

THE TIMES

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INSIDE TIMES2



Dr Mark Porter

When you need to steer clear of antibiotics

Put away the duvet: Britain expects hottest night on record

Harry Shukman

A tropical plume of air moving over Britain threatens to disrupt the sleep of millions and break the record for the hottest night ever.

Forecasters are predicting that temperatures will reach 25C in southern England between 8pm tonight and 8am tomorrow, beating the

previous overnight record of 23.9C set on August 3, 1990.

"There is a chance we could be knocking on the door of that record," Nicola Maxey, a Met Office spokeswoman, said. "We have got tropical air coming in from the Atlantic and warm air coming up from the continent."

Other records could also fall this week. The hottest July day was in 2015,

when 36.7C was measured at Heathrow. Britain's hottest day of all was 38.5C, recorded at Kew Gardens, south-west London, in August 2003.

"On Wednesday there is a cool incursion of air coming in from the west but on Thursday we are back to very widespread high temperatures before the end of the week," Ms Maxey said.

The humidity could make the wea-

ther feel several degrees warmer and Public Health England has issued a level three heatwave warning until Friday. Only level four, which is called in an emergency, is more severe.

The agency urged people to check on friends and neighbours who are less able to look after themselves and advised people to stay inside between 11am and 3pm, and keep themselves

hydrated. Experts also said pollen levels could be "extremely hazardous".

Andy Whittamore, the clinical lead at Asthma UK, said: "Plan any outdoor activities for earlier in the day when the air quality tends to be better."

Heatwaves are determined by the Met Office when temperatures in the same area remain high for three days. **Forecast, page 53**

Watson has to apologise, say victims of abuse lies

Police also criticised by VIPs for backing fantasist

Sean O'Neill Chief Reporter

Police and politicians who promoted lurid claims of an establishment paedophile ring faced condemnation last night after the man behind them was found guilty of making false allegations.

Tom Watson, Labour's deputy leader, was urged to make a full apology to public figures named by the paedophile Carl Beech, who was convicted of 13 charges of perverting the course of justice and fraud.

Scotland Yard, which conducted a £25 million investigation into his

Operation Midland investigation into his claim that he had been abused for years by a VIP ring made up of politicians, military officers and spy chiefs.

The former paediatric nurse, NHS manager and NSPCC volunteer faces a lengthy jail term for a determined campaign of lies and deceit which he hoped would lead to people being convicted of crimes that never happened.

The trial had examined the Metropolitan Police's decision in 2014 to regard Beech — then known by the pseudonym "Nick" — as truthful.

Acting under a policy of always believing the victim, Met detectives accepted his stories of being tortured by snake bites, flown abroad on private planes to be abused, having his dog kidnapped by MI5 and witnessing three separate murders of children. The Met publicly described Beech's allegations at the time as "credible and true".

Many of those accused by Beech, including the former prime minister Edward Heath, Greville Janner and Jimmy Savile, were dead. But he also named Lord Bramall, the former home secretary Leon Brittan and the former MP Harvey Proctor, leading to them being questioned and having their homes searched.

Just days after Brittan's death in January 2015, before his name was cleared, Mr Watson wrote in a newspaper that it was "a travesty that [he] will never be asked the truth". The article was deeply upsetting for the former Conservative

Continued on page 2, col 3



Jo Swinson at an event in central London yesterday where she was revealed as the new Lib Dem leader. She pledged to do whatever is needed to stop Brexit

New Lib Dem leader 'could steal votes from Tories'

Steven Swinford Deputy Political Editor

Boris Johnson risks losing millions of Tory voters to the Liberal Democrats under their new leader Jo Swinson because of his no-deal Brexit strategy, a cabinet minister has warned.

David Gauke, the justice secretary who will resign tomorrow, told *The Times* that no-deal will "play into the hands" of the Lib Dems, who now have an "energetic and passionate" leader.

Ms Swinson, 39, yesterday became the first woman to lead the Liberal Democrats as she was elected with nearly two thirds of the votes cast by party members. In a speech she appealed to disaffected Conservative and Labour voters as she said that she would do "whatever it takes" to stop Brexit.

Mr Johnson, the favourite for the Tory leadership, held meetings with cabinet ministers prepared to quit over his "do or die pledge" to leave the EU with or without a deal.

They included Philip Hammond, the chancellor, Rory Stewart, the international development secretary, and Mr Gauke. Mr Stewart said Mr Johnson had asked if he was prepared to serve in his cabinet, while Mr Gauke said he had had a "very friendly" conversation.

Theresa May hosted a farewell reception last night for Tory and DUP MPs in Downing Street. The prime minister urged them to have a break over the parliamentary recess and be loyal to her successor as she warned of the threat posed by Jeremy Corbyn.

Mr Gauke said that Ms Swinson and the resurgent Lib Dems must not be underestimated. He said: "If we were to narrow our support to purely being those in favour of a no-deal Brexit I think we would be significantly out of touch with a lot of people who have traditionally voted Conservative — those who live in London, the home counties, and various other relatively affluent parts of the country."

