

Heatwave Hotlist



→ Sleep: Tips to get through steamy nights
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Carrie Symonds Number 10's 'first' girlfriend?

Living & Features, page 21



The Daily Telegraph

BRITAIN'S BEST QUALITY NEWSPAPER

NEWS BRIEFING

NEWS

Boris plans to borrow to fund tax pledges

Boris Johnson is prepared to turn on the spending taps by borrowing money to help the squeezed middle classes if he is confirmed as the new Tory leader today. The former foreign secretary is in favour of a policy of "fiscal loosening" that would reverse the tight controls on public spending imposed by Philip Hammond. He is determined to honour promises to give tax breaks to everyone who earns less than £80,000. *Page 4*

WORLD

Britain joins maritime protection force in Gulf

Jeremy Hunt announced yesterday that Britain will join a European-led marine protection force to guard against Iranian threats in the Gulf, as he described Tehran's hijacking of a UK-flagged tanker as an act of "state piracy". The Foreign Secretary said he wanted to "keep diplomacy going", but the seizure last week by Iran of the Stena Impero meant the UK had to take more robust action. "If Iran continues on this dangerous path, they must accept the price will be a larger Western military presence in the waters along their coastline," he said. *Page 15*



NEWS

Nessy hunt is asking for trouble, says RNLI

Conspiracy theorists risk hypothermia and drowning if they follow through with a plan to "storm" Loch Ness in search of its mythical monster, the RNLI has warned. More than 40,000 people have signalled their interest in storming the loch to find the fabled monster, prompting a safety warning. *Page 13*

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Fantasiaist whose lies should never have been believed



The conviction of Carl Beech, centre, yesterday on charges of perverting the course of justice has piled pressure on Tom Watson, left, and Lord Hogan-Howe, right, over their roles in pursuing his baseless allegations

Tom Watson and Scotland Yard face serious questions as paedophile's deception and manipulation exposed

By Martin Evans and Robert Mendick

A FANTASIST who accused some of the country's most high-profile figures of child torture, rape and murder was yesterday found guilty of inventing the Westminster VIP paedophile ring amid serious questions over the roles of both Scotland Yard and Labour MP Tom Watson in his deceit. Carl Beech, 53, a highly manipulative paedophile, was found guilty of 12 counts of perverting the course of justice and one count of fraud by a jury at Newcastle Crown Court, following a 14½-month trial.

Beech now faces a lengthy prison sentence after prosecutors proved he had repeatedly lied to police, who had fallen for his claims. The conviction of Beech prompted calls last night for Scotland Yard - which spent 18 months and £4million investigating the allegations - to be placed in the dock, after it emerged that all of the officers involved in the

debacle had been formally cleared of wrongdoing by the police watchdog.

Mr Watson's role in fuelling the "witch hunt" is also under intense scrutiny and he is even under pressure to resign after it emerged the deputy Labour leader urged Beech to take his allegations to the police after meeting him in July 2014.

Beech, a former paediatric nurse, told detectives he and other boys had been raped and abused by an organised gang that included Sir Edward Heath, the former prime minister, Lord Brittan, the former home secretary, Harvey Proctor, the former Tory MP, Field Marshal Lord Bramall, the former head of the Army, Lord Janner, the former Labour MP, Sir Maurice Oldfield, the former head of MI6, Sir Michael Hanley, the former director of MI5, General Sir Hugh Beach and Field Marshal Sir Roland Gibbs.

Swallowing his lies, the Metropolitan Police launched the disastrous Operation Midland, which saw the homes of some of those accused raided and their reputations left in tatters.

Speaking after yesterday's verdict - which took the jury just four hours of deliberations - Lord Bramall, 95, castigated the Metropolitan Police.

The D-Day veteran said: "I am natu-



A saga of lies, staggering police incompetence and shocking political gullibility

Editorial Comment: Page 19

rally delighted that after four years someone has at last been brought to book for the appalling travesty of justice which I and my whole family and others have had to endure.

"It is of course not only the outrageous, totally untruthful allegations by Carl Beech which perverted the course of justice but also the incompetent and improper way the Metropolitan Police Service handled them at their unquestioned face value which lent them unwarranted credibility."

Mr Proctor, who lost his home and job as a result of the false accusations, said Mr Watson also had questions to answer. He said: "The Metropolitan Police were lapdogs to Mr Watson's crude

dog whistle. It's time for the torchlight to take a closer look at Mr Watson. It is time for an apology from him to me and everyone named or implicated in this truly disgraceful chapter in the history of British policing.

"All he had to do was lie. Mr Beech lied, lied and lied again, and his breathtaking lies were facilitated, enhanced and given credibility by the Met Police without corroboration."

Joan Harborne, the ex-wife of Major Raymond Beech - Beech's late stepfather who was the first person falsely accused - said: "We tried to give them evidence that would prove what Carl was saying was not true, but it was as if they did not want to listen."

