

Trevor Lyttleton's letters published in The Times and Sunday Times

Andrew and the official line of succession

The Times, February 24, 2026

Sir, Calls for parliament to remove Andrew Mountbatten-Windsor from the line of succession would consume parliamentary time at public expense for negligible practical effect. The probability of his inheriting the throne, at 66 with seven members of the royal family ahead of him, is infinitesimal. Given that scarce Treasury resources must fund Ukraine, strengthen defence, safeguard democratic values and protect the vulnerable, pursuing this course would be an ineffective and costly use of time in both Houses.

Trevor Lyttleton London NW11

Times February 21 2026

Blowing our own bugle

Dominic Lawson shows a balanced sense of proportion by describing Rishi Sunak as a "Conservative prime minister before elevation to his present status of Sunday Times columnist" ("The prime minister is hoist by his own petard", Feb 15).

Trevor Lyttleton

London NW11

THE TIMES — Friday, February 16, 2026

Governance Gap

Sir,

Your sustained campaign on sewage discharges has exposed environmental damage and regulatory weakness. Yet one structural omission remains. English water companies are not required to maintain an independent internal audit function — standard practice in banking and energy. That absence weakens governance at its core.

South East Water's failures around Tunbridge Wells last month, which left hospitals and care homes without supply, were not unforeseeable. Nearly two years ago the Chartered Institute of Internal Auditors warned that the lack of internal audit increased the risk of such breakdowns. No action followed.

About a quarter of treated water is still lost to leakage while sewage spills persist. Scottish Water and Northern Ireland Water require internal audit. There is no case for exempting privately owned English monopolies. If reform is serious, regulators should now mandate independent internal audit across the sector.

Trevor Lyttleton London NW11

Prince Andrew's fall from grace and lost titles

October 20 2025

Sir, The Order of the Garter is rightly regarded as Britain's highest honour for exceptional service to the nation. Yet its automatic conferment on senior members of the royal family can blur the distinction between service earned and status inherited. The Garter was founded to honour courage and contribution, qualities abundantly represented across today's society. In view of the King's sincere wish that the monarchy continue to reflect the nation's values, he may wish to consider whether this practice of awarding honours by tradition rather than individual merit still best serves that aim.

Trevor Lyttleton

London NW11

Sunday Times Sept 15 2024

Coming storm

Long says the chaos of her state school became too much. Sadly, that chaos is likely to increase when state schools are faced with the additional costs of accommodating an influx of children of fee-paying parents who can no longer afford the private option. Trevor Lyttleton, London NW11

Altruism's benefits

The Times May 29 2024

Sir, Melanie Phillips rightly states that altruism can help to beat loneliness (comment, May 27). As chair of the charity Contact the Elderly for 50 years I witnessed the effect of our nationwide monthly tea parties, which provided a vital link of companionship with isolated pensioners and transformed the lives of countless young volunteers, many of whom stayed with us for decades. For this reason I share Barrington Black's view (letter, May 28) that national service for 18-year-olds is the government's "best idea yet".

Trevor Lyttleton London NW11

Modern loneliness The Times March 26 2024

Sir, Further to James Marriott's article "Self-obsession is the root of modern loneliness" (comment, Mar 21), at the nationwide monthly tea parties held by Contact the Elderly, the vital link of companionship boosted spirits and transformed the lives of isolated pensioners and volunteers alike. However, the root of elderly loneliness was rarely self-obsession but, all too often, family neglect and lack of social care, as it sadly remains to this day. If the young can be persuaded to take a break from their smartphones and volunteer, they will find friendship, happiness and a strong sense of fulfilment in helping to repair our broken society. To this end more schools should give awards for volunteering as well as for scholastic and sports achievements.

Trevor Lyttleton

Founder, Contact the Elderly (now Re-engage), London NW11

Activity in old age

The Times January 4 2024

Sir, Alice Thomson rightly calls longevity our biggest challenge and for more creativity from politicians. However, instead of just rewarding the active elderly, the awards should go to the volunteers who drive away elderly loneliness with vital regular companionship over a cuppa.