"It is important the Conservative Party appeals to voters in the centre ground. It's a position that would play

Continued on page 2, col 5



Carl Beech said he had been abused by politicians, military officers and spy chiefs

claims of child murder, rape and torture, was criticised by Field Marshal Lord Bramall, who said the lies about him had done "irreparable damage".

Lord Bramall, 95, the former head of the armed forces, told *The Times*: "It was Beech's outrageous and totally untrue allegations which perverted the course of justice. However, the incompetence of the Metropolitan Police and the improper way it accepted his allegations unquestioningly and at face value lent them an unwarranted credibility."

Beech, 51, from Gloucester, had been the star witness in Scotland Yard's

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TODAY'S EDITION

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LIFE LESSONS

Acupuncture and reiki have been soothing nerves at a primary school

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SPORT



ROUGH PATCH

Golfers say the major competitions now come too thick and fast

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BAD DATE

William Dameron's image was used to scam strangers on the internet

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COMMENT

Boris Johnson has tried to keep everyone happy. In power he will have to choose who to betray

RACHEL SYLVESTER, PAGE 21

Nissan refuses to clean up car

Nissan has refused a government request to make thousands of highly polluting cars less toxic. The Nissan Qashqai produces 17 times the legal limit for nitrogen oxides but the carmaker said it wanted to focus on developing new models. Page 4

Victim tells of moped ordeal

Two masked men on a moped robbed a finance director on her doorstep and dragged her husband out of his car at knifepoint. Ratan Lahiri, who lives in Hampstead, north London, said the attack had made her scared to leave her house. Page 5

Oxford's £4bn science drive

Oxford university is to take on Cambridge's prowess in science and technology with a vast investment programme to build two innovation hubs. It is hoped that the £4 billion deal will lead to thousands of high-tech science spinouts. Page 8

Hong Kong chief accused

The chief executive of Hong Kong has been accused of collusion after suspected triad gang members attacked protesters travelling home by train from an anti-government rally. Carrie Lam denied the police had turned a blind eye. Pages 26-27

Big firms face activist threat

Dozen of Britain's biggest companies, including Centrica, Kingfisher and Next, are at risk of being besieged by activist investors because they are producing weak shareholder returns, a City stockbroker has warned. Page 33

Free-to-air TV plea by Lord's

One of the summer's two Lord's Test matches should be shown on free-to-air television every year to capitalise on the success of the World Cup final, the chief executive of MCC, which owns the ground, said. Page 64

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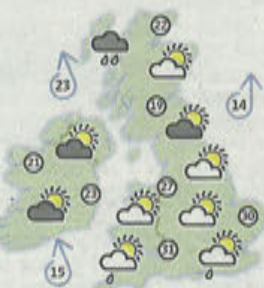
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THE WEATHER



Cloudy with patchy rain in the northwest. Elsewhere, largely dry and sunny. Full forecast, page 53

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Mountains, moors and heaths offer £20bn in green benefits

Phillip Aldrick Economics Editor

Britain's mountains, moorlands and heaths are worth £20.1 billion for their ability to absorb carbon, remove air pollution and provide recreational activities, according to the Office for National Statistics.

The ONS is mapping environmental assets as part of a government project to "improve understanding of our natural capital".

It estimated in 2015 that the entirety of Britain's green spaces was worth £761 billion in terms of carbon sequestration, the removal of pollution, and recreation. The statisticians are now conducting a more thorough analysis of each habitat type to better measure how the ecosystem is changing.

Valuing natural capital has become a critical issue because without a price markets automatically treat the environment as worthless. Costing natural services helps to correct that mistake and improve decision-making.

The natural capital accounts are distinct from the land value of all the

homes in the UK, which the ONS has calculated at £4.1 trillion.

Natural accounts are required by the European Union but Theresa May has also made them a feature of the 25 Year Environment Plan that she unveiled last year.

The plan is focused on "protecting and enhancing [natural landscapes and habitats] for the next generation". It follows work by the World Bank, which has estimated the value of the world's untouched ecosystems at \$33.7 trillion (£27.2 trillion).

The ONS said that the value of the carbon capture provided by mountains, moorlands and heaths was £10.6 billion in 2017. Grassland absorbed carbon dioxide but wetland emitted it. The removal of pollutants from the atmosphere was worth £391 million in health benefits and the recreational service of unspoiled walks was worth £9.2 billion, the ONS said.

The value put on carbon sequestration will increase as the government pursues its target to achieve "net zero" emissions by 2050, it added.

Wind power generated from the land also contributes to its natural value but the ONS could not quantify the effect of this because it is updating its methodology. It added that electricity generated by wind from the habitats had increased more than 24-fold since 2003.

The statisticians are also working on a way of calculating the cultural services "provided by aesthetic appreciation and heritage value". At the moment the estimate is extrapolated solely from the amount people spend on petrol and recreational activities such as game hunting.

In 2017, almost 37 million people spent more than 46 million hours in Britain's mountains, moorlands and heaths. Since 2009, the recreational value of the habitats has decreased because fewer people are visiting. The biggest driver of the decrease has been a decline in spending on car running costs.