Sir Richard Henriques, a retired High Court judge, found more than 40 mistakes in the way the force had handled the inquiry. Sir Richard told *The Daily Telegraph* yesterday: "Within a very few days of receiving all the documents... I concluded that the allegations were fabricated, incredible and untrue."

Five officers were referred to the Independent Office for Police Conduct for potential misconduct. None of the officers involved has been sanctioned.

Lord Hogan-Howe, the then Met Commissioner, retired from the force in February 2017 and was elevated to

the House of Lords as a cross-bencher.

Deputy Assistant Commissioner Steve Rodhouse, who had overall responsibility for the investigation, left the Met in May 2018 to take up a £214,722-a-year job as director-general of operations at the National Crime Agency. Det Supt Kenny McDonald, who was head of Operation Midland, retired in August 2017 on full pension.

Lincoln Seligman, the grandson of Sir Edward Heath, said: "Those who were being investigated by the police watchdog have been let off scot-free."

The trial heard how as Beech was lying to police, he was also committing his own paedophilia offences, downloading appalling child abuse images and filming a young boy urinating.

Mr Watson said he only met Beech once and added: "During that meeting 'Nick' said very little and did not name any of his alleged abusers. I reassured Nick that the police had made clear that all allegations of historic sex abuse would be taken seriously and treated sensitively. It was not my role to judge whether victims' stories were true. I encouraged every person that came to me to take their story to the police and that is what I did with Nick."

Reports: Pages 10-11



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Carl Beech court case

Trail of deceit
Carl Beech and tissue of lies that ruined lives



October 2012
Carl Beech tells Wiltshire Police he was sexually abused as a child by his stepfather, Major Ray Beech, and Jimmy Savile. The case was "undetected" and took no further action.

July 8 2014
Beech meets Tom Watson, left, at his Commons office. Mr Watson says Beech did not name names but did mention that a VIP gang had murdered a child. Watson encourages Beech to go to the police.

November 2014
Operation Midland is launched into claims of "possible homicide" linked to an alleged VIP paedophile ring. On Dec 18, Detective Superintendent Kenny McDonald calls Beech's claims "credible and true".

March 4 2015
Police raid the homes of former Conservative MP Harvey Proctor, the homes of Lord Brittan's widow Lady Brittan and Field Marshall Lord Bramall, whose wife is a dementia sufferer.

August 25 2015
Mr Proctor holds a press conference in which he denounces "Nick" and the police. Mr Proctor says Beech alleges that Sir Edward Heath and Operation Midland is closed without a single arrest.

January 15 2016
After 10 months as a suspect, Lord Bramall is told he faces no further action. Mr Proctor is told on March 21 2016 he will face no further action, and Operation Midland is closed without a single arrest.

November 8 2016
A report by retired High Court judge, Sir Richard Henriques, finds that Scotland Yard made "numerous errors" in Operation Midland and that a major factor was "the culture that 'victims' must be believed".

July 3 2017
Beech is charged with five counts of possessing indecent images and one count of voyeurism following a raid on his house in Gloucester by Northumbria Police.

February 2018
Beech grows a beard as a disguise and flees to Sweden where he buys a £20,000 property, right, in the Arctic Circle, and plans to open a bed and breakfast.

July 3 2018
Beech is charged with 12 counts of perverting the course of justice and one count of fraud.

October 1 2018
Beech is arrested at Gothenburg train station by Swedish police, who have tracked his mobile phone. He is extradited back to the UK.

January 22 2019
Beech pleads guilty to voyeurism, making indecent images of children, and possessing indecent images. Hereford Crown Court hears how he covertly filmed a teenage boy urinating.

July 22 2019
After a 12-week trial, a jury convicts Beech after just four hours of deliberation on 12 counts of perverting the course of justice and one fraud charge.

How Tom Watson sparked police inquiry after falling for the vile lies of a fantasist

Why was a paedophile whose claims of abuse and murder were not supported by any shred of evidence believed for so long?

By Robert Mendick and Martin Evans

CARL BEECH, a narcissist, fantasist and now a convicted paedophile, must have been cock-a-hoop. Tom Watson, then a backbench MP and soon to be elected the Labour Party's deputy leader, had granted Beech an audience.

This was Beech's opportunity to tell Mr Watson of the sexual abuse he had suffered at the hands of a murderous paedophile gang that had operated from the Palace of Westminster.

The meeting would set in chain the perfect storm. Scotland Yard's finest detectives would believe every word Beech told them of three murders and unimaginably deprived child sexual abuse committed by a gang that included a former prime minister and a home secretary, the ex-chiefs of MI5 and MI6, the former head of the Army, numerous MPs and Jimmy Savile.

It didn't matter that there wasn't a shred of evidence to back up Beech's crazy claims. Mr Watson had already stood up in Parliament and said a powerful Westminster paedophile ring needed investigating while police were stuck on a mantra that "victims must be believed".

Yesterday, victims of Beech turned on not just the police but also Mr Watson for his part in their hell.

