

Growing beyond expectation

How Harlow Carr became the Royal Horticultural Society's first garden in North
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Note to Santa that started a career

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‘Everests’ scaled but bigger tests await

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ANDREW VINE
‘They have turned our pavements and shopping streets into places of real danger.’
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Yorkshire's National Newspaper

NEWSPAPER OF THE YEAR

THE YORKSHIRE POST

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The ‘patched together’ care system

Grace Hammond
NEWS CORRESPONDENT

THE public are to be asked who should get social care, who should pay, and what role the state should play as part of a major review into the “patched together” system.

Baroness Louise Casey, who is leading a commission into adult social care in England, said the system too often creates “agony and uncertainty” for people at the most vulnerable points in their lives.

Her team is launching what she describes as a “challenging” conversation with the country, to gauge the views of the public on changes to the current system.

Speaking at the Local Government Association (LGA) annual conference in Bournemouth today, she

Commission chief Casey to launch a ‘challenging’ conversation to gauge public’s views on changes

is expected to refer to 22 attempts since 1997 to reform adult social care, saying: “None have fixed the foundations. Because reform has either tried to improve bits of the system without addressing the whole. Or it has reached for bigger reform without securing public consent for the hard choices it involves.

“Without public consent, each time we get close, the debate narrows. We need to have a different and more challenging conversation with the country.”

Baroness Casey told MPs last month that her interim report later this year will suggest some “quite big” changes to the system. She said that while her final report is expected by 2028, the overall work might be completed sooner.

She also confirmed she had been in contact with would-be prime minister Andy Burnham, who has spoken about the potential for a care levy.

Earlier this year, Baroness Casey indicated that, as part of her com-

mission, she will ask whether reforms proposed by Sir Andrew Dilnot more than a decade ago should be enacted.

He led a review into the future of funding social care and published his proposals in 2011. But despite Dilnot-style reforms having been accepted by previous governments, they have never been implemented.

Labour faced criticism after it was elected in 2024 for scrapping plans for an £86,000 cap on the amount anyone in England would need to spend on their personal care over their lifetime, having argued the proposals were not “deliverable”.

Baroness Casey, inset, is now an-



nouncing that her team will, this month, begin “testing the views of hundreds of thousands of members of the public to get under the skin of where the public are” in terms of their views on social care provision.

These will include especially older people who she will describe as “too often ignored or overlooked”, as well as younger people “who are already losing faith that they will get anything back from the state in return for paying in”.

People will be asked who they think should receive social care, what families should be asked to do for their loved ones, what people should be able to expect from the

state and what people should contribute in return.

In her keynote speech this afternoon to more than 1,700 councillors, council leaders, senior officers, politicians and organisations, she is expected to describe a “patched together” system “where more older people are needing support, but fewer are getting it”, and “where demand from working-age adults is rising in ways we still do not properly understand”.

She will refer to official Government data suggesting a quarter of people in the UK reported having a disability in 2023/24, up from 19 per cent a decade earlier, and that one in 10 people of working age are now claiming a sickness or disability benefit, adding: “Much of this is linked to mental health conditions.”

New Bank chief oversees animal notes

A new Bank of England chief cashier and director of notes is set to take up the role in October – as the Bank prepares to replace historical figures with animals on its banknotes.

Governor Andrew Bailey announced that Rhys Phillips has been appointed, starting the role on October 19.

Mr Phillips will be responsible for the production of high-quality, secure notes which the public can use with confidence, the Bank of England said.

In June, the Bank of England unveiled a list of animals – including a dolphin, a fox, a butterfly, an owl, a bumblebee and a shark – that could appear on Bank of England banknotes, eventually replacing historical figures.

Working with a panel of wildlife experts, the Bank has produced a shortlist of animals that could become the central image on the £5, £10, £20 and £50 notes.

Historical figures who have helped shape thought, innovation, leadership and values have been showcased on Bank of England banknotes since 1970.

Mr Bailey said: “I am delighted that Rhys will be our next chief cashier leading the work to introduce a new generation of secure banknotes.”