The country's mountains, moorlands and heaths cover 36,642 sq km, 15 per cent of the 244,654 sq km that make the whole UK landmass.

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1 New Lib Dem leader

Rise in jury-dodging down to online chat, judge warns

Jonathan Ames Legal Editor

Hollywood may have given jury service a worthy sheen in 12 Angry Men but in reality citizens often dread the call-up and will produce a torrent of reasons not to attend.

Now a senior judge has become exasperated with the excuses, which he claims have become more unified with the help of the internet.

Judge Andrew Menary, QC, the recorder of Liverpool, blamed online chat rooms for fostering the view among the public that they can produce standard reasons that will allow them to avoid their duty.

He expressed his frustration as he handed a 70-year-old man the maximum fine of £1,000 for producing a string of unacceptable excuses for failing to attend Liverpool crown court.

Barry Grimes of Bromborough in the Wirral refused to serve as a juror then failed to attend his contempt of court hearing, according to BBC News.

Grimes failed to attend court for jury service that was initially scheduled for January 2018. His jury service was deferred until this month, but again Grimes was absent. He is understood to

have told officials that he was incapable of sitting for long periods and that he was unable to concentrate. However, when told that he would need to provide a valid medical certificate, Grimes said that he was generally unfit and would not attend.

On another occasion, Grimes said that the scheduled jury service conflicted with a pre-booked holiday but the judge also rejected that excuse.

In the judge's view, Grimes "displayed a wholly unpleasant and unnecessary attitude" and his approach was "a quite deliberate contempt of court".

Grimes has 28 days to pay the fine. If he fails, he could be jailed for 14 days.

Fining Grimes, Judge Menary bemoaned what he said was a rising frequency of people ignoring jury summonses and refusing to sit. He claimed that many were turning to chat rooms for tips on dodging doing their duty.

One web chat room called OverclockersUK, and a Yahoo chat forum, for example, list tips for avoiding jury service.

Prospective jurors who feel that they should be let off the hook must contact the jury central summoning bureau for a deferral or to be excused entirely.

into the hands of the Liberal Democrats. I don't think we should underestimate Jo Swinson. I think she's capable, she's a very good communicator. I think she will be energetic and a passionate advocate for her party's views."

He said if Mr Johnson called an election on a no-deal platform "I think that is going to draw millions of traditional Conservative voters away from us".

Mr Gauke warned that Britain would face a recession if it left the EU without a deal. He said: "We will see the pound falling significantly which, if not immediately, plays into living standards. The cost of lots of goods [would] go up significantly, not least petrol but also food."

"We are likely to see unemployment rises in particular sectors and we are likely to see the public finances taking a hit as tax receipts will fall. If we have left in no-deal circumstances we will almost certainly be in recession, which is generally not a good time for an incumbent government to go to the country."

He said that he wants Mr Johnson to succeed in striking a deal with the EU, but does not believe it is possible before October 31. Mr Gauke also warned that a no-deal Brexit risks breaking up the Union, fuelling support for a united Ireland and a second independence referendum in Scotland.

I'll scupper Brexit, page 11 Leading article, page 25

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1 'Outrageous' abuse lies

minister's family. Mr Proctor, 72, said Beech had "lied, lied and lied again and his breathtaking lies were facilitated, enhanced and given credibility by the Met Police". He also called on Mr Watson to "put right past wrongs" with a public admission. He said: "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".

Greville Janner's son, Daniel, said that Mr Watson had politicised a police inquiry for "personal political advancement, riding on a bandwagon of public frenzy which he had whipped up".

Scotland Yard said its officers had behaved "in good faith" and none faced misconduct proceedings. Deputy commissioner Steve House said: "Operation Midland was carried out against a

What Tom Watson said

In PMQs in 2012: "[I] want to ensure the Met ... investigate clear intelligence suggesting a powerful paedophile network linked to parliament and No 10."

Letter in 2014 demanding rape claim be investigated: "I am driven to the unpalatable conclusion that the identity of the alleged perpetrator - Leon Brittan - may have influenced the case."

Sunday Mirror article in 2015 after Leon Brittan's death: "Yesterday, one survivor said to me that Brittan ... was 'as close to evil as a human being could get in my view' ... I believe the people I've spoken to are sincere."

backdrop of intense scrutiny and allegations that in the past the Met had covered up sensitive allegations about prominent people."

Beech's crimes were exposed by a Northumbria police investigation. He will be sentenced on Friday at Newcastle crown court on the 13 charges for which a jury took four and a half hours to find him guilty. He will also be sentenced for separate offences of downloading child abuse images, voyeurism and absconding to Sweden.

Mr Watson said he had apologised to Lord Brittan's family and, although he recognised Mr Proctor's hurt and anger, would not apologise to him. He said he had met Beech once. "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. That is what I did with Nick." Police in the dock, pages 6-7 Leading article, page 25

News VIP abuse scandal

News

How police found themselves in dock over fantasist's web of lies

Sean O'Neill Chief Reporter

Carl Beech was the sole defendant, and spent seven days in the witness box at Newcastle crown court, yet somehow he was a peripheral figure in this extraordinary case.