Harvey Proctor, the former Conservative MP falsely accused by Beech of murder, torture and rape, said: "The Metropolitan Police were lapdogs to Mr Watson's crude dog whistle. It is now beyond doubt that all of these allegations could never have been true and only someone with spectacular bad judgment could think that they might be."

He called on Mr Watson to apologise. Field Marshal Lord Bramall, 95, a D-Day veteran, said: "It is of course, not only the outrageous, totally untruthful allegations by Carl Beech which perverted the course of justice but also the incompetent and improper way the Metropolitan Police Service handed them at their unquestioned face value which lent them unwarranted credibility."

Lincoln Seligman, godson of Sir Edward Heath, said: "What I find astonishing is that senior police officers in the Metropolitan Police and politicians like Tom Watson, and some elements of media, believed Beech and made frequent public statements to that effect."

Andi Lavery, 47, a genuine victim of abuse who was raped as a five-year-old child by a Catholic priest and some of whose own account Beech had stolen, was scathing: "Tom Watson sponsored child abuse," he said, adding: "Beech is a psychopath, he reminds me of Harold Shipman - he is so mundane, yet there within Beech is the banality of evil."

Daniel Janner QC, whose father Lord Janner was also accused of abuse by Beech, said: "Watson had politicised a police inquiry. He showed no regard for the presumption of innocence. He hounded Lord Brittan, a dying man, to his grave."

Beech, now aged 51, spoke to Watson "at some length" in his private office at that fatal meeting in July 2014. Beech would later tell police that "Mr Watson formed part of the little group supporting me and putting my information out there to encourage other people to come forward".

Mr Watson was a powerful ally for Beech. The MP had previously taken on the police and newspapers, pursuing the *News of the World* for its systemic phone hacking and holding the Met to account over its failure to investigate fully the extent of journalists' crimes.

There was a new crusade for Mr Watson: the pursuit of VIP child abusers. In October 2012, two years before his meeting with Beech, Mr Watson had stood up in Parliament

and declared the existence of "clear intelligence suggesting a powerful paedophile network linked to Parliament and No10".

The claims, in the wake of the furore over the failure of police to bring to justice Jimmy Savile, the BBC broadcaster and serial paedophile, had a devastating effect: Scotland Yard devoted millions of pounds to hunting gangs that didn't exist and Theresa May, as home secretary, was bounced into setting up the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse that will cost the taxpayer north of £200 million.

Against this background, Beech was desperate to be listened to. In the same month as Mr Watson was making that claim, Beech, a middle-class, middle-aged professional working in the NHS, had contacted Wiltshire Police.

He told detectives over the next several years when he was a young boy, his stepfather, a major in the Army, had taken him to Wilton barracks, where he and other men had raped and abused him. He also claimed to have been one of Savile's many victims.

Wiltshire Police interviewed Beech but with his stepfather, Raymond Beech, having died in 1995, and Savile long gone, it was decided little more could be done. Sources have told *The Daily Telegraph* that detectives thought Beech's story implausible.

Beech began a blog, detailing his supposed ordeal. He stole the accounts of genuine survivors of abuse and added his own from the depths of his twisted imagination.

Exaro, a controversial news agency that later closed down, spotted Beech's blog and one of its journalists, Mark Conrad, made contact. Exaro began publishing Beech's increasingly lurid claims, giving him the pseudonym "Nick" to preserve his anonymity. It also peddled Nick's ever more extreme stories to tabloid newspapers for cash.

The meeting between Beech and Watson was set up for July 8 2014. Mr Conrad and a social worker, Peter McKelvin, who was a member of a victims' panel with the national child abuse inquiry, accompanied Beech.

Over the course of two hours, Beech laid out his story of how he had been abused by the gang. Mr Watson was impressed. "It was a very, very traumatic and difficult conversation, as you would imagine," Mr Watson told *The Guardian* a month later. "He only told me about one murder. He spoke very slowly, very intermittently and I didn't need to hear any more."

Yesterday in a statement, Mr Watson said he only met Beech once and at that meeting "Nick said very little and did not name any of the alleged abusers". Mr Watson added: "It was not my role to judge whether victims' stories were true. I encouraged every person that came to me to take their story to the police and that is what I did with Nick."

Mr Watson said in his *Guardian* interview, "What I'm certain of is that he's not delusional. He is either telling the truth, or he's made up a meticulous and elaborate story. It's not for me to judge."



Watson had politicised a police inquiry. He showed no regard for the presumption of innocence. He hounded Lord Brittan, a dying man, to his grave

who would have known if her son was picked up weekly by the gang and returned after being raped - was not interviewed for at least six months. Beech's wife was also not approached. Checks would have shown that children he claimed had been murdered were still alive. Officers flew to Australia to see if a former classmate of Beech's was alive. He was.

Beech had claimed that Sir Michael Hanley, then the head of MI5, had on one occasion arrived at his school and told him his dog had been kidnapped as a warning. Beech also told police that he had witnessed the gang - he called them The Group - shoot his horse Sam, although he had no idea what happened to the body, or what his mother, who was paying for its stabling, thought.

