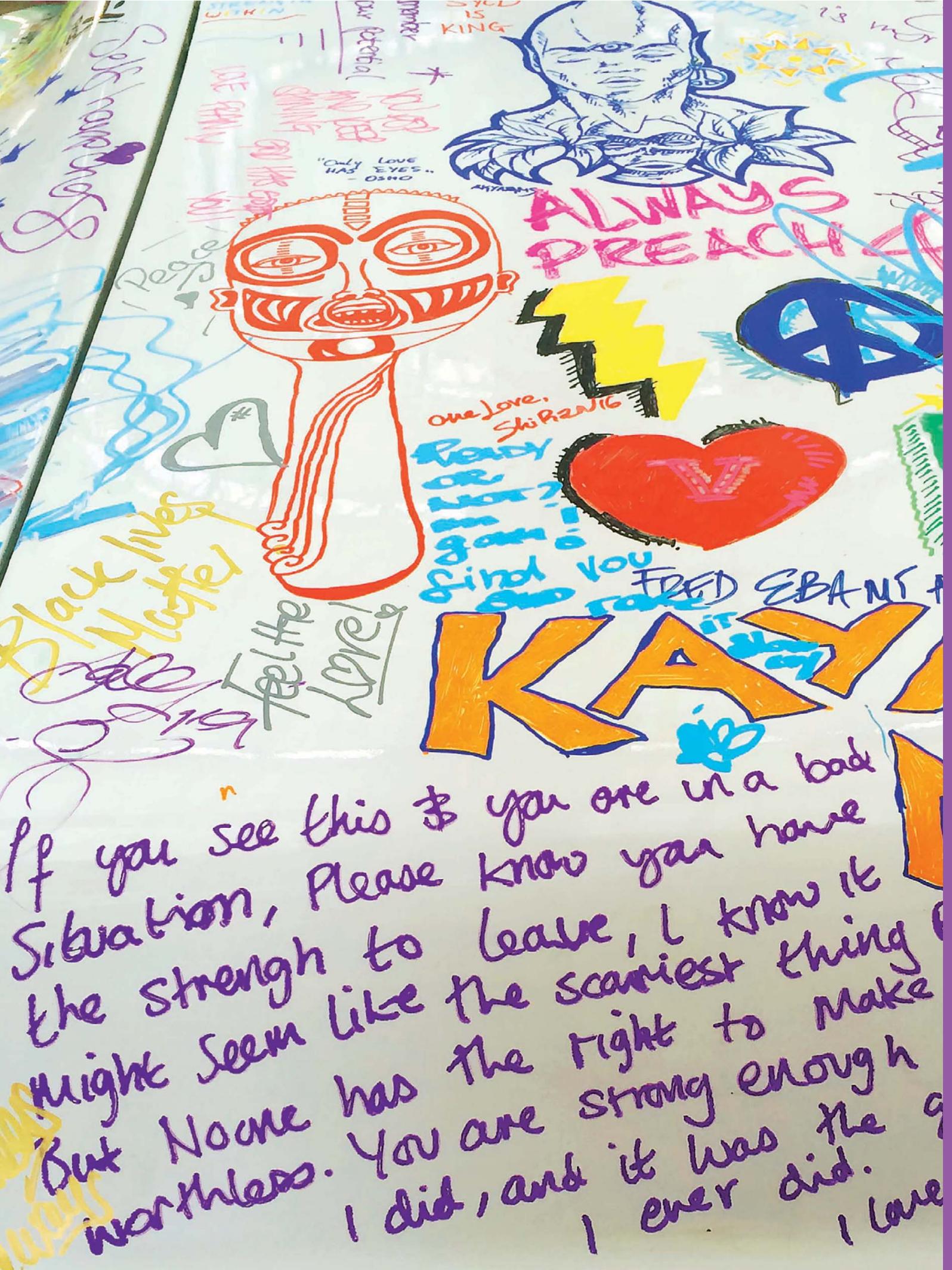
The old country is still troubled. The same noxious geopolitical games are played. Oil has been discovered, so westerners are flocking in. Asian entrepreneurs too. The richest man in Uganda today is Sudhir Ruparelia, an Asian and a close chum of black politicians. He lives like an oligarch. Recently an investigation was launched into his business dealings.

Idealistic black and Asian Ugandans feel we were denied a future together. We could have created a vibrant, non-racist nation. Vyas, an international tennis player, wanted to be mayor of Kampala. I wanted to teach at Makerere and write history books. Houssen might have become a judge. Our children could have set up IT hubs. Magombe, Ochieno and Atim dream they would have built a proper, non-tribal democracy.

Simi is Asian, David is African. Both are divorcees who teach in London. They fancied each other in school in Kampala, when such relationships were forbidden. Last year they found each other on Facebook and got together. They plan to go to Uganda and start a small business. Popat has built a maternity clinic in his old town. Vyas sends equipment to his old school. Maybe that lost future can be found again. Uganda is a wonderful country. Despite our successes in the UK, our hopes must keep burning ■

**NEW BEGINNINGS** Clockwise from right: Brown today; Belinda Atim; Lord Popat; Jasmeen Houssen; Vincent Magombe — all of whom fled Uganda for Britain





ALWAYS  
PREACH



one love,  
Shirazi  
Ready  
or  
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we  
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find you  
and take it

FRED EBANS

KAY

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situation, please know you have  
the strength to leave, I know it  
might seem like the scariest thing  
but no one has the right to make  
you worthless. You are strong enough  
I did, and it was the  
I ever did.  
I love

Soft moments

Black lives  
matter

Feel the  
love!

"Only Love  
HAS EYES"  
- OSHO

STYL  
IS  
KING

power  
our potential

LOVE  
MAY

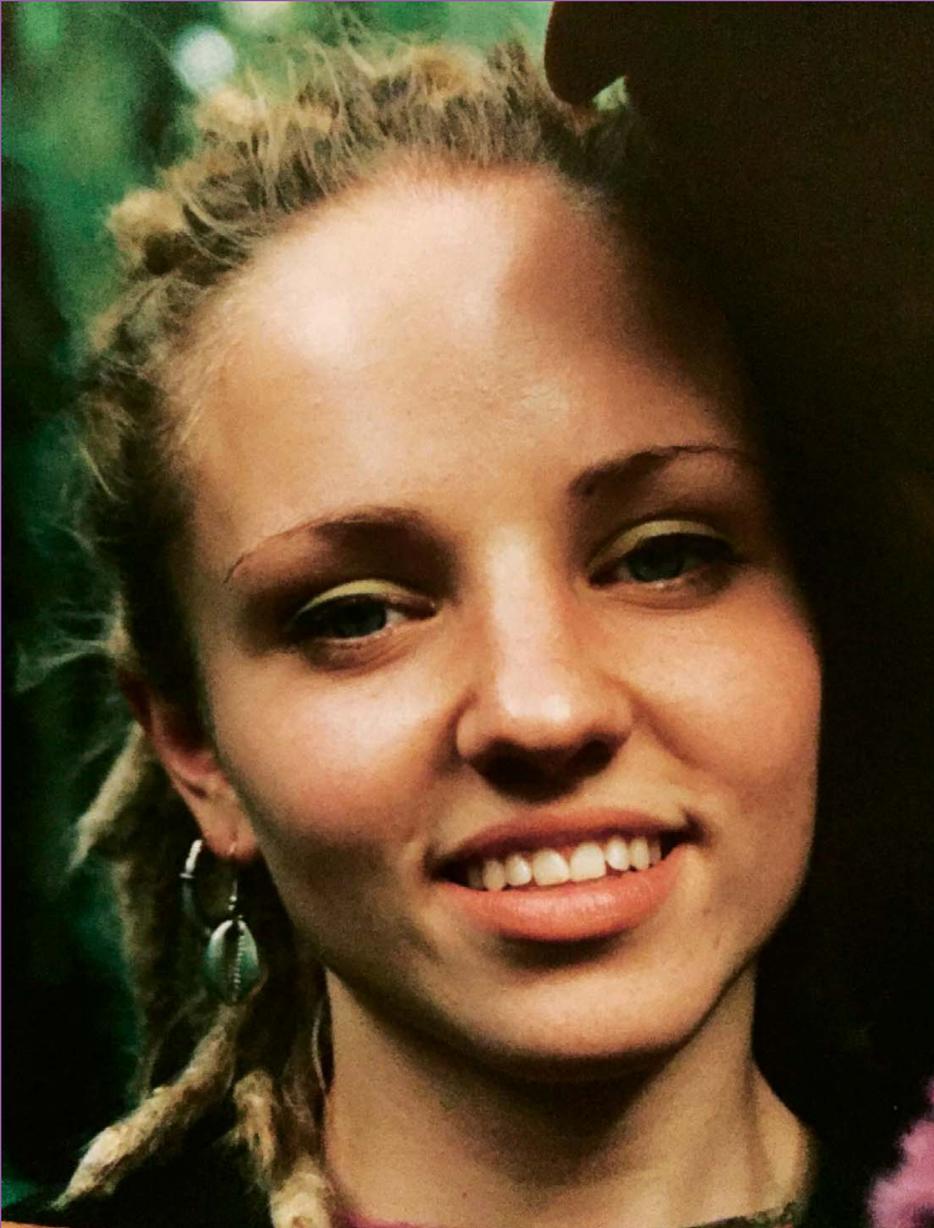
LOVE  
MAY

People



2019

# BRAVE



# FACE

Worrying numbers of teenage girls are enduring violent relationships — fuelled by a brutally sexualised online culture. *Angela Neustatter* meets the girls who have escaped their abusive “first loves” to warn us all of the growing dangers

**DRIVEN TO CHANGE**  
Above: Imogen Paton, who tuned her violent ex's car (left) into a healing art project

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**I**mogen Paton, finely built with a pale blonde bob and a sassy, confident smile, is an intriguing sight, perched against the wreck of the Chevrolet Impala that she takes to music festivals and events around the country. Surely the car, with its crushed grille, crumpled sides and body decorated with scribbles, drawings, comments and poems, is an entertaining display of youthful art? Well, not exactly. The Bad Karma Impala, as she calls it, is a stark metaphor for the wrecked state that Imogen was left in after becoming a teenage victim of domestic violence and extreme emotional abuse.

Imogen was a 19-year-old art student when she met and quickly moved in with her first real “love.” “I think I wanted someone badly to represent the father I lost aged 15,” she says. “He was very smiley and I liked the fact he came from a different class and culture to my middle-class upbringing.” But the violence started quickly, and it emerged that he had a crack cocaine problem. “I wanted to help him, but when I said this he put his hands around my throat and threatened to strangle me. From there, things escalated. He’d throw my belongings, and then me, down the stairs. There were always scary threats, but he could be very loving and I so badly wanted that, so I excused his behaviour. I convinced myself it was my fault for upsetting him by doing something bad.”

Imogen was with him for three years before she left. “He began to stalk me on the streets,” she says. “I remember he nearly broke my nose in broad daylight outside this pub. Then he started trying to break into the flat where I lived. I had a police alarm fitted and CCTV outside, but he still tried to set the flat alight through the letterbox. He had a photograph that he had taken with me just wearing underwear. He made a poster advertising me as a prostitute with my real name and phone number. After he tried to run me over, he was arrested and jailed. He did two months, but he didn’t bother me after that.”

Last month, the Office for National Statistics reported that 11% of girls aged between 16 and 19 in England and Wales say they have experienced domestic abuse in the past year. It is the grimmest of ways for our children to experience first love.

According to a survey by SafeLives, a charity working to help victims of domestic abuse, the problem is even more widespread. A quarter of 13- to 17-year-old girls have experienced some form of physical abuse from a partner. And although the charity found 95% of victims of intimate-partner violence were girls, 18% of boys also reported some physical abuse.