On the trial's opening day Tony Badnoch, QC, said that he would prove Beech's story of child murder, rape and torture to be "incredible and untrue". From that moment the Metropolitan Police was also in the dock.

As the prosecutor dissected Beech's myriad lies, including stories of being flown to Paris on a private Boeing 747 by his abusers, bitten by snakes while trapped in a cupboard, and having his dog kidnapped by MI5, it seemed astonishing that Scotland Yard had once declared these claims "credible and true".

When the Met finally abandoned its £2.5 million inquiry into Beech's allegations, the task of investigating him was given to Northumbria police. Its team challenged almost everything that the Met had accepted.

Beech claimed that he was taken out of school weekly to be abused. Detectives found school records back to the 1970s that described a model pupil with prizes for good attendance.

Officers interviewed Dawn Beech, who had been married to Beech for 22 years. Never once had he spoken for her about being abused by powerful men.

They seized his computers, identifying him as the owner of an encrypted email account sending bogus witness accounts, and confirmed that three murders he said he was "forced to watch" never happened.

Rather than being an abuse survivor, Beech was a paedophile. He wrote hundreds of pages of a child sex fantasy, disguised as a memoir, watched illegal videos and collected indecent images. Yet for more than a year the officers on Operation Midland, and their commanders, treated Beech's lies as truth. The answer to why they swallowed his fantastical story is found in the hysteria that took hold in the aftermath of the exposure of Jimmy Savile's crimes.

Haunted by the failure to bring Savile to justice, the Met set up Operation Yewtree and predators such as Max Clifford and Rolf Harris were jailed.

In late 2014 the Met was looking for other prosecutions and officers actively sought out Beech — then known as "Nick" — when his story appeared on the website Exaro News. Exaro introduced Beech to the Labour MP Tom

Hook, line and sinker

- Scotland Yard followed a policy of always believing the victim rather than keeping an open mind
- It declared Beech's story "credible and true" four weeks into inquiry
- His ex-wife, who had crucial evidence, was not interviewed
- His collection of child abuse images was not discovered
- Police were unaware that Beech had researched places and people before making allegations
- They believed that MI5 had shot his horse and kidnapped his dog
- Accepted that Harvey Proctor and Edward Heath — political foes — were part of same child-sex gang
- Did not discover that a penknife he said he had been threatened with was his grandmother's fruit-knife
- Beech's claim to have been taken out of school was not checked
- Claim that he hated water could have been easily disproved by his photo album, which showed him at pools and beaches around the world

Watson, who stoked pressure for investigations. Beech's lurid story became mainstream news in November 2014 when the BBC led news bulletins with an anonymised interview with "Nick".

The Met saw "Nick" as a star witness. He had a personal liaison officer and was driven around alleged crime scenes as he named the 12 members of "The Group". No one at the Met seems to have considered the sheer implausibility of a story about senior men in MI5, MI6, parliament, the military and showbusiness gathering at the Dolphin Square apartments in Pimlico or the Carlton Club for brutal child sex orgies.

Nor did they seem to realise that Beech had been to police before. In late 2012, only 17 days after the ITV documentary that exposed Savile, he contacted Operation Yewtree and was referred to Wiltshire police. He told how he had been abused by his stepfather and a group of men including military officers, two Saudi princes and Savile.

The case was closed as "undetected" but Beech claimed £22,000 in criminal injury compensation.

The story he told the Met in 2014 was strikingly different. The abusers now included politicians, intelligence chiefs

and the former head of the army. The Met did not seem to question the inconsistency and, in December 2014, called a press conference to say it was investigating three murders and appealing for victims of The Group to come forward.

It was at this event that Detective Superintendent Kenny McDonald described Beech's claims as "credible and true". At the packed news conference, this newspaper was sceptical, asking if police were aware that the muckraking magazine *Scallywag* published similar sensationalist reports in the 1990s. The next day *The Times* reported that "the murders may never have taken place".

The Met blundered on through the lives of those that their witness had accused — frail men unprepared for the assault that officers would unleash.

Field Marshal Lord Bramall, 95, a D-day veteran and former head of the armed forces, had his home searched for 20 hours by ten officers.

The former home secretary Lord Brittan of Spennithorne was ill with cancer when the police questioned him about false allegations. He died aged 75 before his name was cleared.

The former MP Harvey Proctor, 72, had his home searched for 27 hours by 15 police officers, who took away computers and paperwork but found no evidence of any crime. News of the search quickly appeared on the Exaro website.

But the Met had not examined Beech's computers, which would have shown his research into the men he accused. It was Mr Proctor who exposed Operation Midland's failings in August 2015, denouncing the investigation as "so far-fetched as to be unbelievable".

The Met was stung and Midland began to unravel. In September 2015 the police assertion that Beech's claims were "true" was withdrawn and Mr McDonald stepped aside. In January 2016, as Lord Bramall was told the case against him had been dropped, detectives confronted Beech about his evidence. He walked out of the interview.

Midland closed down in March 2016 as Mr Proctor was told he had no case to answer. But an investigation into Beech was ordered only eight months later when Sir Richard Henriques, a retired judge, produced a damning report, detailing 43 failings by the Met.