On Dec 18 2014, Det Supt Kenny McDonald declared at a press briefing: "Nick has been spoken to by experienced officers from the child abuse team and from the murder investigation team and they are I believe what Nick is saying is credible and true."

Just over a month later, Brittan, who had been terminally ill with cancer, died at the age of 75. Although while alive he had not been named in connection with Beech's allegations, he knew full well he was at the centre of the false claims. Brittan, once the

leading libel QC in the country, also knew that as soon as he died, he would be outed as a member of the fictitious paedophile gang because the dead cannot sue for defamation.

Mr Watson had already been in pursuit of Brittan over another false claim, this one an allegation of rape dating back to 1967 made by a woman known only as "Jane".

Her claims had been investigated by a team led by Det Chief Insp Paul Settle, head of the Met's paedophile squad, who had concluded that her story was fantasy and closed the case in 2013. Mr Watson intervened, writing to Alison Saunders, the Director of Public Prosecutions, to complain that the case had been closed without Brittan being questioned.

Police caved in and Brittan, while dying, was interviewed under caution. The case was dropped a second time but police never bothered to tell Brittan before his death. Mr Settle, the one police officer who would have exposed Beech's lies, was put on effective gardening leave, his career over. Mr Settle told *The Telegraph*: "The reason I have nothing but contempt for Tom Watson is that he presented himself as an honest broker. But he wasn't anything like that."

'The reason I have nothing but contempt for Tom Watson is that he presented himself as an honest broker. But he wasn't anything like that'

grieving. Mr Watson twisted the knife. Brittan was, he said quoting a "survivor" of child abuse, "as close to evil as a human being could get". His spokesman last night declined to say if he was quoting Beech.

Mr Watson didn't stop there. "Former home secretary Leon Brittan stands accused of multiple child rape. Many others knew of these allegations and chose to remain silent. I will not. The police," he concluded in the article published in the *Sunday Mirror*, "must continue their investigations."

The Met duly obliged - despite the absence of any corroboration, including actual murder victims. Officers sought a private hearing at Westminster magistrates' court where they obtained search warrants, insisting Beech's testimony was consistent. It had in fact been anything but.

Shortly after dawn on March 4 2015, Lord Bramall, then 92, was woken at his home in Crodland, Hants. His wife, suffering from dementia, was terrified. She would die a few months later without ever knowing Beech's claims were lies. He was greeted by around 20 officers who told him they had a search warrant. He would remain under suspicion for another 10 months.

At around the same time, 150 miles away at Belvoir Castle, Leics, a similar number of officers were raiding the

apartment of former Tory MP Harvey Proctor, whom Beech had named as one of Lord Bramall's co-conspirators. Officers also raided the London and North Yorkshire homes of Lady Brittan, shortly after her husband's funeral and while she was still in deep grief. Van loads of personal possessions were taken and police absurdly asked if soil in her garden in Yorkshire had been recently disturbed.

During the search of Mr Proctor's home, Beech was telephoned by police and told the raid was taking place. Beech called Exaro and the details were published on its website that day. Lord Bramall was asked by detectives if he could swim, as if this might prove his involvement in a pool sex party. On Aug 24 2015, Mr Proctor was questioned under caution, during which the full extent of the allegations against him were set out.

Beech had told police that in 1980, at a property in central London, he had witnessed Mr Proctor raping a 12-year-old boy before strangling him to death. On another occasion he claimed he had seen a boy beaten to death during a sex game, and told officers he had also seen Heath physically restrain Mr Proctor in order to prevent him cutting the genitals off a young boy with a penknife.

He had also claimed a boy in his

school called Scott had been run over and killed by the gang. Police failed to check if any child called Scott had ever turned up dead or reported missing.

Mr Settle, by now *persona non grata*, said the detectives had lost sight of what they were supposed to be doing. "The policy of believing victims meant they were only interested in finding evidence that supported his claims," he said. "Anything that did not fit that narrative was discounted, which is no way to run an investigation."

By January 2016, after almost a year under investigation, Lord Bramall was informed by the police that he would face no further action. He was told there was "insufficient evidence" to proceed, rather than explicitly being cleared of any wrongdoing.

Two months later, Mr Proctor was formally cleared of any wrongdoing, and the Met Commissioner asked retired High Court judge Sir Richard Henriques to carry out a review into Operation Midland.

His findings - while heavily redacted - were scathing. Sir Richard identified 43 separate mistakes by the Met, including misleading a judge when applying for a warrant to search the suspects' homes. It had taken Sir Richard "a matter of days" to realise Beech was a fantasist. Sir Richard said

officers had searched Lady Brittan's home in North Yorkshire "as if they were looking for bodies or body parts". Following the publication of the damning Henriques report, the Met confirmed it had passed the case to another force and Northumbria Police began investigating Beech for perverting the course of justice.