There are cultural reasons for this current level of teenage domestic abuse. Children — who might once have got to know a boyfriend or girlfriend before getting into a naive and fumbling exploration of sexuality — are increasingly finding



**BETTER KARMA** The car of Imogen’s ex — now graffitied with messages of hope and support

themselves with someone they met online that they believe they have got to know, but about whom they actually know little.

Diana Barran, the retiring CEO of SafeLives, is one of many experts in this area who believes social media plays a worrying part. “Young people are so present online, tell so much about themselves and see it as the place to communicate with friends,” she says. “But people behave differently [online] because there is no accountability. It enables people to do very harmful things.”

Define the Line, a survey by the Avon Foundation for Women in partnership with the domestic-violence charity Refuge, found that almost 40% of 16- to 21-year-old girls thought that coercive and controlling behaviour in relationships had become normalised because of the abuse they see in society, the media and online pornography. One in three young people say they find it difficult to define the line between a caring action and a controlling one.

Hera Hussain, a dynamic, award-winning entrepreneur, set up Chayn, a charity that helps people threatened through social media. SafeLives uses its toolkits to train domestic-abuse workers.

“We realised early on that a lot of people didn’t know how technology can be used by partners to spy on and damage their victims,” Hussain says. “Telling them just to get off social media altogether is not realistic. They shouldn’t have to give up what can be a very valuable form of communication.” Not just valuable, but

**“HE HAD RECORDINGS AND PHOTOS OF ME. HE PUT THEM UP ON INSTAGRAM, SO MY FRIENDS AND FAMILY WOULD SEE”**

seemingly essential to the new generation.

Chayn’s website advises people how to stay safe online. Its toolkits are particularly valuable for those trying to build a domestic violence case without a lawyer.

In the private world of mobile-phone communication, it is all too easy for someone to convince a partner to send intimate and graphic messages or files. One mother I spoke to recalls the shock of what she found on her daughter’s phone.

“Amber was 15 when she got together with Joe,” she says. “He seemed like a very pleasant lad and she went out with him for some time. But he would never introduce her to friends, or meet hers. Then he started tormenting her. He told her he wasn’t sure if he wanted to be with her, and I saw how unhappy she was. She didn’t talk to me, so I decided to look at her phone. It was full of graphic sexual messages from him, and it was clear from her replies that their sex life was ‘inspired’ by porn. None of it was about caring for her. I told her what I’d seen and that I’d looked because I was worried about her, but of course she was furious. To my relief, it ended and she seems happy again going out with the friends she had lost touch with.”

Gary Wilson, host of the website Your Brain on Porn, believes the consumption of porn by teenagers and preteens (the average starting age for boys is just 11) is a far more serious risk than we may realise.

He points to 37 neurological studies that focus on how teen brains have great neuroplasticity, meaning that dramatic rewiring can take place, setting a pattern for the future. “Some teenagers today wire their arousal to internet porn’s unnaturally intense synthetic stimuli for as long as a decade before they try to connect with real partners,” he says. Wilson argues that easy access to internet porn plays a part in the increasing violence in teenage ➤➤➤

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relationships. “While glued to his screen, a young man is not learning courtship skills or spending time getting to know a girl as a person. Now, a 17-year-old virgin envisions his first time with his first girlfriend will also involve two of her friends and some handcuffs.”

An analysis of the content of porn websites published in the academic journal *Violence Against Women* found that “of 304 scenes analysed, 88.2% contained physical aggression, while 48.7% contained verbal aggression. Perpetrators were usually males. Targets of the aggression were overwhelmingly female.”

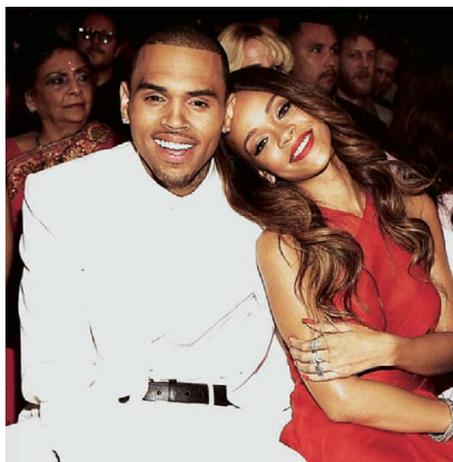
Melinda Tankard, who co-edited *Big Porn Inc: Exposing the Harms of the Global Porn Industry*, suggests that “we are conducting a pornographic experiment on young people — an assault on their healthy sexual development. Girls and young women describe boys pressuring them to perform acts inspired by the porn they consume routinely. Some see sex only in terms of performance, where what counts most is the boy enjoying it. Growing up in a pornified landscape, girls learn that they are service stations for male gratification.”

**T**here is some encouraging news, though. As it becomes clear that a generation of children is in danger of experiencing a grimly destructive kind of “first love”, a range of projects are being developed to tackle it.

The actress Olivia Colman is helping to raise funds for Talk, a charity that goes into schools to talk about relationships, how to recognise coercion and abuse and where to go for help. It also talks about pornography, sexting and their consequences. Kate Lexen, the charity’s education manager, believes it is vital to work with boys as well as girls. “Boys can be very confused and uncertain,” she says. “They may have had experiences that have made them mistrustful of women, and violence is often a male way of dealing with feeling out of control. Although we stress that abusive behaviour is never acceptable, we also prioritise empathy for everyone.”

Around the country, the Big Lottery Fund supports 63 projects under its women and girls initiative; these include focused support for girls at risk of domestic violence. The charity Solace Women’s Aid, which runs refuges for females aged 16 and upwards, has just set up Here2Change, a programme to go into schools and provide peer support and guidance. It is training both girls and boys, in some cases survivors of partner abuse.

Belinda, a likeable, chatty 22-year-old, is part of the team, and feels her “frankly horrifying” experience will be valuable in doing this work. Her relationship with Tom began when she was in her teens. She knew little about him when they got together. The first warning sign was when he flicked a



**TORN APART** Chris Brown and Rihanna’s violent relationship highlighted an epidemic

lighter at her and set her hair on fire on New Year’s Eve. “I should have got out then, but he had treated me so perfectly up until then, I imagined it was a one-off,” she says. When she argued with her parents about her relationship, Tom suggested she move in with him. “Then things began. He locked me in my room, took my phone, began hitting me and screaming I made him do it. When he stamped on me and broke my ankle, I left him and moved into a homeless hostel.”

That was two years ago, and for the past year Belinda has had a new boyfriend. She can still hardly believe how gentle and considerate he is, and what good times they have together. Without the Solace training, which both have done, she is not sure she would have dared to trust him. She is lucky. For others, abuse during the intensely challenging teen years can cast long shadows on relationships in future.

Sarah was 15 when she met Stu and became another victim of teen abuse when he posted photos and recordings of her in the most intimate situations on the internet. Today, with the support of SafeLives, she is sharing her experience with a group of young women who have suffered domestic abuse.

After she got together with Stu, she says, “I found out he was using drugs and I did too, for a short time. He began to hit me, saying I made him do it with my behaviour. I was so young and I didn’t know anything about this kind of behaviour.”

As the relationship became more controlling and abusive, Sarah lost touch with all her friends. “I was very depressed and suffering from anxiety. I moved away to live at home, but I let Stu come live with us because I thought we would have a better

**“GROWING UP IN A PORNIFIED LANDSCAPE, GIRLS LEARN THAT THEY ARE SERVICE STATIONS FOR MALE GRATIFICATION”**

chance of things working there. I was wrong. It was really, really bad. Stu was told to leave our house and I broke up with him then. We had been together 2½ years. He had recordings and photos of me. He put them up on Instagram and made pages about me. He followed all my family and friends so they would see. In the end he got arrested and was charged with child pornography for the pictures, as well as for doing drugs, and he went to prison.”

For Imogen, the owner of the Bad Karma Impala, her first disastrous relationship set up an emotional template. Although a relationship with a kindly man followed, she then found herself drawn to another man who began to abuse her. They were together two years, but the slaps, the shouting and the demeaning began early on. He pushed her downstairs when she was pregnant, then blamed her for doing it herself. The cataclysmic end came when Imogen returned home with the baby the day after she gave birth. That evening they had an argument and he slapped her, baby in arms. “In that moment,” she says, “I realised things would never change, that this relationship would affect my children, and that I must get out. I told him I had to leave.”

The following morning, he told her: “If you leave me, sweetie, you have to believe me, I will kill you. I can make it look like suicide and I will not lose a single night’s sleep over it.”

She managed to record his threat on her mobile phone and, when he was arrested, she went on the run.

If Victim Support had not suggested she go to Solace, she scarcely dares to think what her life would be like now. What a pleasure, then, to hear Imogen tell of the help she received in rebuilding her life, having a home where she could feel safe, and attending courses that helped her understand what happened and see she was not to blame. All this pushed her to create her own Arts Against Abuse organisation to raise awareness and funds for Solace.

During this time, the police had found the 1968 Chevrolet Impala that her partner had smashed on a crazed night. “It was all I had left from that relationship,” she explains, “so I decided to decorate the car and take it to festivals and events.”

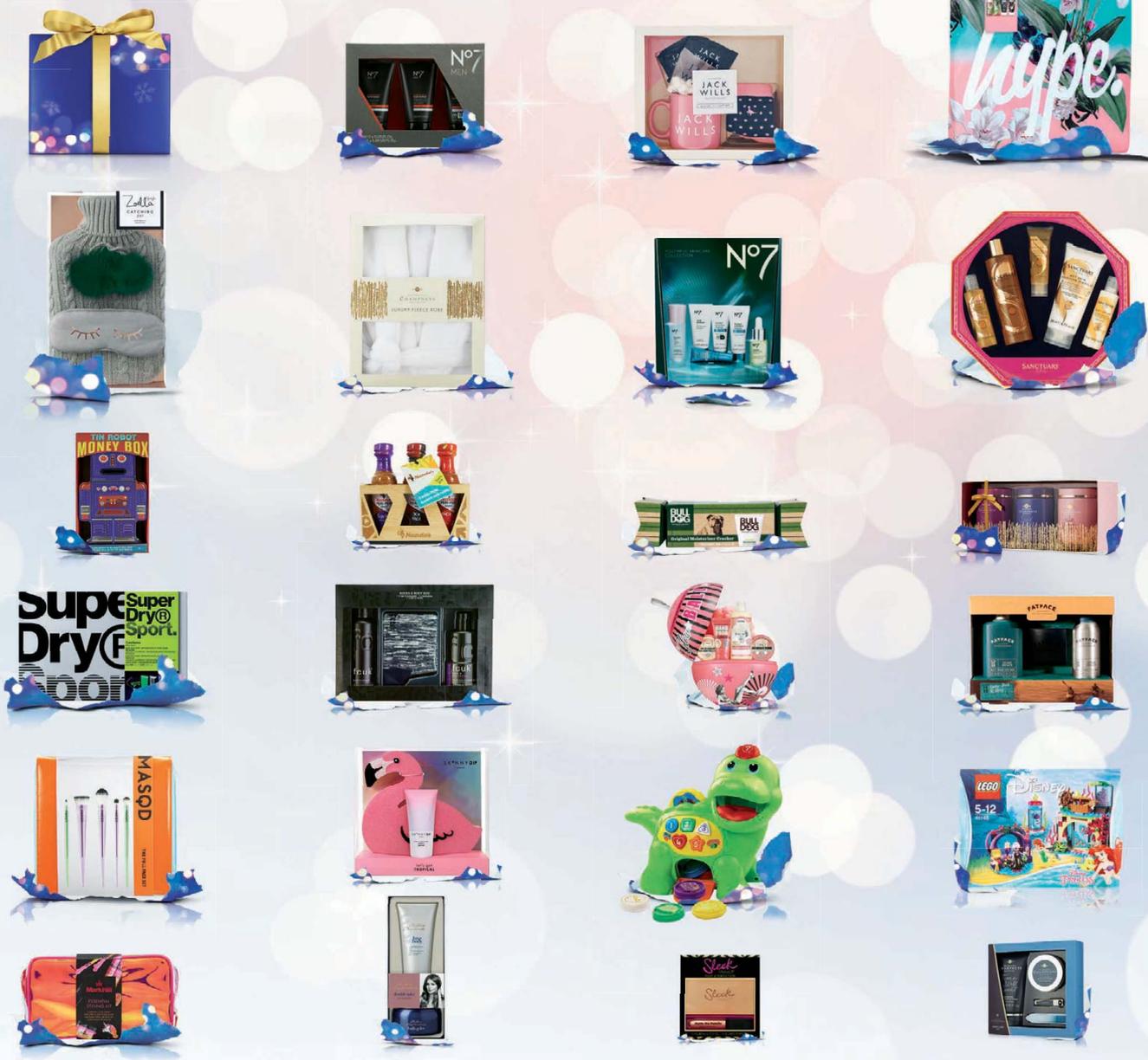
Imogen tells how people are drawn to see what it is all about. “Once I tell my story and what the car represents, men and women open up,” she says. “People then draw and write poems, hopes, dreams, pictures on the body of the Impala. Instead of just another bruised eye or trauma-based image directed at educating the public on violent abuse, I want those who already know how awful and varied abuse is that there is life afterwards.” ■