Ann Rachlin - The Times December 6 2023

Trevor Lyttleton writes:

My sister Ann Rachlin's Fun with Music legacy spread the joy of music to three generations of children (obituary, November 30).

I hope your account of her life might persuade the education minister to put music back on the front burner of the school curriculum. Ann believed in the power of music to act as the greatest therapy of all and at 89 she staged a "Concert for Ukraine" that raised £20,000 for children injured in the war.

Just like Clarkson, I hear no evil Sunday Times December 3 2023

Jeremy Clarkson is getting hearing aids because when asked to get some coal from the bunker, what he hears is: "Would you like some more wine?" ("Heard the latest? I'm getting hearing aids", News Review, last week). My wife insisted I get my hearing aids after a woman at a noisy cocktail party told me her husband had just died and I replied: "Oh! how nice!"

As for Clarkson's wager: "I bet you any money I will be able to program them to mute certain sounds like 'dishwasher", no such innovation is required because the best thing about hearing aids is you can already mute unwelcome voices and sounds by taking them off.

Trevor Lyttleton, London NW11

Spilling Sewage The Times June 3 2022

Sir, Surfers Against Sewage's alarming report ("Half fall ill after surfing or swimming in British water", Jun 1) raises the question of why water companies have been allowed to discharge sewage 1,000 times a day into our waters.

Water companies should face crowdfunded and government-subsidised civil class actions on behalf of victims harmed by their failure to exercise their duty of care, and robustly enforced criminal prosecutions for pumping raw sewage into the sea and rivers and endangering public health.

The public must decide whether they prefer healthy bathing in clean waters and a reconstructed sewage system to a prolonged HS2 project exceeding its 2019 budget of between £72 billion and £98 billion.

Trevor Lyttleton London NW11

The Times May 2 2022

Cancel the Kremlin

Sir, While we should respect and not "cancel" Russian culture by banning its great literature or musical works, the same cannot be said for contemporary conductors such as Valery Gergiev who, as your report says, "chose to sacrifice his career rather than condemn the war" (Apr 29). Spotify and others should still play Tchaikovsky, Rachmaninoff and the great Russian musical repertoire, but remove all pro-Putin content.

Trevor Lyttleton

London NW11

Second Booster Jab The Times March 21 2022

Sir, After easing restrictions the prime minister gave the most vulnerable a false sense of security by promising that they would continue to be protected against Covid-19, without warning them that their first boosters had been losing substantial protection since early January.

Sadly, after the report that the new Omicron variant has caused a surge in hospital admissions (news, Mar 19), the welcome announcement of a second booster has come far too late for the vulnerable over-75s most affected. The government must set a firm date for second boosters and ensure that henceforth the old and vulnerable are properly updated on their level of vaccine protection and boosted in time.

Trevor Lyttleton

Founder, Contact the Elderly

The Sunday Times March 20 2022

Bartok rocks again

Your report on copyright lawsuits against Ed Sheeran (News Review, last week) reminds me of when I acted as legal consultant to Emerson, Lake and Palmer, who faced a similar claim from Bela Bartok's estate. I suggested they settle, as copyright had indeed been infringed, and the Bartok estate was granted proportionate royalties from the ELP album. A year later we received on the grapevine a heartfelt message from Mrs Bartok: "Please tell them to do it again. We've made more money in a short time from the ELP album than from the entire Bartok estate since his death in 1947."

Trevor Lyttleton, London NW11

IF MEMORY SERVES

The Times December 20 2021

Sir, The memory expert Professor Elizabeth Loftus's claim that each time we recall a memory we run the risk of embellishing or changing it ("False memory can be strong, expert tells Maxwell trial", Dec 17), prompts me to reconsider whether to risk writing my memoirs.