Northumbria police seized Beech's computers — loaded with evidence of his deception. When faced with the evidence the once talkative Beech gave "no comment" interviews.

Leading article, page 25



said yesterday that Beech's convictions should be considered "unsafe".

HARVEY PROCTOR

The former Conservative MP was wrongly accused by Beech of involvement in child murder and rape. Mr Proctor, 72, is seeking damages from the Met over the injury to his health and the loss of his home and job.

LORD BRAMALL

The former head of the Armed Forces had his home searched by ten officers and was subjected to hours of police interviews. Lord Bramall, 95, has since received £100,000 compensation from the Metropolitan Police. He told police that the accusations were "monstrous" and that he was "absolutely astonished, amazed and bemused" police were taking them seriously.

LEON BRITAN

The former home secretary died aged 75 from cancer while still under investigation by police over the false allegations in 2015. His widow, Lady Brittan, received a personal apology from Lord Hogan-Howe as well as compensation.

EXARO NEWS

The now defunct "investigative" website that first published Beech's allegations and promoted his claims. One of its reporters, Mark Conrad, contacted Beech after seeing his blog about being a survivor of child abuse and built a relationship with him.

Conrad, who is now a contributor to *Byline Times*, told police that he had helped Beech to set up an encrypted email account so they could communicate securely. Beech would later use encrypted emails to send bogus witness accounts to police.

Exaro's former editor, Mark Watts,

Clockwise from top: Carl Beech in a police interview; the former MP Harvey Proctor; Lord Brittan of Spennithorne; Lord Bramall; the Labour MP Tom Watson; and the police officer Kenny McDonald



LORD HOGAN-HOWE

The Metropolitan Police Commissioner at the time now sits as a crossbencher in the House of Lords. Lord

Hogan-Howe, 61, commissioned a report by Sir Richard Henriques that cleared him of any culpability for the botched investigation.

STEVE RODHOUSE

The most senior officer at the press conference where Beech's lurid allegations were declared to be "credible and true". Mr Rodhouse, 47, is now director-general of operations at the National Crime Agency.

KENNY McDONALD

The senior investigating officer in Operation Midland also declared Beech's allegations to be "credible and true". The detective superintendent retired weeks before the start of Beech's trial. The police watchdog said five officers involved in Midland had been cleared of misconduct.

Key players in a scandal that wrecked reputations

TOM WATSON

Labour's deputy leader has been accused at the child abuse public inquiry of having stoked "a moral panic". Mr Watson, 52, piled pressure on the Crown Prosecution Service and the police to ensure that Lord Brittan of Spennithorne was interviewed over a rape allegation, despite his frail health. Beech described Mr Watson as "part of the little group that was supporting me".

Relatives of Major Beech, who died aged 60 in 1995, dismiss the claim he abused his stepson as "fantasy". But the court heard that in 1990 Beech wrote to his mother telling her for the first time he had suffered sexual abuse from his stepfather.

There is no doubt Beech embellished his account greatly over the years, adding detail from internet conspiracies and stealing the stories of genuine survivors.

Secretly, Beech was also accessing paedophile material online. Hereford crown court heard earlier this year that police found 333 illegal images — including 36 of the most serious category — on his computers after a search of his home in November 2016. They also found more than 300 "indicative" images, many taken by himself of children near his home or in swimming pools.

Until last-minute guilty pleas in January, Beech had planned to claim in his defence that his son could have downloaded the illegal material.

An expert in deception and invention

Behind the story

Carl Beech was an NSPCC volunteer on a child safety project at the same time he was lying to police about being the victim of a powerful paedophile gang (Sean O'Neill and Fiona Hamilton write).

Beech, 51, visited 33 primary schools in Herefordshire between 2012-15 to talk about recognising and reporting child abuse.

He had a high-level DBS check before being accepted as a volunteer on the Speak Out, Stay Safe programme and told the charity he was an abuse survivor whose allegations were being investigated by police. The NSPCC accepted his word and became, along with the police, politicians and sections of the media, victims of his skill at deception.

A former nurse, school governor and NHS manager, Beech's image as a respectable, professional, family man was a key factor in persuading people

he was telling the truth. His 20-year marriage was coming to an end when he began making his public claims about being an abuse victim. He and his wife Dawn met at nursing school in the late 1980s and after the split their only son lived with his father.

Beech seemed to be coping well despite the break-up, taking a new job as an inspector for the Care Quality Commission. Yet he was also constructing his lurid account of physical and sexual abuse.

The ordeal began, he claimed, when he was aged eight and his mother Charmian — later a Church of England vicar and diocesan safeguarding officer — married Major Raymond Beech in Salisbury in 1976.

It was her second marriage but lasted just four months before she moved out and obtained a restraining order. The military's file on the major describes a "dangerously explosive" alcoholic who assaulted his wife, tore up her clothes, smashed furniture and threatened to sexually assault her.

Fugitive tried to start new life as B&B owner in Swedish wilderness

David Brown Chief News Correspondent, Overkalix

Drifts of snow on the mud track where he had parked his car lay 5ft deep as Carl Andersson struggled to clear a path to his new home on the banks of the frozen Kalix River.