Scrutiny had finally turned to Beech. As part of that investigation, detectives seized a number of computers and other devices from Beech. It was during these searches that they discovered more than 350 indecent images of children, including 36 of the most serious category A. One device also contained a video of a young boy urinating.

In July 2017, Beech was charged with five counts of possessing indecent images and one count of voyeurism and summoned to appear before Worcester Crown Court.

But because he had claimed to have suffered sex abuse himself, he retained his right to anonymity.

In July last year, just weeks before his trial was about to get going, the Crown Prosecution Service, which had been examining a file of evidence from Northumbria Police, announced he was also to be charged with 12 counts of perverting the course of justice.

He was also charged with one count of fraud in relation to the £22,000 he had received from the Criminal Injuries Compensation Authority for the abuse that had never taken place.

This was something their colleagues in the Met had clearly failed to spot. Beech's trial for possessing indecent images had been due to begin on July 30 last year, but he was nowhere to be seen. He had gone on the run. A warrant was issued for his arrest and an international manhunt begun.

Beech had fled to Sweden, planning a new life in a small village in the Arctic Circle, using the false name Stephen Anderson. He bought a house in Overklix with a plan to open a bed and breakfast business.

He skipped town, travelling through Sweden under a variety of aliases, staying at hostels or sleeping on trains.

Acting on a European Arrest Warrant, Swedish police tracked Beech through his mobile phone to Gothenburg station, where he was finally apprehended on Oct 1 2018.

On Jan 21, 18 months after he was first charged, Beech finally appeared at Hereford Crown Court, charged with four counts of making indecent

images, one of possessing indecent images, one of voyeurism. Hidden behind a fake calculator app on his computer were pictures of young boys, some of them undressed, one of whom was lying face down on a bed, blindfolded and handcuffed. A camera belonging to Beech contained photographs of young boys playing football with their shirts off, which he had taken surreptitiously from a window of his Gloucester home. There was also evidence that he had been watching appalling child abuse videos online, including ones featuring the rape of babies.

Beech pleaded guilty and was remanded in custody and ordered to immediately sign the sex offenders' register. The man who had spread so many lies about being a victim of abuse had finally admitted to being a paedophile himself.

Beech's trial for perverting the course of justice and fraud began at Newcastle Crown Court on May 7, with him pleading not guilty to all charges.

With astonishing arrogance and cruelty he kept up his lies, meaning the true victims in the case - those he had falsely accused, including Mr Proctor and another military figure, 96-year-old Gen Sir Hugh Beech - were forced to give evidence and undergo painful cross-examination.

When Beech entered the witness box, during three days of cross-examination, prosecutor Tony Badenoch QC systematically exposed every lie he had told the police.

The jury was told that the day Beech's £22,000 criminal injuries compensation claim was approved, he put down a £10,000 deposit for a white Ford Mustang convertible. It was also revealed that Beech had been penning a so-called "misery memoir", which he no doubt hoped would make him rich. Entitled "Too Many Secrets: Surviving a Child Sex Ring", it contained a series of wild allegations of sexual abuse relating to himself and his "best friend", John.

At one point Beech claimed to have been beaten so badly that he had been hospitalised. However, there were no medical records to support this.

Among the more outlandish claims Beech made during his evidence were that he had been subjected to a series of cruel punishments by his abusers, which included being bitten by a snake, stung by angry wasps and electrocuted. He drew a body map that purported to accurately chart the many scars and wounds that he bore as a result of his years abuse.

The only problem was that when a doctor examined him before the trial, there were no marks on his body. He also told the jury that he had been left with a lifelong fear of water after having his head shaved under it as he was raped over the bath as a boy.

But the prosecution exposed the lie with holiday snaps that showed Beech swimming and even snorkelling. He told police he was removed from school every Friday by his abusers, but his records showed him to have had an excellent attendance.

Beech handed police a penknife that he claimed he had kept from the time when Mr Proctor had threatened to kill him. Mr Badenoch described the penknife as a "sophisticated paedophile" for whom lying was as natural as having a morning cup of tea.

The jury was also told that his story bore many similarities to child abuse memoirs written by the author Timmy Fielding.

Mr Badenoch suggested that there may have been a financial motive behind Beech's lies, but the real reason he decided to destroy the lives and reputations of so many innocent men may never be fully known. But there's no question Beech enjoyed the attention afforded him by Tom Watson, a questionable news website and some overeager Scotland Yard detectives who had forgotten to bother with the truth.

Calling the shots Key figures in the investigation

Investigation. Lord issued a personal apology to Lady Brittan and Harvey Proctor. Retired in Feb 2017 and was elevated to the Lords that year.

Lord Hogan-Howe. Commissioner of the Met throughout Operation Midland, he distanced himself from the day-to-day running. When it began to unravel, he said he was sorry for any distress caused to the accused, but refused to apologise for the

Dep Asst Commissioner Steve Rodhouse. In overall charge of Operation Midland. Was present at the

press conference in Dec 2014, when the phrase "credible and true" was first used. Was the subject of a voluntary referral to the Independent Police Complaints Commission in Nov 2016. Left the Met in May 2018 to join the National Crime Agency as director general of operations on a £214,722 a year.