*Some names have been changed. Follow Imogen’s project at [badkarmaimpala.co.uk](http://badkarmaimpala.co.uk)*

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*Simon Barnes* on the secret lives of Britain's deer

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*Sarah Raven's* treats for the night before Christmas

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A *Life in the Day of Aussie* ballet star *Alexander Campbell*

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Your guide  
to modern  
living



# Relative Values

Lady Carina Frost, 65, widow of Sir David, and their youngest son, George, 30, an entrepreneur, on the unexpected loss of loved ones. Interviews by *Sophie Haydock*. Photograph by *Anna Batchelor*

## Lady Carina

George was an easy birth, which was a relief, as I'd had an emergency caesarean with his brother Wilfred. I knew George would be my final pregnancy — three boys was enough. David, who was a wonderful father, was at all their births. The paparazzi would be waiting to take our picture as we came out of hospital. It seemed ridiculous, but David loved all that. He and I had a very special marriage. I can't tell you the chaos that used to go on, but he kept me on my toes. He hardly knew where the nursery was — he was always flying off somewhere for work. In truth, I didn't always take motherhood in my stride. At times, I'd scream and shout and sob. But the boys were my life. They were all adored, yet, as the youngest, George had the advantage of getting away with a huge amount. He was a happy little chap — we nicknamed him "the grinner".

The boys were like triplets. They fought but had an amazing bond. We lived in London, just off the King's Road, and had a home in Hampshire. The boys boarded at Eton — it was agony when they were away, but I knew they were happy. They'd come home as often as they could. Later, Wilfred went to Oxford, while Miles and George went to Newcastle University — I honestly can't remember what George studied there. David had made his start at Cambridge, and was desperate for the boys to go too. That was the one thing he blew. He pushed too hard and they ran a mile.



Life is so fragile. David was 74 when he died, but, my God, he fitted a lot in. After his death, I went into complete chaos. The boys were incredible, but darling Miles, in particular, as the oldest, saw me through. Wilfred wasn't with us when we got the news; George went to London to break it to him, which I'm immensely proud of him for doing and I just don't know how he did it.

I was starting to process David's death when, two years later, Miles died completely unexpectedly, at the age of 31. The last time I saw him was through the window at our home in the country, practising his boxing. I'd got lunch ready, George said Miles had gone for a run, so I told him to look for his brother. The next thing I knew, police were ringing the gate bell. I came running down the drive and Miles was lying on the grass and George was giving him CPR. I had to be pulled away. I was distraught.

Again, we had to break the news to Wilfred, who'd been in Stockholm. George and I met him

at the airport. When he came through the gates, we ran up to him and hugged him and howled. After that it was a blur.

David died of an aneurysm. When they did his post-mortem, they found he had a genetic heart condition [hypertrophic cardiomyopathy, which Miles later died from] that they didn't tell us about. I'll never forgive them for not alerting us to that, ever. I'm still so angry. I wanted to sue, but George and Wilfred wouldn't let me. I eventually got a hand-written apology. The boys were tested — they don't have the same gene, luckily.

I miss Miles every second of every day, but I'm also thankful for George and Wilf, who help me see that there is light in our future. I'm very proud of them. George has an energy like his father. He launched his own rum brand, the Duppy Share — he works so very hard. And beautifully, on the bottle, in very small writing, is something David used to say: "Never waste a second."

## George

I found out about Dad in the early hours of the morning. I woke up and could hear a weird noise. Then our uncle came in and told us. Only then did I realise that the noise was Mum wailing like a hyena.

Mum is utterly unique. She has an extraordinary amount of love, empathy and strength. She always puts her children first. I don't think it's a coincidence that Miles went off and did his own thing in finance, I launched the



**A TOUCH OF FROST**  
George and Carina. Left: Carina and David in 1984 with Miles, George's eldest brother, who died, aged 31, from inherited heart disease

Love



Duppy Share, and Wilf has followed Dad into television, as co-anchor of a business news programme in the US. There's no way we'd have been able to do it without that support.

Mum came from quite an aristocratic background, but got lost in Barbados for five years and modelled for Ossie Clark. Dad was from a humble background and went to Cambridge on a scholarship. I never felt constrained by their celebrity or aristocracy.

After Dad died, we watched

**When David died, they did a post-mortem, but never told us they had found a genetic heart condition**

an interview with him. The interviewer asked him, "Do you think you've lived your life in the best way possible?" and he said, "My father was a Methodist minister, and the principles of Methodism are to make the best of every situation, to use the talents you've got, and never, ever waste a second. Yeah, I think I've done OK on those fronts." He'd never said that to us. Ever since then, I've lived by that mantra.

Miles died of a condition that Dad had that went unassessed. Hopefully, by talking about the horror of finding Miles — my complete rock and best friend — and trying in vain to save him, it will make people think about their families and get checked.

Mum asked me to go and look for Miles that day. I went off in the car, thinking that she was being paranoid. When I saw him lying there, I laughed in my head. He

#### STRANGE HABITS

##### George on Carina

Mum has gone from sending oddly irate text messages (sometimes randomly in caps lock) to becoming one of the finest and most creative users of emojis

##### Carina on George

George is like a turbocharged Tigger. This is normally a positive thing, but at times he can leave a path of destruction akin to a drunken Tasmanian devil

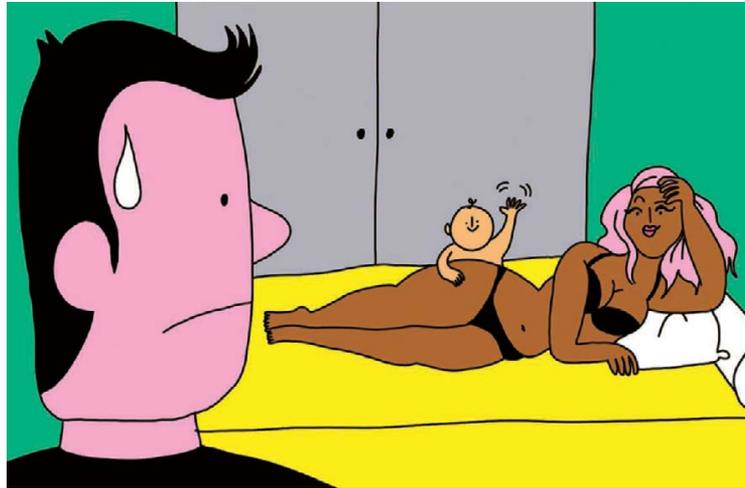
was clearly just sunbathing. But as soon as I hit the horn and he didn't respond, I knew something was wrong. I didn't know if Miles was going to regain consciousness at that point, so I didn't want to worry Mum. I tried to shield her from it all. My instinct was to call the ambulance and perform CPR. While losing Miles was beyond awful for Wilf and me, for Mum to lose her eldest son... Nobody should have to go through that.

We want to make sure his death isn't a waste, so we set up the Miles Frost Fund to raise money to put in place a national network of testing centres. The loss of Dad and Miles will always be a black hole in our lives. I'm very proud of Mum for the way she's coped. She knows she'll see them again, and that's incredibly powerful for her ■

[bhf.org.uk/miles-frost-fund](http://bhf.org.uk/miles-frost-fund).  
*The Duppy Share*, £28 for 70cl;  
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How, after the birth of our child, can I get my husband interested again in sex, a woman asks *Emma Barnett*

## Three in a bed



**Q** My husband and I are in our twenties and have been married for a year and a half. We have a one-year-old child and we work together. We were into some very kinky stuff, but since having our child my husband's sex drive is near zilch. He says he doesn't know why and he still loves me. It's frustrating. I feel like I'm losing out on my youth and it makes me question our relationship. What do I do?

**A** Let's get straight to it: did he go down the business end while you were in labour? The comedian Frankie Boyle once joked that seeing the birth of his child was akin to witnessing a horrendous murder in a favourite picnic spot. There's a chance that your man can relate — he may feel

that gaining an offspring cost him his favourite patch.

Perhaps something else is at play. Now you care for his child, he sees you as pure. How can he do the nasty to someone who nurtures his baby? He can't simultaneously spank you and worship your mothering skills. You are either a whore or his Madonna. As Freud observed, you just can't be both. (Of course he could be having an affair, as is sadly common after the birth of a child. The stress, the new distance between a couple and sleep deprivation all play havoc. But I want to give him the benefit of the doubt and focus on the other two scenarios.)

What's required is an intervention from you. Unlike those who don't want to get back in the sack post a baby, you are

approaching your man with good news. You want him and, crucially, you want him to want you.

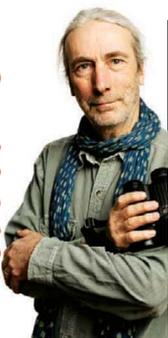
Ask him — cheerfully and boldly — why he no longer sees you in the same light. If he says he views women as magical and untouchable unicorn-like figures post birth, don't blame him. It's the fault of society around him, which too often writes women off once we've fulfilled certain duties and reached a certain age.

He may feel you've come to the end of the adventurous road and now it's drudgery from here on in. Remind him that this is only the start of your adventures together. Why not plan a holiday abroad and leave your one-year-old with a grandparent? Or go somewhere closer to home if purse strings are tight. You require some time to reconnect, without a child attached to one of your limbs.

Of course you shouldn't need to do this, but his love for you, in a world that sees women as sexy pre child and sexless post, has seen you punished for a miraculous feat, one you both agreed to. Rev him up, take him away and make him see the glorious you. I could propose couples therapy, but I think bonking your way out of this one is the best route. It's the only light-hearted way you can get him to revisit his favourite picnic spot without wincing ■

@emmabarnett;  
Emma presents BBC Radio 5 Live Daily, Wed-Fri, 10am-1pm

## Simon Barnes Snow doesn't always conceal — it also reveals



**T**he blanket of snow doesn't hide. It reveals. Did you ever, as a child, write a secret message in lemon juice? This is the easiest invisible ink: when you give the paper a gentle toasting the writing is revealed. The fall of snow has the same effect.

Cast your eyes downwards. Time and again, and in the most unpromising places — garden, suburban wood, roadside verge,

golf course — you find the clear white page of the snow marked by certain mysterious signs. Look for the one shaped like two sugared almonds, placed side by side.