His purchase in January last year of a decrepit wooden house on the edge of the Arctic Circle was a chance to make a fresh start away from the trouble in Britain as he approached 50.

Anna-Lisa Andersson, no relation, recalled Andersson arriving at her guesthouse in Overkalix, a village which has a population of fewer than 1,000. "He said he liked the snow, the wind, the cold and the loneliness," Ms Andersson said. "He told me he was looking for a new place, a new life."

The drifts eventually melted. By the time the snow returned later that year, the villagers' sense of trust had been betrayed after they gradually uncovered the truth about the stranger they had welcomed into their lives.

He was Carl Beech. And the trouble in Britain he was fleeing was criminal and of his own creation. He had made a series of lurid and utterly fantastical allegations of paedophilia which had devastated the lives of elderly, well-known men.

He had taken early retirement from the NHS in 2017, receiving a £59,000 lump sum and a monthly pension of £752. He had given the lump sum to his mother, the Rev Charmian Beech, 74, and she repaid £39,000 so that he could buy a £175,000 house five miles from the centre of Overkalix which he planned to turn into holiday accommodation.

Overkalix's remoteness and the bitter conditions in winter necessitate a close sense of community, so Ms Andersson was happy to help her future business competitor settle in as he attended local Swedish-language classes for immigrants.

"He is a nice man," she said. "I was helping him with his new life. Helping him to refurbish the house. I got him the people to do the work."

Nathalie Navez, 37, befriended the man she knew as Andersson on the Facebook page for Overkalix. She and her husband, Vincent van Vytven, 38, are also outsiders, having moved from Belgium to run a holiday chalet business on the outskirts of the village.

"We were not interested in his past," Ms Navez said. "When you come to the north you have a blank sheet; you start again. He told us he was fed up with the stress and the people at home."

Ms Navez and her husband were surprised when their new friend's mother, Charmian, 74, and aunt, Diana, 71, drove 2,000 miles to Overkalix to visit him rather than take a flight. Both women were Church of England vicars. She recalled their friend saying that his mother and his teenage son both wanted to live with him in Sweden.

At the end of June, he went travelling with Claudio Comi, an Italian travel blogger. The pair were pictured together on July 1 in the 24-hour daylight in Batsfjord, Norway.

The last time that Ms Navez and her husband saw the Briton was when they went together to an event to mark the

soler eclipse on July 13. Mr van Vytven said. "He said to us, 'I am having some stressful things right now. I need some time. I will text you when it is clear.'"

Then he stopped replying to messages or answering calls.

Christina Gaversten, 73, a retired teacher, met him soon after he moved to the opposite side of the road from the home where she had been born. "I told him that I am here to help him come into the society," she said. "I haven't so many friends so it was nice."

When her new friend's mother and aunt arrived in early June they visited her home for coffee. "His mother told me her surname was Beech and I said to Carl, 'But your name is Andersson,'" she recalled. "He said he had taken his grandmother's name who was from Denmark."

The next month he told Ms Gaversten that a friend from France would be visiting and they would both be travelling to the north of Sweden and into Norway. His mother had repaid her son the rest of the lump sum he had given her and a further £3,000 as he moved around Sweden.

Property records showed that on July 29 he had bought a second property in Kiruna, a mining town 150 miles from Overkalix deep in Swedish Lapland.

When he failed to return to Overkalix, Ms Gaversten began her own



Carl Beech's house at Overkalix, where neighbours read online about his past

research on her English friend but could find no trace of him on Google. Then she recalled talking to his mother and began searching for "Carl Beech".

The results from conspiracy theory websites which had ignored court orders not to publish his name made disturbing reading.

At 5:50pm on October 1 he was seized by police at Gothenburg's central railway station as he tried to return to the far north of the country. He was arrested under his real name.


He later claimed that after moving to Sweden he adopted the surname Andersson to "get away from Beech" but offered no explanation for using other aliases including Oscar Andersson, Samuel Williams, Samuel Karlsson and Sam Anders. Three days after his arrest he shuffled, handcuffed and unkempt, into the court of international and organised crime in Gothenburg and agreed to be extradited.

His conviction yesterday at Newcastle crown court for the lies he told, claiming to be the victim of an establishment paedophile ring, may finally help his friends in Overkalix begin to understand the mysterious Englishman they welcomed into their lives.

Daily Universal Register


UK: Jeremy Hunt, the foreign secretary, or Boris Johnson to be announced as the leader of the Conservative Party to replace Theresa May.