Det Insp Flannery. Led the search for the Met in May 2015 to John's National Crime Agency as director general of operations on a £214,722 a year.

Det Sgt Eric Swind. Retired in 2017 while still under investigation over alleged wrongdoing during the

Retired in May. Det Chief Insp Flannery. Responsible for signing the application for search warrants. Believed to be off sick.

Det Supt Alison Hepworth. Led the search at Mr Proctor's home in 2015. Still serving.

Det Sgt James Towley. The first Scotland Yard officer to interview Beech in Oct 2014. Still serving.

Det Sgt Danny Claffick. Liaison officer for Carl Beech. Still serving in Scotland Yard.

Det Sgt Matt Flynn. Led the search at Mr Proctor's home in 2015. Still serving.

Det Sgt Eric Swind. Retired in 2017 while still under investigation over alleged wrongdoing during the

operation. Det Chief Insp Flannery. Responsible for signing the application for search warrants. Believed to be off sick.

Det Supt Alison Hepworth. Led the search at Mr Proctor's home in 2015. Still serving.

Det Sgt James Towley. The first Scotland Yard officer to interview Beech in Oct 2014. Still serving.

Beech used his 'respectable' background to trick police

By Martin Evans CRIME CORRESPONDENT

AS a school governor, a former children's nurse and an NSPCC volunteer, Carl Beech used his credentials to fool police officers into launching a disastrous investigation.

Born in Wrexham in 1968, Beech was the only son of Robert and Charmian Galt, who were both nurses. His parents split up shortly after his birth and in 1976 his mother married army officer Raymond Beech and the family moved into military accommodation at Wilton Barracks in Wiltshire.

Major Beech, who already had three children from his first marriage, was an uncompromising disciplinarian who was nevertheless prone to violence when drunk and his relationship with his stepson was difficult from the outset.

The marriage only lasted a few months and Charmian and her son moved to Kingston Upon Thames. It was while training at the Royal Berkshire Hospital in Reading in 1988 that Beech met fellow nurse Dawn Morgan and the pair married in 1992 when he was 24.

The couple relocated to Gloucester, where Beech was employed at the local hospital. The couple had a son in 2002 and Beech was appointed chair of governors at Beech Green Primary School. He eventually moved into hospital management at Gloucestershire Hospitals NHS Trust.

All of this was to prove key when helping to convince the police that his allegations of VIP paedophile abuse were "credible and true".

On the surface he was a devoted

family man but he spent well beyond his means and the family were often in financial difficulty.

In 2011 his marriage broke down and he moved into a house with his son.

But with his mother having been ordained as a Church of England vicar, she was less able to banish his spending and his debts began to mount.

The financial motive may explain why in 2012 Beech went to Wiltshire Police, claiming to have been abused.

He set up an organisation for child abuse survivors and claimed to have worked as a volunteer for the NSPCC.

But throughout this period Beech was accessing appalling videos and images of child abuse.

When his lies began to unravel Beech fled to Sweden, where he planned to run a guesthouse with his mother.

Who are the victims? The high-profile men accused of belonging to The Group and abusing young boys

Sir Edward Heath. Served as prime minister from 1970 to 1974. Died in 2005, aged 89. Beech claimed he first met Heath when he was taken to the Carlton Club in London in the late 1970s. He told police the former prime minister had abused him aboard his yacht, Morning

Lord Brittan. Home Secretary from 1983 until 1985. Died 2015 aged 75 while still under suspicion. Beech claimed to have met him on his yacht, Morning

Harvey Proctor. Tory MP between 1979 and 1987. Beech told police Mr Proctor had been the most sadistic of the group, claiming he liked to inflict pain while he was carrying out the abuse. He also accused the retired general of being present at pool parties where children were abused. Lord Bramall's home was raided by police at a

Cloud. He also claimed Mr Heath had intervened to prevent Harvey Proctor castrating him with a penknife.

Michael Hanley. Former director general of MI5. Died in 2001 aged 82. Beech told police Mr Hanley had been one of the cruelest of the abusers and he would mete out punishment when he broke the rules. He claimed Mr Hanley had once kidnapped his dog, had set

Carl Beech, far left, at an extradition hearing in Sweden last year. During his trial, he maintained his lies against Field Marshal Lord Bramall, top, and Harvey Proctor, right, while Lady Brittan, centre, had her homes raided. Above, Beech makes merry by the pool in snorkelling gear while on holiday, even though he claimed the abuse had left him with a lifelong fear of water

wasps on him and had thrown him in a cupboard with a snake.

Lord Bramall. Former head of the Army and D-Day veteran, Beech claimed Lord Bramall had first abused him at Wilton Barracks where his stepfather was a major. He also accused the retired general of being present at pool parties where children were abused. Lord Bramall's home was raided by police at a

time when his wife was suffering from dementia. She died while her husband was still under suspicion. He was later paid £100,000 in compensation.