Deer! The cloven feet of deer: sometimes it's the first time you notice that they're about. It's constantly amazing that creatures as big as deer can live secret lives right in the middle of human populations. We can be entirely

unaware of their presence until the fall of snow reveals them, as fingerprint powder reveals the secret doings of burglars.

There are six species of deer in Britain, four of them introduced. The Romans brought us fallow deer, the landed gentry brought in sika, Reeves' muntjac and Chinese water deer, mostly in the 19th century. You're meant to despise them as non-natives, but I've never

# Family



To get children to think of others, start by discussing what they can do for charity, says *Lorraine Candy*

## The gift of giving

Two of my children go to state schools and two go to a private school. I make no judgment either way on this, all I know is our kids are thriving at both and I notice little difference between their schools until Christmas time. At the state junior school, the sense of urgency around the Christmas fair is palpable. We aren't gathering in the playground and hall just for chaotic festive shenanigans, we're raising cash to help rebuild the playground and upgrade the hall.

It's different with seasonal activities at the private school, where the fundraising focus is less of an immediate need. But what this difference really underlines is the importance of community and contributing, a lesson I struggle to teach my children, especially the two more self-oriented teens. Raising money for the state school is an imperative, not a choice, and for the "gimme gimme" generation that's a valuable message to get across during the most consumption-focused time of the year. Educational psychologists all agree that ensuring you imprint more charitable thinking, or empathy in general, in your children's emotional skill set can only help them through life.

But how? According to one US study, simply talking to kids about it over a longer time period than merely Christmas can unlock empathy and make them more

likely to donate later in life; talking has been shown to have greater impact than role modelling the behaviour alone.

So I've taken the liberty of compiling a "reverse advent" calendar of ideas that may help your family enjoy the grace of giving between now and the big day. I can feel my teens rolling their eyes as I type that phrase, but one in five kids is living below the poverty line in the UK, so I'll ignore their predictable cynicism for now.

Foodbanks supported by the Trussell Trust are easy to donate to locally using a shopping list on its website. This is my six-year-old's favourite way of helping out.

Kiva.org, the world's largest crowdfunding platform for social good, has delivered more than

£800m in microloans to more than 2.5m entrepreneurs and students in 83 countries. You can loan as little as \$25, then receive updates of how the money is being used before it is repaid to your Kiva account. It's all online, so easy for teens to do.

It doesn't always have to be cash, though, "time and talent" donations count too. Vinspired is a volunteering charity for 14- to 25-year-olds in the UK. You can sign up for 2018 and be useful in projects across the country.

And if these don't appeal, think about what issues have touched you. Most charity donations are inspired by personal experience ■  
@SundayTimesLC  
Visit [trusselltrust.org](http://trusselltrust.org), [kiva.org](http://kiva.org) and [vinspired.com](http://vinspired.com)



### CHARITY BEGINS AT HOME

Children whose parents talk to them about giving back were

# 20%

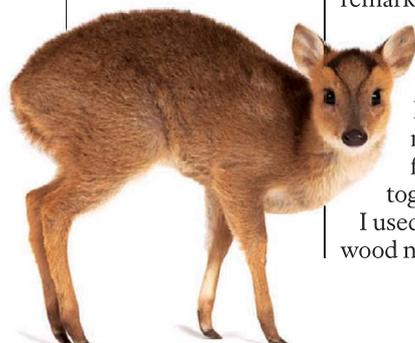
more likely to give to charity than parents who did not discuss this with their children

UNITED NATIONS FOUNDATION 2013

TOUGH LOVE ILLUSTRATION BY CECILE DORMEAU FAMILY ILLUSTRATION BY BEN CHALLENGER, ALAMY



## the deer that have adapted to live surreptitiously among us



had the heart to despise a deer. Muntjacs have made the most remarkable adaptation to our island, for they favour the most crowded part of it, central and southern England. They're small and mostly solitary — though females and young stay together for some months. I used to see them regularly in a wood near Potters Bar: they came

out of cover as soon as the car park closed and the dog walkers had departed. They were aware that there was a point in the day at which the wood became safe. Since we got rid of our wolves — the last one was gone by the 18th century — deer have been without predators, so their only problem is adapting to the ever-changing human-made environment. They have found

subtle ways of surviving and prospering. Their genius is to do so without attracting attention. When the snow falls, it's not just the winter wonderland that's remarkable: even more so is the way that the snow reveals the wonderland of wild Britain: something that's always in front of us and yet (almost) always just beyond our reach ■  
@simonbarneswild

# How the festive rush creates a perfect storm

Preparing for Christmas is anything but calm. In fact it's one of the busiest times of the year – which is just what the fraudsters want



**F**or most people, Christmas is a time of family, food and giving. We really look forward to it. On the flipside, the run-up is pretty frantic, what with shopping, family, meeting deadlines, heading off on holiday or making elaborate meals. But there is one group who are much more excited about these busy weeks than the celebration itself: the fraudsters. For them, the run-up to Christmas is Christmas.

This period is a perfect storm for shoppers; they're short of time, hassled and distracted. Instead of making one buying decision a day, we might make a dozen. The pressure of finding a hard-to-get gift or bagging a bargain can mean we lower our guard. We may also be under financial stress. All this can make us less cautious online than usual. Of course, the fraudsters know this and ramp up their activities accordingly.

They will target consumers on many fronts. Phishing emails have been around for years, although the level of sophistication has increased considerably. More recently, as smartphones have taken over, they've been joined by "smishing" texts. Even though many of these scams are clever and well-designed,



22%

Just one in five of us say that we feel 'very secure' when shopping online at Christmas

Barclays DigiSafe Christmas survey 2017

under normal circumstances we would be more wary. But when we're pressed for time and desperate to buy a must-have gift, we may click on a link that appears to offer what we want. That click could do anything from installing malware on our computer to taking us to a scam website which we might then believe to be real.

Price pressures come into play, too. Perhaps we really want to buy our partner a jacket, but it costs too much. We search online and find an unfamiliar website that appears to stock it at a good price. We're so pleased, we click and pay without checking the payment screen is from the genuine seller. By the time we spot our mistake, the money is long gone, probably to a criminal gang's account across the world.

Or we might, say, be trying to arrange to collect elderly parents for the holiday when somebody phones, telling us there's a problem with our bank account and that they need our password. If this were an ordinary day, warning bells would sound. But we're trying to work out what train the family is on and who is going to sleep where and the mince pies are burning... and so we let the scammer in,



## How to buy safely online

Getting ready for Christmas can be stressful and can increase your risk of becoming a victim of fraud. So Barclays has created Supercon (below left), a fictional toy that no longer wants to be part of a scam. It appears in our ads to help people understand what to look out for.

**Ross Martin**, Head of Cyber Digital Eagles at Barclays, shares his top tips for secure shopping this Christmas



- 1. Look for mistakes**  
Take a couple of minutes to look at any offer in your inbox. Does it sound too good to be true? If so, it probably is. Look out for telltale signs such as spelling mistakes and suspicious links.
  - 2. Check the website**  
Make sure that the seller is genuine before entering any of your payment details and look out for things like fuzzy imagery or any unusual requests for personal and bank details.
  - 3. Use secure wifi**  
Public wifi can be insecure. Consider shopping from home to keep personal details safer.
- If you're a Barclays customer**
- 5. Put a freeze on your card**  
If you think you've lost a card over Christmas, you can freeze it temporarily while you search for it. You can do this using your Barclays Mobile Banking app.
  - 6. Control online purchases**  
With your Barclays Mobile Banking app, you can turn remote purchases 'on' and 'off'. Use 'on' when shopping online.

**Defeat online fraudsters this Christmas. Search 'Barclays DigiSafe'**

“  
It pays to  
work on our  
resilience,  
learn to take  
it slower and  
to stay calm



because it feels like one more task solved. Or perhaps we're out and about. We remember that we need to order groceries online, so we use our phone and log on to the nearest free wifi. Little do we know it's a hotspot set up by a scammer.

Because we're in a rush, we don't notice that the network name is a bit strange. And two weeks later, we discover that our bank card has been used to buy a laptop.

These scenarios happen hundreds of thousands of times a year, especially around Christmas. So, what can we do?

Well, it may pay to work on our resilience, try to teach ourselves to slow down and stay calm. We can also try to familiarise ourselves with the risks and learn to take a minute to think.

Finally, remember that fraud can happen to anyone. It's a misconception that scammers just target older people. In fact, research shows that younger people are more likely to be victims because they spend more time online and on social media, too, which, increasingly, is where the fraudsters lurk.

Scammers are sophisticated criminals who will target anyone. Don't let your Christmas become their Christmas.

Let the feast begin... it's the day before Christmas. What should you serve your eager guests?

# Christmas Eve crackers



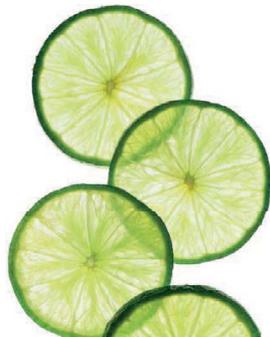
**Sarah Raven**



#### SHARE AND SAVE

You can share and save recipes from our digital editions

**C**hristmas Eve is my favourite part of the whole festive celebration. People start arriving, tensions haven't yet emerged and it feels like the time for a party. I love lighting the fires and putting candles on almost every surface, with the great scents of the Christmas tree, forced hyacinths, freesias, lilies and food all rolling together. You walk into a room and that smell immediately takes you back to every previous Christmas. For people turning up in dribs and drabs, the brilliant coloured pantzarosalata is perfect with a drink. The walnuts make it quite substantial and the whopper cheese straws feel celebratory. The main course is super-quick and easy. Have all the ingredients ready to roll, then just bring it together less than half an hour before everyone wants to eat. And that's the only cooking. The ice-cream cake is prepared and waiting in the freezer.



## 1

### Duck curry

This is quick and easy, at its best with duck, but it also works well with chicken or guinea fowl. If rendering the duck fat feels like too much of a faff, just use 2 tbsp of olive oil for frying the duck pieces. Serve with Persian jewelled rice and a little fresh coriander sprinkled on top.

#### SERVES

4 people

#### INGREDIENTS

4 duck breasts (total weight about 700g), skin on  
2 lemon grass stalks, outer leaves discarded, finely sliced  
1 red chilli, deseeded, finely chopped  
Grated zest of 2 limes  
2 tbsp red or green Thai curry paste  
400ml tin of coconut milk  
150ml chicken stock  
Juice of 1 lime  
150g mangetout or sugarsnap peas  
300g fresh beansprouts  
Small bunch of fresh coriander, roughly chopped

**01** Pull the skin off the duck and fry over a medium heat until the fat is released (about 10-15 minutes). Keep 2 tbsp of the fat and save the rest — you can use it for roasting potatoes. Discard the skin.

**02** Cut the duck breasts into bite-sized pieces and fry in the 2 tbsp of duck fat over a high heat until browned all over. Add the lemon grass and chilli and cook for 1 minute. Add the lime zest and curry paste and cook for 2 minutes. Turn down the heat, then add the coconut milk, stock and lime juice. Simmer for 10 minutes, stirring.

**03** Add the mangetout and simmer for 3 minutes. Add the beansprouts and cook for a further minute. Don't let the mangetout or beansprouts overcook. Taste and season. Sprinkle with chopped coriander before serving.

## 2

### Persian jewelled rice

The textures, colour and flavour of this rice make it an almost stand-alone dish. You can replace the rice with bulgur wheat.