Nature notes



Two spectacular, but elusive butterflies are now flying about in woods. One is the white admiral, which has dark brown wings with a broken white bar slanting right across them on either side. It soars and glides dramatically between the trees and lays its eggs on honeysuckle. The other is the purple emperor. This flies high and fast among the treetops, but comes down to feed on sap in tree trunks and on salt in dung on the ground, where it opens and shuts its iridescent purple wings. Much easier to see in the next few months will, it seems, be painted lady butterflies, which have pale orange wings marked with black and white. These are immigrants that have been arriving in large numbers, nectaring on thistle, and coming into gardens. They are laying eggs, so their numbers will soon increase further, portending a great "painted lady summer", perhaps matching the glory of the invasion year of 2008. DERWENT MAY

Birthdays today



Daniel Radcliffe, pictured, actor, the Harry Potter film series (2001-11), 30; **Prof Christopher Andrew**, former official historian, M15, *The Secret World: A History of Intelligence* (2018), 78; **Alan Barnes**, saxophonist, composer, *The Sherlock Holmes Suite* (2007), 60; **Jo Brand**, comedian, 62; **Sir Ross Cranston**, High Court judge (2007-17), Labour MP (1997-2005), 71; **David Essex**, singer-songwriter, *Rock On* (1973), and actor, *Silver Dream Racer* (1980), 72; **Alex Fraser**, chief executive, London Institute of Banking and Finance, 60; **Graham Gooch**, cricketer, former England captain and coach, Test career 1975-95, 66; **Martin Gore**, musician, Depeche Mode, 58; **Prof Edward Gregson**, composer, 74; **Woody Harrelson**, actor, *Cheers* (1985-93), *The People vs. Larry Flynt* (1996), 58; **Fran Healy**, singer-songwriter, Travis, *Why Does It Always Rain on Me?* (1999), 46; **Mike Hulme**, professor of human geography, University of Cambridge, 59; **Alison Krauss**, singer, *Raising Sand* (2007), 48; **Andrew Langdon**, QC, chairman of the Bar Council (2017), 56; **Sergio Mattarella**, president of Italy, 78; **Len McCluskey**, general secretary, Unite, 69; **Judit Polgár**, chess grandmaster, title achieved at the age of 15 years and 4 months, 43; **Lord (Richard) Rogers of Riverside**, architect, *One Hyde Park* (2009), 86; **Robin Simon**, founding editor, *British Art Journal*, 72; **Mark Skipper**, chief executive, Northern Ballet, 58; **Slash (Saul Hudson)**, guitarist, Guns N' Roses, 54; **David Strettle**, rugby union player, England (2007-13) and Saracens (2010-15, 2018-19), 36; **Dame Mary Tanner**, European president, World Council of Churches (2006-13), 81; **Prof Mark Williams**, director, Oxford Mindfulness Centre (2008-13), 67; **Prof Michael Wood**, historian and broadcaster, 71.

On this day

In 1998 a team of scientists announced in the science journal *Nature* that they had produced three generations of cloned mice.

The last word

"He sows hurry and reaps indigestion."
Robert Louis Stevenson, novelist,
Virginibus Puerisque (1881).



Liberal Revival

Jo Swinson has won the leadership of the Liberal Democrat Party on a surge of support for opposing Brexit. Now she has to find a wider appeal

On the more trying days of coalition government after 2010, the late Paddy Ashdown liked to reflect on the lowest point of his time as leader of the Liberal Democrat Party. Do not complain about ministerial office, he would say, when he could recall the party's popularity marked by an asterisk which denoted "support within the margin of error of zero". Mr Ashdown's point was that Liberal Democrats are a resilient bunch.

That was an important virtue when, in 2015 and again in 2017, the party suffered the electoral punishment that is the common fate of junior parties in coalitions. Sir Vince Cable took over unopposed as the reluctant new leader and the party seemed to be all but over. Yesterday the Lib Dems chose Sir Vince's deputy, Jo Swinson, as their leader over the former energy secretary Sir Ed Davey. Ms Swinson inherits a party in ruder health than could have been expected.

The Lib Dems came second in the May 2019 European parliament elections, beating the Conservatives and Labour, and made most progress in the local elections. In a political contest splitting four ways, Ms Swinson takes up her new post as a significant political figure, one who may well help to determine the nature of the next government. It was for that reason important

that she used her acceptance speech to clarify that she did not like the idea of a coalition with either the Labour Party or the Scottish National Party.

For the moment Ms Swinson only really has one policy. The cause that has propelled the Lib Dem recovery is the same one that dominated the hustings — opposition to Brexit. With the Tories committed to delivering Brexit, the Brexit Party angry that it has not yet happened and Labour unable to make up its mind, the way has been cleared for the Lib Dems to speak with clarity for the cause of remaining in the European Union. Sir Ed tried to make "decarbonising capitalism" a talking point but Ms Swinson's point that the Lib Dems were "the obvious rallying point" for those opposed to Brexit was the central question.

Ms Swinson will only capitalise, though, if she is able to widen the appeal of her party beyond the residual minority who do not accept Brexit. If the new prime minister is successful in taking Britain out of the EU, then clarity on staying in will lose much of its relevance. The Lib Dems will probably become the first party to advocate that Britain should reapply for membership. Even for Remain-ers that will be a big hurdle and politics will to some extent move on.

The task for Ms Swinson is to define the kind of

Liberal Democrat Party that she wishes to lead. Even three decades after the fact, the party bears the marks of its uneasy merger of classical liberals and social democrats.