The King aboard a battle tank



CHRIS JACKSON/PA WIRE

The King has taken a ride in a British Army tank during his first visit to the Royal Tank Regiment (RTR) since becoming Colonel-in-Chief. Charles's ride in the Challenger 3 Main Battle Tank came during a visit to the Tank Museum, in Bovington, Dorset. Princess visits hospital: Page 5.

City airport recruits 3 directors to board as Allen quits

CITY of Doncaster Council chief executive Damian Allen has stepped down from the board of the local authority-owned company set to reopen Doncaster Sheffield Airport – with a local business chief among three new appointments to the organisation.

Dan Fell MBE, chief executive of Doncaster Chamber of Commerce, has become a director of FlyDoncaster along with Andrew Offer of 2Excel, an aviation company based at the airport. They are also joined by consultant Stephen Barker, who has previously held senior roles for Gatwick and Birmingham airports.

Companies House filings show Mr Allen stepped down as a company director on June 22, with Mr Fell, Mr Barker and Mr Offer being appointed on the same day.

Senior Doncaster Council officers Debbie Hogg and Christian Foster have remained as directors.

Council auditors Grant Thornton have previously raised governance concerns about senior council officers sitting on the company's board.

Three further board appointments are expected to be made.

Among the conditions for the project receiving £160m of devolution funding from Oliver Coppard's South Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority is allowing it to appoint two non-executive directors with aviation and commercial expertise to the FlyDoncaster board.

The release of funding is also conditional on key terms of the lease between the council and landowner Peel being renegotiated. A sticking point for lease renegotiations is an attempt to ensure that the funding package is exempt from a lease clause entitling Peel to 20 per cent of the airport's future turnover above annual base rent payments.

An airport project spokesperson said: “These new directors will bring significant additional experience to the airport operator, particularly in business representation and aviation areas. The final board will be made up of eight members, bringing together the right range of skills required to oversee the successful reopening and ongoing management of the airport. The full list of appointments will be communicated in due course.”

Lease ‘progress’: Page 2.

Fighters intercept Russian aircraft threatening UK carrier

TWO fighter jets have intercepted a Russian patrol aircraft which ‘repeatedly approached’ the UK's Carrier Strike Group, the Ministry of Defence (MoD) said yesterday.

The Bear-F plane dropped a series of buoys into the water near to the aircraft carrier HMS Prince of Wales before being intercepted by F35 jets on Thursday last week, the MoD revealed.

It condemned the activity in the

Norwegian Sea as “unsafe and unprofessional”.

The announcement comes on the eve of the two-day Nato Summit in Ankara, with Sir Keir Starmer set to attend his last major international event after months of pressure to increase military spending.

Meanwhile, it was also announced yesterday the UK would sanction Russian scientists and institutions responsible for developing the Novichok nerve agent used in the 2018 Salisbury assassination plot.

Addressing the Russian aircraft interception, a MoD spokesperson said: “While operating in the Norwegian Sea on Operation Firecrest, the UK's Carrier Strike Group was repeatedly approached by a Russian ‘Bear-F’ maritime patrol aircraft.

“The Bear-F passed at low altitude and unnecessarily close to HMS Prince of Wales and dropped a large

number of sonobuoys in close proximity to the carrier.

“This activity was unsafe and unprofessional. The Russian aircraft was intercepted and escorted by two UK F-35 jets from HMS Prince of Wales until it left the area.”

The UK's Carrier Strike Group is currently deployed off Iceland under Nato command, with 1,500 British personnel on board. The group consists of HMS Prince of Wales,

Type 45 destroyer HMS Duncan, F-35 jets, Merlin and Wildcat helicopters, and is supported by RFA Tidespring.

The Bear-F, a plane which can be used for reconnaissance or as a bomber, is believed to have dropped tens of sonobuoys into the waters near the aircraft carrier. The monitoring devices use sonar to detect submarines and other vessels.

Minister visits: Page 4.