#### SERVES

4-6 people

#### INGREDIENTS

50g dried cranberries  
60g raisins, or a mixture of raisins, sultanas and chopped dried apricots  
250g basmati rice ➡➡➡



PHOTOGRAPHS BY LOUISE HAGGER, FOOD STYLING BY EMILY KYDD, PROP STYLING BY ALEXANDER BREEZE, HELEN OATHCART, GETTY

2 *tbsp olive oil*  
 1 *small onion, finely chopped*  
 1 *cinnamon stick*  
 1 *tsp cardamom pods, dry-fried*  
 1 *tsp coriander seeds, dry-fried*  
 600ml *hot chicken stock*  
 50g *pistachio nuts, dry-fried*

**01** Put the cranberries and raisins into a jug and pour over enough boiling water to cover. Soak for 20 minutes, then drain well.

**02** Wash the basmati rice in several changes of cold water, until the water is no longer cloudy. Drain well. Put the olive oil into a pan and heat gently. Add the onion and sauté until soft. Add the rice, cinnamon stick, cardamom and coriander, stirring to ensure all the grains are coated in the oil.

**03** Pour in the stock, bring to the boil, then turn down the heat and cook with the lid on for 15–20 minutes, until all the liquid has evaporated. Remove from the heat and stir in the cranberries, raisins and pistachio nuts. Taste and season. Serve hot or cold.

# 3

## Stilton and black olive cheesy sticks with pantzarosalata

For a Christmas party, I love supersized cheese sticks — thin, but very long. Stick them in a tall glass to have with a drink, ready to dip into intense, purple, beetroot-and-walnut pantzarosalata.

### SERVES

15-20 thin long sticks

### INGREDIENTS

100g *parmesan cheese, freshly grated*  
 100g *stilton, grated*  
 2 *tsp cumin seeds*  
 1 *tsp hot paprika*  
 20 *black olives, finely chopped*



250g *ready-made puff pastry*  
 Flour, *for rolling out*  
 1 *egg, beaten*

### Pantzarosalata

1 *large beetroot, about 180g (you can use precooked)*  
 4 *tbsp walnuts, chopped*  
 30g *stale white bread, crumbled*  
 1 *garlic clove*  
 6 *tbsp olive oil*  
 4 *tsp red wine vinegar*

**01** Cook the beetroot in a pot of boiling water for about 40 minutes, until soft to the point of a knife.

**02** To make the cheese sticks, heat the oven to 200C (220C non-fan) Line two baking sheets with lightly oiled baking parchment.

**03** Put the two cheeses, cumin

seeds, paprika, olives and ½ tsp salt and pepper into a bowl, stirring to combine.

**04** Roll the pastry out on a floured surface to about 15cm x 30cm. Brush with a little beaten egg and sprinkle with a third of the cheese mixture, spreading it evenly all over the pastry. Fold the bottom third of the pastry up and the top third down to cover it. Roll out as before and repeat the process twice with the remaining cheese mixture. Roll the pastry into a 20cm x 40cm rectangle. Brush with a little beaten egg.

**05** Cut the pastry lengthways into 1cm-wide strips. Holding one end, twist the other end to give the strips a spiral shape. Place on the prepared baking sheet and bake



for 10–12 minutes, until risen and golden brown.

**06** While the straws are cooking, make the pantzarosalata. Once the beetroot is cooked and cool enough to handle, peel it and chop coarsely. Place in a food processor with all the other ingredients and blend together until smooth.

**07** Once the straws are cooked, cool slightly, then place on a wire rack. They are fine cold, but best served just warm, dipped into the intense purple pantzarosalata.

# 4

## Frozen mocha and ginger meringue cake with pomegranate sauce

You can make this well before Christmas; it's super-easy. To save time, you can buy the meringues — it doesn't matter if they are powdery and dry.

### SERVES

8-10 people

### INGREDIENTS

#### For the meringues

6 egg whites  
180g granulated sugar  
180g caster sugar  
Sunflower oil

2 tbsp strong instant coffee powder or granules  
750ml double cream  
1 tbsp caster sugar  
1 tbsp coffee liqueur, such as Tia Maria or Kahlúa  
3 pieces of stem ginger, thinly sliced  
1 tbsp of the ginger syrup

#### For the pomegranate sauce

3 tbsp redcurrant jelly  
275ml pomegranate juice (bought or fresh)

## The Dish

*Juice of 1 lime  
1 heaped tbsp arrowroot  
Seeds of 2 pomegranates*

**01** Heat the oven to 110C (130C non-fan).

**02** To make the meringues, whisk the egg whites until very stiff and dry, then add the granulated sugar bit by bit, whisking until the egg white regains its former stiffness. Fold in the caster sugar with a large metal spoon. Spoon onto greaseproof paper rubbed with a trace of sunflower oil, or a silicone mat, and bake in the oven for about 3 hours until crisp. Remove and break the meringue into pieces.

**03** Mix the instant coffee with 1 tbsp boiling water, then allow to cool. Whip the cream to the soft-peak stage and mix in the sugar, Tia Maria and half the coffee. Fold the sliced ginger,

ginger syrup and meringue pieces into the whipped cream mixture and then spoon into a deep (8cm) straight-sided round cake tin, 22cm in diameter, or a loaf tin, lined with non-stick paper. Marble the top with the remaining coffee. Freeze for at least 24 hours.

**04** To make the sauce, dissolve the redcurrant jelly in the pomegranate juice over a low heat. Add the lime juice. Bring to the boil, then remove from the heat. Add the arrowroot mixed with a little cold water. Return to the heat and simmer, while whisking, for a couple of minutes. Then let the sauce cool. When it's completely cold, add the pomegranate seeds.

**05** Serve the cake straight from the freezer (it softens fast, so don't take it out as early as you would with ice cream), drizzled with the sauce ■





t, puds amazing, i

[sainsburys.co.uk](https://www.sainsburys.co.uk)





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n-laws praising, s



#everybitofChristmas  
is living well





# Cocktail sticks at the ready

Introducing our Christmas Antipasti Party Platter



Christmas is coming together





## “This is some of the finest duck to be found outside Beijing”

### Duddell's London Bridge



### Marina O'Loughlin

I've never come across duck polishing before. This is not a euphemism. The bird arrives with some ceremony, already gleaming a dark, lacquered bronze. But it's apparently not quite gleaming enough: a white-gloved staff member rubs it with muslin until it virtually shoots out motes of light, threatening to upstage this already glittering new restaurant.

Air-dried skin is then shaved off with surgical precision. It's crisp, almost brittle, like the caramel on a crème brûlée, only duck-flavoured, with the slenderest coating of melting fat anointing its underside. We're

told to dip this into fennel sugar. We levitate with pleasure.

The rest of the duck is carved into juicy, fragrant slices to be packed into pancakes with its eight “condiments” — the usual cucumber and spring onion, plus pomelo and pineapple, sauces of sour-sweet plum sauce, peanut and sesame, and a powerhouse, citrus-pungent aged mandarin number. No two mouthfuls taste the same, their only unifying element sheer joyous duckiness.

There's a second, stir-fried duck course, but after this performance, who cares? The only thing I don't love is the pancakes, fluffier, more pikelet-like than the bog-standard ones, lacking their bland elasticity. Sometimes homemade isn't an improvement (see Heinz Cream of Tomato Soup). Otherwise, this is some of the finest duck — from Ireland's Silver Hill Farms — to be found outside Beijing.

Anyway, carried away, sorry. That duck is desert-island food and this is Duddell's, the first branch outside Hong Kong of an acclaimed swankpot located in the Duddell Street outpost of Shanghai

Tang. It's brought to us by the “power couple” Yenn Wong and her husband, Alan Lo, between them responsible for some 20 or so high-octane hospitality businesses. In every sense of the word, this is a dazzler. It's in St Thomas' Church, also home to the Old Operating Theatre Museum, the historic space transformed into a jaw-dropping, double-height room in shades of jade and mother of pearl, crowned by imposing chandeliers that make dramatic sense of the (super-noisy) space. There's a lot of din all round: particularly a cacophony of soft launches, invites and what-bloody-have-you pockmarking my social media timelines like a plague of positivity.

Thanks to this needy marketing push, I nearly filed Duddell's under “over my dead body”. You may be lucky enough to be immune to social media, but years as an anonymous restaurant critic working from the buzzing hub of my empty kitchen means I rely on Twitter — and, latterly, Instagram — a lot. Not just for finding restaurants untrumpeted by huge public relations budgets, but ➤➤➤

Duddell's,  
9A St Thomas Street,  
London SE19RY;  
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duddells.co/london

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## Table Talk



**GOLDFISH VARIATIONS** The Cantonese dim sum symphony is “shallowly ordered for its photogenic qualities”

for keeping the swirling winds of existential solitude at bay.

So you might be less irritated by the ubiquity of the benign-sounding “influencer”, a shadowy semi-professional figure paid to perform the arduous task of pimping products via app posts — a role now mutating to the rather more sinister “enabler”. What the terms boil down to is quid pro quo, free meals or even loot in return for each “omg” and “to die for” plug of hyperbole. Instead of making me want to add their targets to my #Hotlist, I’d rather watch a perpetual loop of *The X Factor* (the Steve Brookstein series) while being force-fed Twiglets and tangerine jelly.

I’m glad I got over myself, because Duddell’s food, led by the former Hakkasan chef Daren Liew, is mostly sensational. (And, of course, if, in my twenties, someone had offered me a grand a post to pimp a new restaurant, I’d have bitten their hand off before you could say “amazeballs triple-decker kimchi burger”.)

We have a “limited portion” soya chicken, succulent poulet de Bresse brined in aromatics before its skin is hot-oiled into a crackling shard: just gorgeous. Cubes of slow-braised beef shin in dried XO fish sauce with sea vegetables and knots of tofu skin, an exercise in the pleasures of pungency and texture. There’s slipper lobster of preternatural delicacy — boy, the kitchen knows how to fry — with

black-bean sauce studded with soft cloves of sweet black garlic.

For every Chinese restaurant outing, there’s someone who’ll insist on the salt’n’pepper squid and sweet’n’sour pork. I’m glad of one pal’s basic tendencies — I’d never have ordered these, but they’re sublime. The squid is bemusingly tender, rustling in what I can only describe as celestial fried scraps, pugnacious with chilli and tongue-tingling with salt. The pork — sorry, “sweet and sour Cointreau Berkshire pork” — reinvents the Day-Glo, gnarly gloopathos as a sophisticated beauty with all of the original’s cheap thrills. Even the cocktails are little revelations: my pisco, saffron, Sichuan pepper and chilli Yellow Wonder arrives topped with a beautiful scarlet fish, made from Campari jelly.

I can’t wait to return to Duddell’s for the dim sum, one of my very favourite meals. And when I visit a week later, this is where it falls apart. Goldfish-shaped dumplings, shallowly ordered with their photogenic qualities in mind — where are my influencing millions? — aren’t as decorative as the publicity shots (see above), a little

**The five dim sum chefs have 200 years’ experience. Perhaps they need a bit of a lie-down**

lurid and lumpen. In fact, they could do with a bit of refining all round, their bouncy, fish-paste homogeneity making it hard to figure out whether you’re chomping through scallop, king crab or basic prawn har gau. In the PR puffery, they talk about having five dim sum chefs with more than 200 years of experience between them. Perhaps they should let the poor dears have a bit of a lie-down? But there are highlights: cheung fun (“like Chinese cannelloni”, says our helpful server), their slithery skins wrapped around crisp beancurd-filled prawns; sugar-crusted bao stuffed with iberico pork; even the usual condiments are superior, the chilli oil fiery and crunchy, leaving a suggestion of fermented fish.