Trevor Lyttleton Founder, Contact The Elderly

This prompted the following excellent advice in reply

PRINT THE LEGEND

**Sir, Embellishing or changing recalled memories is exactly why Trevor Lyttleton (letters, Dec 20) should write his memoirs. I've written mine an absolute romp! So much more interesting than the real thing and, of course, I stand by every word.
Dr Peter Honey Windsor**

Irish stance on Israel is antisemitism in disguise

Sunday October 24 2021 The Sunday Times

Madeleine Spence's article on anti-Israel sentiment in Ireland tells only part of a very sad story (News Review, last week). In May 1945 - three years before the state of Israel was founded - the taoiseach, Éamon de Valera, visited the German ambassador to express his condolences on the death of Adolf Hitler.

Despite this endorsement of the architect of the Holocaust, de Valera was re-elected twice and served as president of Ireland from 1959 to 1973 - with the overwhelming support of Irish voters.

Trevor Lyttleton, London NWII

Seeing is belying – Sunday Times October 3 2021

Further to your excellent letters on eyewitness evidence (last week), when I was a law student an armed gang burst into the lecture hall and started to attack those in the front row. No harm was done: it was a hoax - and after dismissing the fake assailants, our lecturer asked us to write reports of what had just happened.

Our descriptions varied widely: from four attackers to seven, armed with weapons ranging from knives and hammers to sticks and brooms. I learnt never to underestimate the challenge of establishing the truth from conflicting evidence in court.

Trevor Lyttleton, London NW11

The Sunday Times September 05 2021

**Afghan animal airlift only added to our national shame
United Barkingdom**

Now we know our great country has gone to the dogs.

Trevor Lyttleton, London NWII

The Times August 27 2021

FOUR-DAY WEEK

Sir, Cutting working hours might do more than boost productivity and worker contentment ("Four-day week could be Covid's greatest gift", Aug 25; letter, Aug 26). Employers could also boost the country's volunteer base by allowing employees time off to help the homeless, disabled and vulnerable elderly, still deprived of social care eight years after Jeremy Hunt called their neglect a national disgrace.

Trevor Lyttleton

Founder, Contact the Elderly (now called Re-engage)

The Times July 19 2021

Clean Rivers

Sir, Emma Duncan rightly proposes that we should pay for clean rivers. The costs can, however, be substantially mitigated by draconian penalties on polluting companies, government-subsidised class civil actions on behalf of victims of toxic waste and robustly enforced criminal prosecutions of those responsible for pumping raw sewage into rivers.

Trevor Lyttleton London NW11

The Sunday Times July 18 2021

Volunteer force

Matthew Syed rightly states that "ancient civilisations understood the importance of human connections", but I don't agree that "we seem to have all but forgotten". Having developed over 50 years a nationwide team of volunteers, I have witnessed their unique commitment (some over many decades) in providing regular human contact to lonely elderly people over millions of cups of tea at Contact the Elderly (now Re-engage) tea parties.

I firmly believe that, over the next 50 years, Britain's sense of fairness and compassion will prevail and spirited volunteers will continue to provide the vital human connection and dedication that will transform vulnerable lives, regenerate our communities and help to mend our broken society.

Trevor Lyttleton, London NW11

Sunday Times June 6 2021

Name dropping

On the subject of unfortunate acronyms (Letters, last week), as a young solicitor I was instructed by one of my firm's important clients to register the company name Southern Hemisphere Investment Trust. Fortunately the companies registry spared our embarrassment by objecting to the name on the grounds of its initials.

Trevor Lyttleton London NW11

Leading letter: The Times May 13 2021:

Concerns over content of the Queen's Speech

Sir, The prime minister rightly condemned the opposition for neglecting social care for 13 years in the Queen's Speech debate (report, May 12) but failed to set out the "clear plan" to fix social care he claimed to have prepared when he took office in August 2019. The government can only truly claim to be levelling up our country when it tackles once and for all the neglect of vulnerable pensioners dying alone and unsupported by social care that Jeremy Hunt called "a source of national shame" in October 2013.