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WEATHER



Cloudy with some rain, light winds.
Full forecast: Back Page

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Abbey’s artwork

THE historic surroundings of Ampleforth will be home to artwork from the region. Paintings, printmaking, ceramics, sculpture, jewellery and millinery will be on display in a showcase celebrating the region's artistic talent – with work available to buy.

Full story: Page 3.

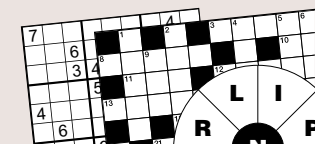
Museum gigs fears

A BID to host more gigs in York's Museum Gardens has faced objections over late-night noise and antisocial behaviour. Future-sound Events, which runs Live at Museum Gardens, has applied to stage live music concerts up to 12 days a year until 10.30pm.

Full story: Page 7.

Puzzles Post

16 daily crosswords and puzzles: Pages 2 and 16.



One Health’s cheer

ONE Health Group delivered an increase in profits and revenues over the last financial year as it invests in a new surgical hub. The Sheffield company said in the year to March 31 2026, revenue grew by 11 per cent to £31.6m. Gross profit rose to £6.5m.

Full story: Page 17.



COMMENT

Britain cannot ignore threat of Putin's Russia

The past few months have been dominated by the debate around Britain's defence capabilities. In fact, the final nail in Sir Keir Starmer's political coffin came as a result of the resignations of Defence Secretary John Healey and Armed Forces Minister Al Carns.

Healey, who was seen as a Starmer loyalist, was withering in his assessment of the PM and Chancellor's approach to the defence investment plan (Dip).

Writing to the PM that "You have been unable and the Treasury has been unwilling to commit the resources that the nation needs to defend the country at this time of rising threats".

If that was not enough to jolt the Government out of the coma of complacency that Britain has fallen into over the past few decades when it comes to defence, then events last week should end any illusions that the country can continue to do the bare minimum.

The Ministry of Defence (MoD) said a Russian patrol aircraft "repeatedly approached" the UK's Carrier Strike Group as it operated in the Arctic and was intercepted by two F-35 fighter jets.

Russia's Bear-F plane dropped a series of buoys into the water near to the HMS Prince of Wales aircraft carrier. The MoD condemned the move as "unsafe and unprofessional". Given the Putin regime's provocations in recent years, it can't be dismissed as just a chance encounter or even a mistake by the Russians.

The new Defence Secretary Dan Jarvis says "We should be clear-eyed about the fact that the threat from Russia exists in every domain" and insisted that Andy Burnham "understands the importance of defending our nation".

If Burnham is to show that he really understands the importance of defence then he needs to be ready to take difficult decisions.

Farage will be held to far higher standards

Reform UK and Nigel Farage have spent the past couple of years riding a turquoise wave of a favourable political tide, the MP for Clacton now finds himself in hot water over financial support that he has received.

Farage cannot expect to evade scrutiny if he is serious about becoming the next incumbent of 10 Downing Street. So far the leader of Reform UK has leveraged with great effect the disconnect that many voters are suffering from Westminster.

However, the chief architect of Brexit must realise that he will now be held to much higher standards, as anyone vying for the highest political office in the country should. It isn't simply a case of telling interviewers to 'mind their own business' when questions are asked of his financial affairs. The public expects transparency.

The Reform UK leader is facing scrutiny over the support given to him by long-term associate George Cottrell, which included funding for staffing, security and the use of a London townhouse.

The controversy over financial support from Cottrell combined with the ongoing probe by Parliament's standards commissioner into a £5m gift Farage received from crypto-billionaire Christopher Harborne points to a pattern of Farage enriching himself. The leader of Reform UK says "It's now clear the establishment will stop at nothing to hurt Reform – we want to smash their cosy consensus."

When people say they want a change in politics, they don't want to see standards denigrated further. It is a matter of trust. Trust that is heavily undermined when politicians take money from convicted criminals and not declaring it.

Hailing Harlow Carr

Yorkshire is a horticultural hotbed and this love of gardens has not come about by accident. The region's green and lush landscape provides plentiful inspiration for people to get out into their own gardens and let their imaginations run free.