The place is rammed on both visits with young, designer-clad Asians. With Duddell’s emphasis on rare and expensive ingredients — abalone on rice; sesame toasts reimagined with greyish wagyu weeping molten foie gras instead of prawns, the culinary equivalent of one of those matt supercars you see parked outside Harrods — they’ve clearly got their eyes on a starry prize. The Hong Kong branch has one Michelin, perhaps an exaggerated display of generosity on the part of the tyre guys, given the overall quality of dim sum in that city. But despite the screechy marketing, I’ll be back, if only to polish off more of that duck ■  
@MarinaOLoughlin

#### DUDELL'S From the menu

Half peking duck with eight condiments £35

Cantonese soya chicken £26

XO beef shin with sea vegetables £12

Slipper lobster with black garlic and organic basil in chilli bean sauce £38

Salt and pepper squid with hon shimeji mushrooms £12

Sweet and sour Cointreau Berkshire pork £19

Foie gras beef on toast £12

Yellow Wonder cocktail £12

Beaujolais Fleurie £42

#### TOTAL

For two, including 12.5% service charge  
£234

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# Wine with a jalfrezi? Not as bonkers as it sounds



**Will Lyons**

**M**y local curry club recently invited me along to one of its regular outings to the Indian restaurants of the neighbourhood. I like to think it was my wit and good company that elicited the invitation, but I'm pretty sure it was because they were after

some guidance on which wines to order. Spice is tricky for oenophiles: fiery food can play havoc with your taste buds, chilli in particular, as it tends to accentuate the bitter flavours latent in red wine and can neutralise the fruitiness. But, of course, curry isn't always hot and there are myriad ingredients that go into it, from perfumed ginger and basil to the earthy and savoury chives and onions.

When pairing wine with spicy food, a good option is to go for an aromatic white, such as a riesling or a gewürztraminer from Alsace. Both have plenty of

vitality and acidity. If I'm eating something with a little sweetness, rosé — preferably a fruity one — is also on my list.

In recent years I have experimented with red wine and found that anything full-bodied, with low tannins and lots of warming juicy red fruit (look out for the grenache grape variety) can pair well with mild to medium-bodied spices.

If we're talking really hot curry, however, I tend to favour a cool and crisp glass of lager. After all, everyone's allowed the occasional night off ■

@Will\_Lyons



**2016 KIM CRAWFORD PINOT GRIS THE NEW ZEALAND HOUSE OF WINE, £13.50**

*New Zealand*  
Pinot gris pairs excellently with Thai food, its delicate citrus and floral character marrying with the spices. This example from Marlborough has a slightly honeyed character and a fresh, clean finish.



**2016 WAIMEA GRUNER VELTLINER MAJESTIC, £15**

*New Zealand*  
Grüner veltliner is Austria's top grape variety and is loved for its versatility with food. From Nelson, on New Zealand's South Island, this Waimea has tropical notes of pineapple, herbs and stone fruit. A winner with gently spiced seafood.



**2016 CAVES D'ESCLANS WHISPERING ANGEL, COTES DE PROVENCE FROMVINEYARDS DIRECT.COM, £16**

*France*  
Any kind of dish with a little sweetness or residual sugar works really well with rosé. A sniff of Whispering Angel reveals a slight trace of smoke, giving way to cool zesty grapefruit in the mouth.



**PAUL MAS COTE MAS, PEZENAS, LANGUEDOC MAJESTIC, £13**

*France*  
This Paul Mas is a rich, fleshy wine with flavours of dark fruit — notably cherry and plum. An easy-to-drink red from the south of France, it sits well alongside meat-based curries that are rich in earthy spices with medium heat.



**QUINTA DO ATAIDE ALTANO ORGANIC, DOURO WAITROSE, £11**

*Portugal*  
Symington is noted as the producer of Graham's port, but the family also has an estate that makes unfortified wine. The white and red are both interesting but stable choices. This organic example has aromatic red fruit that will pair well with coriander.



**2014 DOMAINE RICHEAUME CUVÉE TRADITION, COTES DE PROVENCE YAPP BROTHERS, £19.50**

*France*  
A rich, smooth blend of syrah, merlot, cabernet sauvignon, grenache noir and tempranillo. Its complex flavour combines well with the garlic and onion in mild curries.

# SANTA'S LITTLE HELPER

Let John Lewis and Google Home Mini take the stress out of your family's Christmas – and help you remember those perfect gifts, too

**S**chool's out for Christmas, and it's the first day of the holidays for mum, Ellie, and dad, Andrew. But there's no time to rest: children Becky and Tom's excitement levels are rising – and so is Ellie and Andrew's stress. There's still a million things to do and presents to find.

But Ellie's got a festive little helper: "Hey Google, what are my reminders for today?"

Until now, the Google Home Mini has been slumbering on the kitchen

counter, but the sleek, voice-activated smart-speaker springs to life: "Make mince pies for sister Karen; buy presents for Karen's kids; deck the halls with boughs of holly..." The Google Home Mini talks Ellie through her tasks for the day.

The compact unit responds to Andrew's voice, too, although he soon wishes it didn't after the Google Home Mini reveals the Ashes scores.

Andrew changes the subject: "Hey Google, what is the traffic like on the M25?" He's planning to nip out to pick



up Becky and Tom's new bikes. Ellie, meanwhile, needs to get on and make those mince pies, but: "Hey Google, what's the time?" Eeek, it's quickly running out. "OK Google, how do you make mince pies."

Later, it's time to hit the shops. But where are the children? Ellie commands: "OK Google, broadcast – 'It's time to go.'" The Google Home Mini devices in Tom and Becky's rooms instruct the children that they are required downstairs. Now. "What a marvellous invention," mum thinks to herself. The Google Home Mini's "broadcast" function is so easy to use that shouting from the bottom of the stairs has become a thing of the past.

The shopping expedition is a great success, and Ellie and the children return from the shops laden with presents, tinsel, crackers and tasty mince pies. Back home, Becky and Tom are allowed a festive treat. "OK Google, play *Arthur Christmas* from Netflix," says Becky. And, because the Google Home Mini works with Chromecast, the film is playing on the TV by the time the kids hit the couch.

Meanwhile, in the kitchen, Ellie is also feeling festive. "OK Google, play my Spotify Christmas playlist." She is singing along when Andrew returns from some secret shopping of his own (Google Home Mini had told him the closing time of the shop that stocked Ellie's longed for cashmere sweater – she'd been dropping hints for weeks).

The weather outside may be frightful, but the kitchen's an inferno. "Hey Google, turn the heating down," Andrew splutters, glad he had a smart thermostat installed so he can adjust the heating. As Andrew disappears next door to see the kids, Ellie whispers into the Google Home Mini: "Hey Google, turn the music up please. And the heating."

- **The Google Home Mini costs £49 at John Lewis, including a two-year guarantee**
- **Visit your nearest John Lewis store to try it for yourself and get knowledgeable Partners' advice**
- **Buy in-store or online at [johnlewis.com](http://johnlewis.com)**

“

The Google Home Mini talks Ellie through her tasks for the day

## 'OK Google, talk to Moz The Monster'

What better way to enjoy the magical, heartwarming Christmas story of Moz The Monster – the adorable star of the John Lewis Christmas ad – than with this brilliant interactive version that works with Google Home Mini? Your children can hear and take part in the story of Moz The Monster and seven-year-old Joe, personalise sound effects and try the Moz The Monster quiz at the end.

John Lewis



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The Clarkson Review: McLaren 720S

# The appliance of Travelodge science



## Jeremy Clarkson

By and large, it's a fact that when Ferrari is making excellent road cars, its Formula One racers are slithering about, and then breaking down or coming fourth. And, conversely, when it's making terrible road cars, its racers are cruising to victory without breaking a sweat.

All through the early Noughties, Ferrari was totally dominant on the track. It won the world championship five years on the trot. And the road cars it was making? Well, there was the 550, which was sort of quite nice, and the 360, which wasn't even that.

But then in 2009 along came the brilliant 458 Italia and a range

of front-engined GT cars that cause grown men to go weak at the knees. And it hasn't won the F1 title since.

It's not just Ferrari that suffers from this problem. McLaren was pretty much always a top three team. But then it decided to start making road cars and now its F1 racers drive around at the back for a couple of laps and conk out.

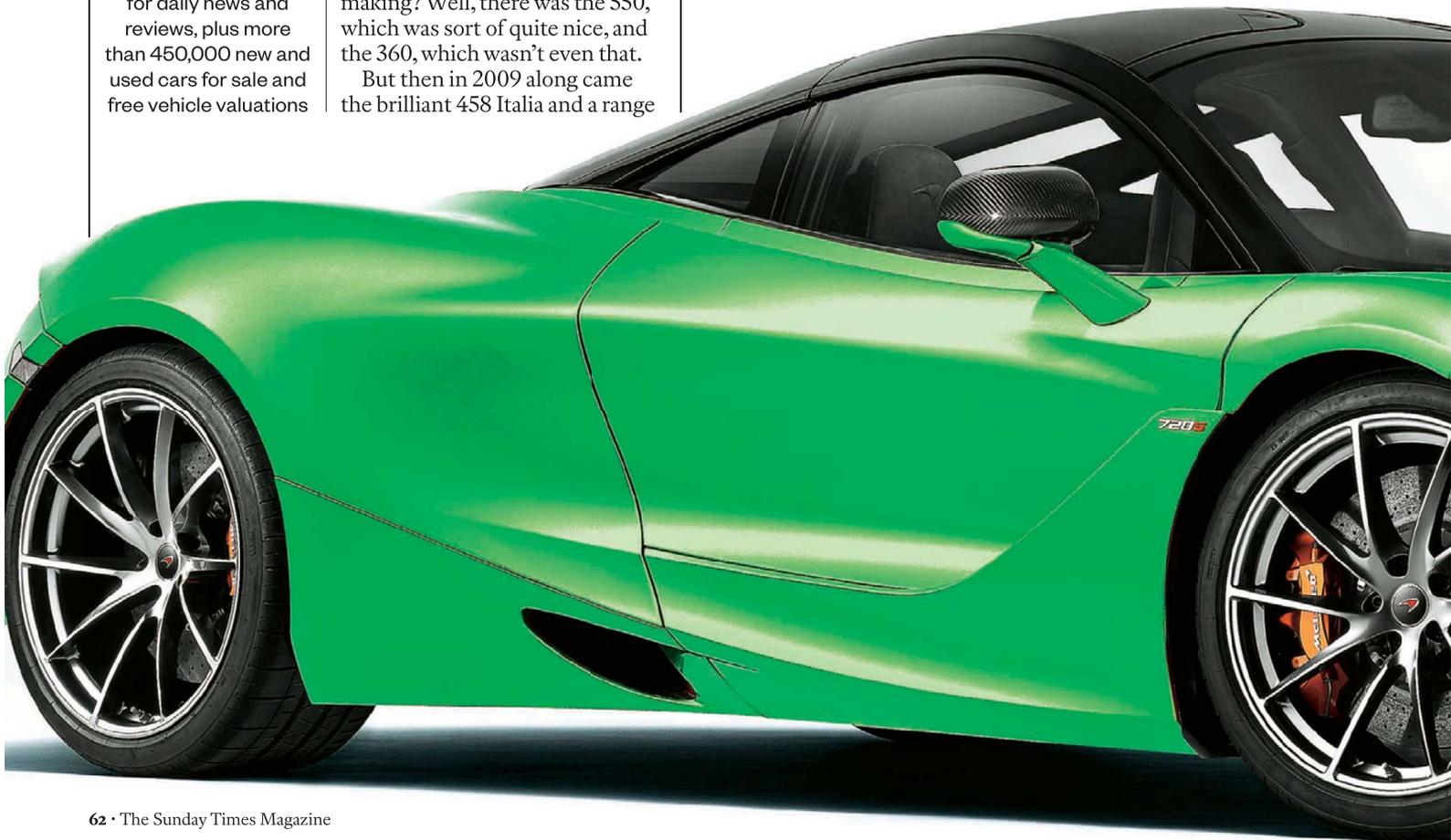
Many commentators blame the Honda engine for this lack of pace and unreliability and I'm sure it's partly to blame. But think about it. If you're trying to get a road-car division up and running, you're going to put your best people on that. You just are.