The new leader made an immediate pitch for the liberal vote when she praised immigrants, feminism and action on climate change. She also paraded the usual litany of liberal bogeymen such as Messrs Trump and Farage. There are bigger questions that need to be answered, however. Is the party to be liberal on economics and in favour of reform of public services, in the manner of the Orange Book liberals, such as the former MPs David Laws and Sir Danny Alexander, or will its statist wing prevail?

Ms Swinson will have to be clear on her plans for working with other small parties as well as the conditions under which her party might lend its support to an administration led by a Conservative or Labour prime minister. David Steel's advice to the Liberals in 1981 to go back to their constituencies and prepare for government was soon mocked by events. Ms Swinson told her party that she stood before them as a possible prime minister. That, too, is probably hyperbole but one of Brexit's many revolutions has been to make the Lib Dems matter again.

China without Charm

The use of gangsters to bludgeon democrats in Hong Kong is an act of desperation

The Chinese leadership believes it can conquer hearts and minds across the globe with elaborate investments in deep-sea ports and high-speed rail lines. Sadly it does not have much of that synthetic charm left over for Hong Kong. In that unhappy territory, pro-Beijing gangsters this week broke the bones of democracy activists with steel batons, safe in the knowledge that their savagery would be immune from arrest or investigation.

Since the 1997 British handover, Beijing has tightened its grip on what is now known as a special administrative region. It was always clear that China resented this "specialness" but grudgingly accepted it as long as Hong Kong was a magnet for investment. Today many mainland cities, such as Shanghai, are more prosperous and the commercial argument for Hong Kong's exceptionalism has weakened. As for the territory's semi-autonomous status, this plainly clashes with the absolutist tendencies of President Xi. In 2014 the frustration of young Hong Kongers bubbled over in the street protests of the umbrella movement. This was quashed partly by the use of triad gangs, hired to do Beijing's dirty work. One critical journalist was

severely injured by a gangster on a motorcycle wielding a meat cleaver.

The demonstrators have learnt from the failed 2014 protests. This time they have a single primary aim: to have the Hong Kong administration formally withdraw an extradition bill that would allow the mainland to interfere even more with the territory's judiciary. For the most part the protest leaders have maintained discipline; debris was cleared and Hong Kong's business activities were not seriously impaired. This week, however, a handful of protesters pelted the walls of the Beijing representative's office in Hong Kong with eggs and stones. Beijing was furious. The triads did their bidding and stormed the urban railway to beat people at random. The police appeared only after the gangs had melted away.

Beijing fears that Hong Kong could turn into a "coloured revolution" such as that experienced in the former Soviet Union. A successful uprising in Hong Kong could encourage the downtrodden Uighur Muslims of Xinjiang province or the separatists of Tibet. To remove that threat it is pursuing a kind of hybrid warfare that largely side-

steps the alternately passive or brutal Hong Kong police. It no doubt calculates that thugs administering a short sharp shock to noisy democrats is better than bringing the Chinese army out of their barracks and on to the streets. And it reckons that neither the Hong Kong chief executive, Carrie Lam, nor the West, will raise much of a fuss.

But China is making a nonsense out of its pledge to abide by "one country, two systems". Every weekend for the past six weeks it has shown its reluctance to tolerate any system that voices independent thought or seeks to democratise a dysfunctional local government. By handing the state monopoly of force over to criminal gangs to enforce "order", Beijing displays the fragility of its rule. Its behaviour in Hong Kong is an act of self harm. Those in independent Taiwan who call for a closer political relationship to the mainland can no longer persuade young people that it is possible to breathe free in a union with China. And those in the West who argued that unfettered trade with Beijing was the surest way of liberalising the communist regime have also been wrong-footed. Day by day, China's mask is slipping.

Web of Lies

False claims about a paedophile ring were fanned by the police and Tom Watson

Wrong, malicious, false and horrendous were the words that the former MP Harvey Proctor used to describe the gruesome allegations levelled against him by Carl Beech. In 2014 Beech, a former hospital manager, accused Mr Proctor and a string of other high-profile men of the murder, abuse and rape of children in the 1970s and 1980s. Now we know he made it all up.

A ten-week trial at Newcastle crown court has found Beech guilty of fraud and fabricating evidence. His lies launched a mammoth investigation, Operation Midland, that cost the Metropolitan Police £2.5 million and irreparably

damaged the reputations of innocent men. Initially, Beech's identity remained cloaked, but his alleged abusers' names became known when their properties were raided by the police. The officer leading the investigation gave Beech's account additional clout when he called it "credible and true" on television.

The crown court's verdict is welcome but it comes too late for some. Of the 12 men whom Beech falsely accused, eight are dead, including the former prime minister Edward Heath and Leon Brittan, the former home secretary. Brittan lived long enough to witness the trashing of his

reputation, but died before his name was cleared. Not the least of those responsible for this behaviour was Labour's deputy leader, Tom Watson, who met Beech and pressed police to pursue his allegations. Days after Brittan's death, Mr Watson wrote an article in the *Sunday Mirror* in which he quoted a "survivor", thought to be Beech, who had told him that the late politician was "as close to evil as a human being could get".

All the living victims of Beech's sordid accusations deserve apologies from detectives who dragged them through hell. They also deserve an apology from Tom Watson.