Trevor Lyttleton Founder, Contact the Elderly (now Re-engage); London NW11

The Times March 17 2021

MONARCH'S LOVE NEST

Sir, In response to Sathnam Sanghera's proposal that "blue plaques should mark moments that matter" (Notebook, Mar 15), may I suggest a blue plaque for Bryanston Court, the former London residence of Wallis Simpson, that reads: "King Edward VIII sometimes slept here."

Trevor Lyttleton London NW11

The Times September 11 2020

Loneliness and the tender care of the elderly

Sir Alice Thomson rightly calls to end the loneliness of the 418,000 elderly people incarcerated in care homes. The government should make this a priority, if only out of respect for the millions of lonely elderly people who died alone and unsupported by social care, over the course of the seven years since Jeremy Hunt, as health secretary, described their plight as "a source of national shame".

Trevor Lyttleton

Founder, Contact the Elderly (now called "Reengage")

The Times July 29 2020

CAPITAL NO-NOS

Sir, I enjoyed Sathnam Sanghera's selection of advice to first-time visitors to London (Notebook, Jul 27). Times readers may also appreciate the following gems from Gerard Hoffnung's memorable Oxford Union speech in 1958. He said that all London brothels displayed a blue lamp; free zebra parking was available on most roads; and that, on entering a train compartment, "remember to shake hands with all the passengers".

Trevor Lyttleton
London NW11

Times letters July 24 2020

HARD CHEESE

You rightly say that "a new cheese is not to be sniffed at" in applauding the innovative marketing of the mouldy cheese Le Confiné (Creative Spread, Leading Article, Jul 22). However, before encouraging a big British initiative, the big cheeses in government should bear in mind President De Gaulle's warning: "How can you govern a country with 246 different kinds of cheese?"

Trevor Lyttleton London NW11

The Sunday Times July 05 2020

Starter for 10

Rod Liddle suggests Sir Keir Starmer should have sacked Rebecca Long Bailey months ago (Comment, last week). This raises the question of why he appointed her in the first place, after she gave Jeremy Corbyn 10 out of 10 for leadership of the Labour Party, which included his mishandling of antisemitism. Trevor Lyttleton, London NW11

CARE OF THE ELDERLY The Times May 19 2020

Sir, Philip Collins (May 15, and letters, May 16) rightly holds the government to account for "wasting a lot of time since 2015" and failing to make adequate provision for social care and the elderly. If, as far back as 2013, the government had acted on Jeremy Hunt's warning that the neglect of the elderly was "a source of national shame" we would by now have a fully implemented and funded social care policy. We would thus have avoided the scandal of transferring thousands of elderly people from NHS hospitals to inadequately monitored and infected care homes, for which the Care Quality Commission must also be held to account.

Trevor Lyttleton

Founder, Contact the Elderly (now Re-engage); London NW11

Still time for tea

Andrew Riley Letters Editor of The Times March 7 2020.

Times readers are a civilised bunch. Trevor Lyttleton writes to invite Rose Wild to tea, urging her to reconsider her recent claim that "few people have tea parties any more" (Feedback, Feb 29).

He writes: "Since I founded Contact the Elderly in 1965, over a million cups of tea have helped to create vital life-happiness links between isolated pensioners and volunteers. Today (and renamed Re-engage) the charity's 11,000 volunteers re-engage monthly at 900 'contact' tea parties across the UK."

The Sunday Times January 12 2020

Peer Review

Roland White suggests the Labour Party could nominate Nigel Farage for a peerage (Atticus, last week).

Boris Johnson's smartest countermove would be to nominate Jeremy Corbyn for a dukedom, in return for his services to the Conservatives.

Trevor Lyttleton, London NW11

The Sunday Times November 3 2019

Talking in his sleep

Roland White (Atticus, last week) writes that "dozing in the Commons is wrong. Isn't that constitutionally the role of the Lords?" Presumably he had in mind the peer who dreamt he was making a speech and woke up to find that he was.