And it must be said, they did do a good job. The fresh-out-of-the-box McLaren MP4-12C wasn't the most exciting-looking car and in some ways it felt as though it had

been engineered by someone who cuts his lawn with nail scissors. It was all very obsessive compulsive. But, ooh, it was clever and fast.

And then the range expanded and the excitement started to come and eventually we got the P1, which, I still maintain, is the most bonkers car I've yet driven. It was swivel-eyed and mad. An insane bastardisation of Elon Musk's vision, the way it used battery tech to create more speed. It really was, as I said at the time, a weaponised wind farm. I adored it.

Now, with the F1 team still in disarray, it has come up with a new road car that doesn't have the P1's hybrid drive system but somehow manages to be, as near as makes no difference, just as fast. Let me put that in figures. A P1 will do the standing quarter-mile in 10.2 seconds. And the 720S?



You'll need 10.4 seconds. That's not a big gap.

And in the corners you'll make up for that lost fraction. It took me a long time to master the P1. But when I did, I found that, in extremis, it will understeer. The 720S will too but to nothing like the same degree. Which means that round a track the straightforward dinosaur will be quicker than the rainbow warrior.

There are all sorts of extremely dreary reasons for this, all of which have to do with weight and electronics. Let me put it this way. You can download data from your 720S so that after supper you can analyse how it and you managed on your journey home from work. This is a nerd car.

It may look brilliant — mine was brown and I still thought it was a sensation — but you cannot get round the fact that it simply doesn't have the soul of a Ferrari. It'll kick a Fezza's arse in any race, anywhere, anytime, but you can't help feeling it's a car built after a meeting in a Travelodge with a flip chart. And not while casually doodling over a bottle of wine.

And I'm afraid that, from this point on, things get a bit bad. There's a lot of talk about how it's 5.548% stiffer than the old 650S and how the engine has 195 more cubic centimetres because of the increased stroke and how there's

## Head to head

McLaren 720S v  
Ferrari 488 GTB



Price	
£208,600	£183,984
Power	
710bhp	661bhp
0-62mph	
2.9sec	3.0sec
Top speed	
212mph	205mph

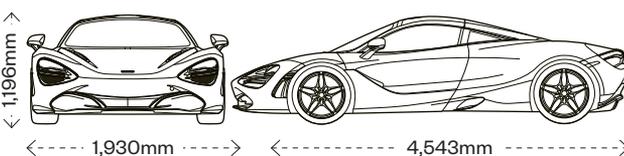
been a rethink in the design of the carbon fibre tub. And I don't doubt all this engineering pays dividends at the limit through Eau Rouge at the Spa-Francorchamps circuit in Belgium. But the downside is that when you run over a manhole cover on the M40, you'll wince.

The party piece of all McLarens is the way they combine brilliant handling with a supple ride. Well, the 720S doesn't. It's too firm.

And the brake pedal is wrong. When you first push it, nothing happens, which means you have a bit of a panic and push harder, which causes the car to stand on its nose. I found that even when I had my foot on the brake pedal, the car would still creep forwards. You really have to give it a shove.

## The Clarkometer

### McLaren 720S



<b>Engine</b> 3994cc, V8, twin turbo, petrol	<b>Fuel / CO<sub>2</sub></b> 26.4mpg / 249g/km
<b>Power</b> 710bhp @ 7500rpm	<b>Price</b> £208,600
<b>Acceleration</b> 0-62mph: 2.9sec	<b>Release date</b> On sale now
<b>Top speed</b> 212mph	<b>Jeremy's rating</b> ★★★★☆

## You can download data from the 720S and after supper analyse how it did. This is a nerd car

There's nothing wrong with the brakes. It's the pedal. And I'm not the only one to notice this. Autocar did too. And so did James May. It's an issue that needs resolving.

One that can't be resolved so easily, though, is the way the interior works. It's all done on purpose and it's too complicated. The electric seat adjustment is a case in point. There's no logic to it, and the same applies with the immensely complex Track, Comfort and Sport settings. Then there's the sat nav, which is way better than it's been in any McLaren to date and is actually better than the system you get in a Volkswagen Golf.

This then is a tricky car to sum up. Yes, it is mind-blowingly fast. It's a direct competitor for the Ferrari 488 but in terms of what they both set out to do, it's not a competitor at all. They're in a different league altogether. I even think the Big Mac is better-looking and that's saying something because the little Ferrari is like a dreamy mix of Alicia Vikander and something I just thought of.

But the ride is too firm, and the controls are too hard to use and that brake pedal is an issue as well. And then there's the really big problem. You sense this car was designed by really, really clever people who live and breathe yaw, slip angles and various other engineering conundrums.

People who really would be more gainfully employed in the company's race team, where such things matter.

For the 720S to blow my frock up, it needs some P1 fairy dust. It needs a bit of humanity in the mix, a bit of childlike fun.

In short, this car would have been better if it had been designed not in a Travelodge, but in the pub ■





**LIVING THE DREAM** Adam Henson was impressed by how the Land Rover Discovery performed around his farm

## Me and My Motor

Countryfile presenter Adam Henson was behind the wheel at 8

Adam Henson, the farmer and Countryfile presenter, was driving Land Rovers around his father's Gloucestershire farm from the age of eight. He graduated to tractors and other farm machinery at the age of 13 and by 17 was an accomplished driver — but it still took him four attempts to pass his test.

"I didn't know the whole 'mirror, signal, manoeuvre' thing," says Henson, now breezily driving around his 1,600-acre farm in a brand new top-of-the-range Discovery. "I didn't even have a lesson before my first test. I had to find my dad on the farm to take me to the test centre and he was covered in sheep shit and wearing wellies. I think the test guys failed me before I even got in the car."

Henson, now 51, grew up on the farm he still runs today, although it has more than trebled in size over the years, and he is quick to point out that he is a tenant, not the owner. It was while "almost going bankrupt" during the

outbreak of foot-and-mouth disease in livestock in 2001 that Henson entered a contest to find a new Countryfile presenter. Then, the programme had about 2.5m viewers in its Sunday morning slot. Today, shown on BBC1 on Sunday evening, it regularly attracts between 8m and 9m: "Countryfile is bigger than X Factor, and John Craven is more famous than Simon Cowell," says Henson, pausing the Discovery to point out a fluffy Highland heifer and a huge pile of "human biscuit" — dried-out, odourless excrement used for fertiliser.

Henson has had the seven-seater 4x4 — on loan from Land Rover — for only a couple of days but drives it as nonchalantly as if it were the battered family pick-up. He likes functional cars — "I don't crave to own a Ferrari" — loathes traffic jams and could never live in London.

Funnily enough, it was in Northwood, on the northwestern edge of the capital, where his father, Joe, first caught the farming bug. The illegitimate son of Harriet Collins, a chorus girl known by the stage name Billie Dell, and Leslie Henson, then a star of stage and screen, Joe spent his childhood helping out at a local farm and fantasising about becoming a farmer.

He realised his dream in 1962, renting 450 acres that are still part of the farm today, and later opening the Cotswold Farm

Park, a visitor attraction of rare British breeds.

As a child, Henson, who has three older sisters, idolised his father and "was just always following him out of the door pulling on my wellies".

Aged 18, he bought an Austin Allegro to get him through agricultural college, then went travelling with a friend (now his business partner). "We tried hitching around New Zealand but we could never get a ride, so we bought a little Morris Minor — we had to tow a tanker behind it, it lost so much oil," says Henson. "Then in Australia we bought a Ford Falcon (XB), a fantastic six-cylinder car; made a lovely noise."

Then it was back home to a Toyota Carina and life on the farm, where he settled down with his childhood sweetheart, Charlotte, and had two children, Ella and Alfie, now aged 19 and 15.

When he was chosen as a television presenter, he was again following in the footsteps of his father, who, as a result of his passion for rare breeds, appeared on various animal-related TV shows, alongside the likes of Johnny Morris.

Joe died in 2015. "It was devastating," says Henson. "It still is, but it is lovely having the farm. There are memories wherever I go. Sometimes I'll sit and have a quiet cry somewhere." ■

**Interview by Emma Smith**

Driving



### MY LIFE IN CARS

1985

Austin Allegro



1988

Morris Minor



1988

Ford Falcon (XB)



1989

Toyota Carina



1994

Subaru Impreza estate



2014

Range Rover Sport



### MY DREAM CAR

A brand new Land Rover Discovery — currently on loan from the car company: "I'm not just saying this. It really is my kind of car"

Self-driving vehicles will have to “decide” who to save in a crash. That’s why philosophers must play a role in building them

## A dilemma for your car’s AI: who lives and who dies



**Robert Matthews**

When the world’s most famous scientist delivers his thoughts on the future of humanity, he makes headlines. Stephen Hawking certainly did that last month when he warned the rise of artificial intelligence (AI) could bring about the “worst event in the history of our civilisation”.

Hawking also said, however, that AI might be wonderful. One thing he is certain about is AI researchers need help if they’re to avoid creating microchip monsters no one can control.

Hawking thinks the best hope lies in research in fields including economics, the law and computer security. Nothing new there: the same list appeared in an open letter published by AI experts in 2015. Well, almost. Hawking omitted one discipline mentioned by the experts: philosophy.

Hawking regards philosophy as an irrelevance. In 2011 he declared: “Philosophers have not kept up with modern

developments in science.” If that’s what he believes, it’s Hawking who hasn’t kept up with modern developments. Philosophers are playing a key role in the AI debate.

Take self-driving cars, which Jaguar Land Rover revealed are now being tested on British roads. Doubtless the algorithms mostly do a grand job, but what happens if, say, a child runs into the road and the only way to avoid impact is by swerving over a cliff? Should the AI put the life of the child above that of the driver?

Philosophers call this a “trolley problem” and their insights are guiding studies of the codes we want AI to follow. Early results hint at trouble ahead for car makers. The journal *Science* has reported on research showing that most people want “ethical” AIs willing to sacrifice passengers in some circumstances. Or that’s what they want in other people’s cars. In their own, they want AI that always puts them first.

What should car makers do? No one knows — which seems to support Hawking’s scepticism about philosophy. But its value lies in warning the cheerleaders for AI that such problems exist — and that not even humans give consistent answers to them ■

*Robert Matthews is visiting professor of science at Aston University in Birmingham*



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MB, London

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**Matt Bingham**

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**BEST FOR PRICE**

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This plugs into your TV to bring 4K to films, Netflix and Amazon shows. As with Apple TV, you control it via a smart little remote, your phone or voice commands. It’s tiny, fast and a bargain. **MB** [amazon.co.uk](http://amazon.co.uk)

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# More power to your Christmas

Why put all your energy into making Christmas perfect when you could be conserving it instead?

**Dominic Wells** gets some top tips from 2016's MasterChef winner Jane Devonshire (above)



**F**or any family cook, Christmas can be hectic. No matter how well planned your festive feast, somehow the turkey always ends up taking longer than expected, the roast potatoes don't crisp as they should, or the Brussels sprouts end up soggy. Perhaps that's why the goose is the more traditional Christmas bird: the cook, too, tries to glide serenely along while in reality paddling to stay afloat.

One chef – or MasterChef, to be precise – who understands this better than most is Jane Devonshire. A mother of four, Jane describes herself first and foremost as a “family cook”, and was endearingly gobsmacked to win the prestigious TV competition last year.