Sir Hugh had been one of the senior army figures who had abused him at various military establishments around the UK. Now 96, he gave evidence during the trial via video link in which he described the allegations as "beyond grotesque".

Lord Janner. Former Labour MP and Peer. Died in 2015 aged 87. Beech claimed he had first met Janner at the Carlton Club, an

allegation that caused the police to become suspicious because as a Labour politician he would not have been welcome at the Conservative Party gentleman's club.

According to Beech, Mr Oldfield was part of "inner circle of abusers". He told police Mr Oldfield tortured him with spiders, wasps, snakes and darts. Mr Oldfield, who served in the intelligence corps during the Second World War, later became the head of MI6 and was reputedly one of the models for John le Carré's fictional character, George Smiley.

Major Raymond Beech. Beech's stepfather. Died

in Brighton in 1995. His wife was married to Beech's mother, Charmian, lasted less than a year, but during that time he was regularly abused. Beech also accused his stepfather of sexually abusing him to members of The Group, including his military superior. Beech hired a private detective to make sure his stepfather was going to the police with his allegations.



ESTABLISHED 1855

A shameful episode for the police

The conviction of Carl Beech for fabricating allegations of an Establishment paedophile ring marks the end of a saga of lies, staggering police incompetence and shocking political gullibility. It has shredded the reputations of innocent people, several of whom have died and cannot defend themselves.

Beech, who was given the pseudonym "Nick" while his claims were investigated, was found guilty of 12 counts of perverting the course of justice and one of fraud over a £22,000 criminal compensation payout. However, he is not really a fraudster but a fantasist, and should have been recognised as such from the moment he began touting his story around to credulous listeners.

He alleged that he was the victim of a Westminster-based paedophile network that included a former prime minister, an ex-home secretary and various heads of the intelligence services and the military. Not only had they abused children, he claimed, but they had taken part in murder, and dark forces had covered it all up.

The context for what then transpired was the failure of the police properly to investigate the late Jimmy Savile, a prolific sex offender. In Oct 2012, Tom Watson, now Labour deputy leader, told MPs that he knew of the existence of "clear intelligence suggesting a powerful paedophile network linked to parliament and No 10". This referred to another case but alerted Beech to a potentially friendly ear after failing to interest Wiltshire Police in his story.

He was urged by Mr Watson to go back to the police who were, by now, committed to believing any sex abuse complaint, however outlandish. Basic checks that would have disproved Beech's lurid claims were not carried out. A homicide inquiry was set up solely on the basis of his unsubstantiated allegations and, against this backdrop, Theresa May as home secretary instigated a public inquiry into historic sex abuse. One senior police officer even called this farrago of obviously fanciful tales "credible and true". They were neither.

This was a shameful episode for the police, though they still insist they did everything right; and Mr Watson must share culpability. Many observing him on this matter formed a clear impression of a scandal at the heart of the Tory establishment, and Mr Watson did little to disabuse them as the lives of innocent people were dragged in and destroyed. He should apologise today in the Commons.

Ineptitude over Iran

To describe the Government's handling of the events that resulted in Iran's illegal seizure of a British oil tanker as totally inept would be an understatement. The warning signs that Tehran was likely to attempt an act of piracy against British shipping in the Gulf had been evident ever since a detachment of Royal Marines earlier this month intercepted an Iranian tanker suspected of shipping oil to Syria. Not only did Iran respond by threatening to seize a British ship, but the frigate HMS Montrose had already been obliged to intervene when Iran's Revolutionary Guard Corps harassed the BP-owned tanker British Heritage.

And yet ministers failed to take adequate measures to protect British shipping. Theresa May has even been accused of turning down an offer from Donald Trump of US protection for British ships in the Gulf which, given the chronic shortage of available Navy vessels to do the task, might well have prevented the British-flagged tanker Stena Impero from falling into Iranian hands

The Iran debacle has exposed our politicians' lack of military sense

SIR - Acting in haste on behalf of the EU to seize a foreign tanker was bound to have consequences, especially as the Royal Navy has so few usable ships. Refusing help from the United States to escort our tankers through the Strait of Hormuz (report, July 22) compounded the folly.

As a staff college instructor, I do not recall any military student suggesting such a foolish course of action to deal with a similar challenge. Are our ministers properly trained for their critical roles?

Group Captain DRE Evans (retd)
Cardiff

SIR - Iran's hijacking of British ships highlights the folly of investing a large part of the Navy's budget in two huge, cumbersome, vulnerable aircraft carriers. A fleet of frigates and small boats would be far more effective.

Brian Sanders
Brighton, East Sussex

SIR - To my knowledge, Jeremy Hunt wasn't part of the Cabinet that bought

two white-elephant aircraft carriers. It was the legacy of Gordon Brown's Labour government. I live close to Rosyth, where they were assembled.