Trevor Lyttleton, London NW11

The Times October 19 2016

FLEEING CALAIS

Sir, Lady Eccles makes a plea for Britain to show generosity in dealing with unaccompanied children from the Calais Jungle (letter, Oct 18).

In 1940 the congregation of the West London Synagogue decided that money raised for a decorated cupola should instead go to the Kindertransport project for Jewish refugee children fleeing Nazi Germany. Maybe today Britain should similarly abandon vanity projects, such as the Garden Bridge, and use the funds to support the Calais children. Trevor Lyttleton London NW3

Full list of the Queen's Birthday Honours

Saturday June 16 2007, The Times

Trevor Michael Lyttleton. For services to Contact the Elderly charity. (London, WIH)

Letter: Reaching out to the isolated elderly

From the Chairman of Contact the Elderly

The Times - Thursday May 06 2004

Sir, The revelations about the appalling neglect of elderly people throughout this country (Public Agenda, April 27) come as no surprise to voluntary organisations like Contact the Elderly which battle hard on a daily basis, against an increasingly supine bureaucracy, to establish contact with isolated elderly people in desperate need. Contact the Elderly provides a vital lifeline of companionship for thousands of isolated and frail elderly people throughout the UK, through volunteers who drive them out to tea on one Sunday afternoon a month. Sadly we can no longer rely on local authorities to refer to us elderly victims of neglect. Instead, we have to devote our overstretched resources, needed to recruit caring volunteers, to finding people whose details should be available to every director of social services at the touch of a button.

The quality of individual lives seems not to be an issue for the social services, who are too often reactive to crises, rather than proactive in probing beneath the surface. Of the UK's 10 million old people, one in three lives alone. The sad truth is that the erosion of pension by falling annuity rates, combined with greater longevity, will compound the problem of loneliness, and the pressing financial worries of this increasingly marginalised group of people.

Yours faithfully,

TREVOR LYTTLETON n23 Bryanston Court, George Street, WIH 7HA.

Advice on Enduring I Powers of Attorney The Times February 21 2004

Is it possible for my wife and I to take out powers of attorney on each other while still compos mentis so to avoid all the legal trauma should one of us ever suffer from dementia? L.W., Neath, Wales.

Yes it is. Trevor Lyttleton, a solicitor and member of the Court of Protection Receivers Panel, which deals with this area of law, says that this is something that a lot of couples do. They each enter into a power of attorney, appointing the other spouse as attorney in the event of one or the other being mentally incapacitated.

Sunday December 14 2003 The Sunday Times

RECORD

You report that Judge David Owen holds the current record for judgments overturned on appeal (News, last week). I wonder whether he has surpassed the 19th-century record of Mr Justice Kekewich, whose penchant for being overruled prompted this exchange in the Court of Appeal. Clerk of the court: "My lords: this is an appeal from Mr Justice Kekewich". Master of the Rolls: "And are there any other grounds of appeal?" –

Trevor Lyttleton, London W1

Published in The Times Brief Letters to the Editor July 21 2000

A memorable Irish warning

From Mr Trevor Lyttleton

Sir, On the way to Glengariff in Ireland a few years ago I saw the following: "Beware! Extreme Danger! Church Entrance Ahead!.

Yours faithfully, TREVOR LYTTLETON, London W1. July 21 2000

The Times 23 June 1985

Inflation : ignored

From Mr. T. Lyttleton.

Sir, I have heard recently of two claimants whose respective actions have taken four and five years to reach the High Court. Assuming that judgment is awarded in their favour, in each case the plaintiff will receive at - least 30 per cent. less than his due in real terms while the defendant, on the other hand, will have benefited by the fall in the value of money and will be paying at least 30 per cent, less in real terms than if he had settled the claim at the proper time. As higher rates of inflation now prevail it is to be hoped that Parliament will take immediate steps to remove this obvious injustice by introducing the necessary legislation to give the Courts power to take inflation into account when making awards on civil claims.

Trevor Lyttleton. Flat 18,33, Bryanston Square, W.1.