“It sounds trite, but food should always be about love and good times and fun,” says Jane. “Don't stress too much about Christmas cooking: if something goes

“  
Seeing a smart meter in action has made us all much more aware



wrong, it just becomes a story to laugh at later. My parents once had the cat gnaw on the turkey leg. They ended up walking all over London to find a butcher that would sell them just one leg of a turkey so that they could skewer it on to their damaged bird.”

But while the spread that results from your kitchen labours may not always go to plan, there is one area in which the savvy chef can keep control: the amount of energy you use while cooking. Smart cooks get smart meters installed, which allows them to see how much they're spending on energy in pounds and pence.

You may find the results surprising. Did you know that using an oven for four hours will cost you in the region of 50p? Of course you won't want to cancel your Christmas roast, but it's something to think about at other times of the year. Microwaves are far more energy-efficient



**Parsnips**  
40 mins in oven, about

**8p**

**Turkey**  
4 hours in oven, about

**47p**

**Brussels sprouts**  
10 mins on hob, about

**1p**

**Gravy**  
20 mins on hob, about

**2p**

**Bacon-wrapped stuffing bites**  
20 mins in oven, about

**4p**

**Roast potatoes**  
1 hour in oven, about

**12p**

PROMOTED CONTENT

## THE POWER OF PENNIES

It's amazing what you can make for very little energy. Follow these cooking tips from Jane Devonshire, and you'll be amazed how little it costs

### 0p Starters

"Cold starters save on energy and on fuss. For instance, make mackerel pâté – mashed up smoked mackerel, cream cheese, lemon juice, black pepper and horseradish cream to taste – the day before Christmas and put it in the fridge. Prawn cocktails also always go down well."

**Energy cost: zero**

### ½p Side dish

"Don't boil your Brussels, try to get hold of the tiny ones and, if not, peel them so you have the leaves, put them in a pan with some butter, chopped up, vacuum-packed chestnuts, a little shredded ham hock and fry with a little chicken stock and season to taste."

**Three minutes on a hob, approx cost: less than ½p**

### 1p Dessert

"I always keep frozen fruit in the freezer for smoothies. You can also use it to make an easy fruit compote in the microwave by sticking some frozen black-forest fruits in a jug with a bit of sugar, a cinnamon stick, some mixed spice or star anise – and maybe a whack of alcohol!"

**Five minutes in microwave, approx cost: 1p**

than conventional ovens, as are slow cookers: they use only as much energy as a humble lightbulb, so that eight hours of a slow cooker will cost only about 10p. No wonder sales have risen 55 per cent in recent years.

"I grew up in a house without even an indoor bathroom," says Jane, who is currently writing her first cookbook, "so I'm very much about not wasting things. That old saying is so true: 'Look after the pennies and the pounds will look after themselves.' And, these days, with all the awareness about your carbon footprint, the idea of saving energy is really coming back.

"My teens have a lot to learn, though: they often leave all the lights on. My 18-year-old has even taken to leaving the iron on when he's finished with it. I mean, good on him for ironing his shirt in the first place, but..."

Here's a handy tip: if you have children, why not get them involved? Smart meters come with a hand-held device that makes it easy to keep tabs, wherever you are in the house. Show your kids how it works, then challenge them to shave a particular amount off your weekly energy bills. You can even incentivise them by offering them a share of everything saved. You'll soon find them switching off all the electronic gadgets when not in use, or not overfilling the kettle when making tea.

"It is scary when you first see a smart meter in action," says Jane. "You put on the kettle and this thing just goes 'Whoosh!' It's made me so much more aware."

**Contact your energy supplier about getting a smart meter at no extra cost. If you are unsure which provider you are with, go to [smartenergyGB.org/suppliers](http://smartenergyGB.org/suppliers)**

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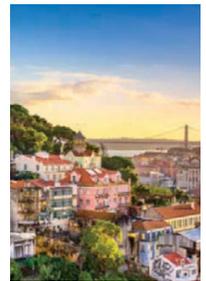


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# A Life in the Day



## WORDS OF WISDOM

### BEST ADVICE I WAS GIVEN

Don't sweat the small stuff

### ADVICE I'D GIVE

Never worry about the things you can't control

### WHAT I WISH I'D KNOWN

It's easier to learn French as a child than as an adult

## Alexander Campbell

The Royal Ballet star raised eyebrows down under when he chose dance over cricket

**A**lexander Campbell, 30, was born in Sydney, where he trained at Academy Ballet. He joined the Royal Ballet School in London, aged 16, and went on to star with the Birmingham Royal Ballet. He is now a principal with the Royal Ballet at Covent Garden, where his repertoire includes the Prince in both *The Nutcracker* and *The Sleeping Beauty*. He is single and lives in south London.

“I don't know if I believe in fairy tales, but dancing at the Royal Opera House has been a dream come true. When I wake at 7am, I sometimes remember the Australian kid who had to pick between cricket and ballet — now that I'm a principal with the Royal Ballet, I know I made the right choice.

Most mornings I take a hot

shower. It helps after a hard performance the night before, especially when my calf muscles and hamstrings ache. I do a lot of lifting in some of the ballets, so the base of my spine is vulnerable too. People imagine ballet dancers don't eat much, but we are exercising all day and burn it off fast. I need a lot of protein and carbohydrates, so breakfast might be fried eggs on toast or cereal.

I try to catch the Tube to Covent Garden before 8am. There might be a bit of banter with my dressing-room buddies before I go to the gym, somewhere in the rabbit warren of the Opera House, for a light workout. Class then starts at 10am, when the whole company comes together to spend an hour and a quarter stretching and exercising in readiness for the day ahead. We do this six days a week.

I've spent almost half my life in England now and so, four years

ago, I applied for and was granted British citizenship. London does feel like home. Rehearsals for *Nutcracker* start at noon. Sometimes I'll rehearse two or three ballets at the same time. We are supposed to get an hour for lunch, but it's not always possible. I tend to graze on nuts and dried fruit.

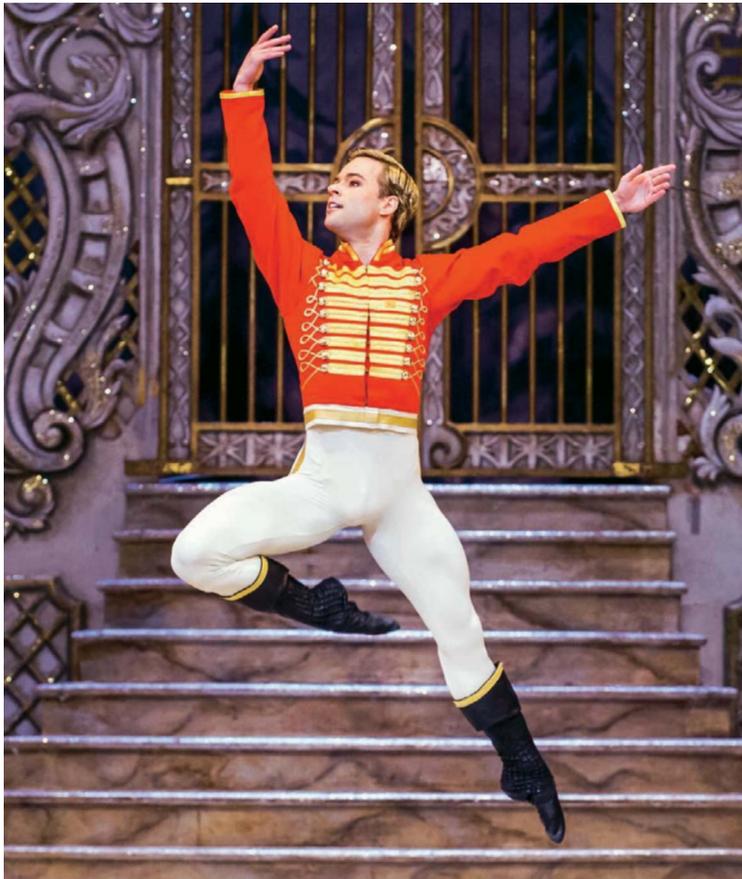
My dad was a cricket scout for New South Wales and my earliest memories are of knocking a ball around with him in the back garden of our home in Sydney. I was a decent left-handed batsman by the age of 14. Most people thought I'd follow the path of bat and ball, but I was also a promising dancer. My ballet teacher made it clear I had to choose one or the other. It was the toughest thing I've ever had to do, because I loved my sport. It wasn't normal for an Aussie boy to take ballet lessons and there were raised eyebrows among my cricket friends, but everybody else was supportive.

Soon after, I won a scholarship to the Royal Ballet School at the Sydney Eisteddfod and found myself on a plane to England. I was only 16 and had no idea what to expect. Mum came to help me find digs at a hostel in Hampstead. There were times when I wanted to pack my bags and head home and I had tearful conversations with my parents. Eventually I moved into a flat in Earls Court with friends and found my feet. My first job was dancing with Birmingham Royal Ballet, before I joined the Royal Ballet as a soloist in 2011.

Rehearsals end at 5 or 6, then I have a couple of hours to prepare for the evening performance. I try to eat something that will give me energy for the show, such as roast chicken and rice, or a pasta dish. By the time the curtain comes down it's often 10.30pm, and I don't arrive home until midnight. Finding a girlfriend who can understand my hours is difficult.

I don't know if I would have made it as a cricketer, but I love to play whenever I get a chance. I recently took one very balletic catch in the outfield. I'm watching as much of the Ashes series as I can — just don't ask me who I'm supporting ■

**Interview by Jeremy Taylor**  
*Alexander Campbell performs in the Royal Ballet's current production of *The Nutcracker*; roh.org.uk*





# The French Riviera

Explore the famous sights of Nice with visits to some of the French Riviera's most picturesque resorts, such as Antibes and Cannes before unearthing hidden Villefranche-sur-Mer and the iconic principality of Monaco.

**Itinerary** (for full details visit [www.raildiscoveries.com/NRS](http://www.raildiscoveries.com/NRS))

## Day 1 London to Nice

Catch the early morning, direct Eurostar to Marseille (departure depending), changing trains for the high-speed service to Nice where you arrive in the early evening. The French Riviera is home to some of the most magnificent scenery in Europe and it makes for an ideal holiday location. Admire the deep blue Mediterranean Sea which is surrounded by pretty harbours and leafy trees as you relax in the typically warm climate on your rail holiday.

## Day 2 Nice

This morning, enjoy a guided walking tour of Nice taking in the city's key sights. Following the tour, your afternoon is free for you to continue exploring at your own pace. Perhaps take a stroll along the Promenade des Anglais and enjoy marvellous views of the glittering Mediterranean Sea.

## Day 3 Antibes and Cannes

Discover the charming harbour town of Antibes by train. Here you have time to experience the bustling marketplace, where you can sample a wide array of local produce. You also see the fascinating Picasso Museum, formerly the Château Grimaldi, and home 1925 to Pablo Picasso himself for six months in 1846. This afternoon, continue by rail to Cannes, exulted for its annual film festival.

## Day 4 Villefranche-sur-Mer

Travel by rail to pretty Villefranche-sur-Mer today. Hugging a hillside that sweeps down to a wide, deep bay between Monaco and Nice on south-east France's beautiful Cote d'Azur, this pretty town has long been a popular holiday resort thanks to its sunny Mediterranean climate, sandy beaches, excellent restaurants and picturesque setting.

## Day 5 Monaco

Take a trip by along the spectacular coastline to the

tiny principality of Monaco for a guided walking tour. Visit Monte Carlo and the charming hilltop town of Éze before returning to Nice for a farewell dinner.

## Day 6 Marseilles and return to London

After breakfast, check out of the hotel and journey back to Marseilles, where you take an orientation tour that includes Notre Dame de la Garde as well as free time in the Old Port area. Afterwards board the direct Eurostar service to London St Pancras, arriving late this evening.



## DEPARTURES

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