Ian Kelman
Dunfermline, Fife

SIR - Sir Alan Duncan is leaving the Foreign Office because of his dislike of Boris Johnson, but it would have been more to his credit at this time of crisis if he had remained in his post to assist Mr Hunt in negotiations with Iran.

A lot of MPs are motivated more by their own pride than that of their country.

Colin Eldred
Eastbourne, East Sussex

SIR - If HMS Montrose had been close to the tanker abducted by Iranian forces (Letters, July 22), what action could it have taken?

Would it have shot down the helicopter and fired on the gunboats? Or could it have sent out boarding parties? Any action like this would have resulted in considerable loss of

life, and the event would have become a major international incident.

David Vaudrey
Doynton, Gloucestershire

SIR - Were our tankers to carry heavily armed specialists to repel gunboat suggested in yesterday's letters, we would risk starting a new Gulf war.

Instead, they should be fitted with water jet system of the kind used to repel Somali pirates. Pointing the jets upwards as well as outwards, creating mists over the decks, would also deter helicopters from lowering gunmen

Nick Rose
Chichester, West Sussex

SIR - When the media reports major incidents - whether criminal, medical, educational or otherwise - a serving professional briefs the public.

For defence issues, only politicians and retired admirals seem to address the public. Have the Armed Forces been struck dumb?

Christopher Samuel
Haslemere, Surrey



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Electric scooters

SIR - Electric scooter enthusiasts (Letters, July 22) would do well to look at cities already blighted. In Stockholm, you find dumped hire-scooters littering busy footways.

More dangerously, their riders navigate among both pedestrians and moving vehicles, day and night. For now, Londoners will be safer and healthier sticking to Shanks's pony.

Vivian Bush
Beverley, East Yorkshire

SIR - Having just returned from San Diego, California, and spent time in Austin, Texas, I would warn those rushing to legalise electric scooters in London: they are a menace to all - from pedestrians to motorists, and of course to the riders themselves.

They litter the streets - the flotsam and jetsam of the Eco Age - and are a nuisance to everyone save the Silicon Valley masters who profit from their existence.

The solution to London's travel woes they are not.

Martin Killick
Fort Worth, Texas, United States

High-street homes

SIR - Dorothy Alexander (Letters, July 20) asks whether redevelopment could permit commercial and residential properties to exist side by side to prevent town centres being deserted after shops close.

When shops are converted to residential use, they should incorporate a garage with an easily replaced frontage, in order to accommodate any subsequent upturn in the demand for retail premises. This would relieve housing needs, solve parking problems, and allow for rapid reconversion if required.

Bruce Denness
Whitwell, Isle of Wight

Vibrant verges

SIR - Your report (July 20) on the planting of verges using non-native seeds and its potential harm to invertebrates was a little concerning.

I ran into very slow-moving traffic on the anti-clockwise M25 recently when returning from holiday. My frustration at the delay turned to delight when I looked at the roadside and saw miles of wildflowers with oxeye daisy, scabious and teasel being visited by many butterflies.

I assumed this attractive display occurred spontaneously, but would be interested if anyone knew otherwise.

Janet Newis
Sidcup, Kent



Profligate genius: Brunel beside the launching chains of the SS Great Eastern, 1857

What Brunel would have liked about HS2

SIR - Isambard Kingdom Brunel may have been a great engineer, but he also had a penchant for spending other people's money.

The same can be said of those in charge of HS2. The Stephensons had a much more down-to-earth approach than Brunel, and their work has stood the test of time.

Terry Morrell
Willerby, East Yorkshire

SIR - As the estimate of the cost of HS2 drifts from £60 billion to £90 billion, it's worth trying to understand what these numbers actually mean.

This increase takes the amount to be paid by every British taxpayer (of whom there are roughly 30 million) from £2,000 to £3,000. The average

salary in Britain is roughly £28,000 - on which the tax payable is, as it happens, around £3,000. So what is proposed is that every taxpayer in Britain contributes a year of the work to build HS2.

These calculations are fairly rough and ready, but I'd suggest they are not 50 per cent out, as the (already revised) HS2 estimate has proved to be. Let's also remember that this money is to be spent on a project which the Government's own economic affairs committee described as relying on "evidence that is out of date and unconvincing", adding: "The analysis presented to justify the project is seriously deficient."

John Stewart
Terrick, Buckinghamshire

The rise of Lyme disease must not be ignored

SIR - Your report (July 18) on Lyme disease and its possible origins needs amplification.

Down the years, I have walked in the Highlands, the Pennines, the North York Moors, the Peak District, France, Belgium, Florida, Vermont and California, and was never bitten by a tick. However, a year ago, in my garden, two miles from Stansted Airport, I was bitten by a tick and acquired the disease. I am still

suffering the effects: they are nasty. When I asked the doctor if there were any more cases in the village, patient confidentiality was cited.

I suggest that Lyme disease is much more widely distributed than acknowledged by the medical profession. BBC Scotland's recent *Disclosure* programme about it should be seen by every doctor in Britain.

Alan Davidson
Elsenham, Essex

Compromising now would be a ca