Yorkshire is also home to Harlow Carr which allows people of all ages to enjoy the sights of nature. When the Royal Horticultural Society (RHS) merged with the Northern Horticultural Society in 2001, Harlow Carr welcomed 72,000 visitors a year and employed 11 gardeners. Today, it attracts over half a million visitors annually and employs 176 staff.

This growth is worth celebrating as Harlow Carr marks 25 years since becoming the RHS's first garden in the North of England.

It is also worth paying tribute to the army of volunteers who make the visitor experience so memorable. Yorkshire truly is lucky to be home to such a beautiful public garden.

Letters to the editor

Email: yp.editor@ypn.co.uk

Write to: The Editor, The Yorkshire Post, Pinnacle, 15th Floor, 67 Albion Street, Leeds LS1 5AA.

Please include your full postal address and the publication date if referring to a Yorkshire Post article or a previous letter. Please print as well as signing your name. The Editor reserves the right to shorten letters.

Don't bolster defence at expense of the needy

MK O'Sullivan, Victoria Street, Allerton Bywater, Castleford.

The Yorkshire Post today (30/06/26) includes a timely and well argued item on defence and security and the assets available, and needing additional such.

We now hear the Conservative leader tell us time and time again that her party will greatly improve the threadbare status of the Armed Forces, and how, yes you have got it, by deep welfare cuts?

Listen to the likes of Stride, Philip, Patel, Cartledge and the message is clear. Have you noticed with just how much relish the Conservatives talk about welfare cuts as if they actually enjoy the idea of inflicting pain and distress on so many of the vulnerable? 14 years revisited? It is a strange kind of mentality, liking inflicting pain.

The Armed Forces after 14 years of Tory cuts and more cuts and

slashing are so reduced in numbers and equipment that certain tasks and actions cannot be carried out. The Royal Navy cannot provide enough frigates and destroyers to form a CBG (Carrier Battle Group) to protect and defend one of the RN aircraft carriers. French ships now are needed.

Are plans to build new drone ships instead of frigates and destroyers a sound investment? How are the army to be supplied with modern weapons and equipment, tanks, APC's come to mind?

The Defence Department has a deserved bad reputation for orders that are way over costs when handed over and then prone to malfunctions, the two aircraft carriers, and tanks are examples.

Will the Royal Navy in future years be capable of blue water operations? Will the army and RAF be capable of effective combat op-

erations against Russian aggression? It should be axiomatic that the first duty of any government is to protect the safety of the nation, just as it should be not to deliberately inflict pain and distress on the weak and feeble.

World War Three?

David Quarrie, Lynden Way, Holgate, York.

World War Three is coming, just ask Estonia, Lithuania, Latvia, Georgia, Ukraine, Finland, Poland, Romania, Hungary, Germany, and the Balkans!

I think there will be World War Three in about three to four years. Vladimir Putin's long time overall plan/wish from his days as a KGB Officer in the DDR (East Germany), have been to re-assemble the old USSR.

He has been probing and testing NATO, the USA, much of Western Europe for weakness, and he has located many. The Western Alliance is not strong enough to cope with Russian military might.

Admiral Tony Radakin and the Labour ex Defence Secretary and Forces Minister have highlighted the UK's weakness and lack of preparedness. A classic example was it took three weeks to get a warship from its UK base to Cyprus.

Putin has been building up allies and he is willing to poison critics of his regime no matter where they live. US President Donald Trump has highlighted his refusal to go on helping Europe defend herself and his many outbursts give an impression of 'admiring' Putin rather than opposing him at every turn.

We are in real danger of sleep walking into War. Defence spending not welfare increases!

SNAPSHOTS OF YORKSHIRE

Windmill at Skidby. By Ian Richardson.



Have you taken a stunning photograph of everyday life in and around Yorkshire?

For a chance to be featured, email your image, along with your contact details and a brief description of the image, to yppicture.desk@ypn.co.uk (Please label your email "Snapshots of Yorkshire". Image format: Hi-res JPEGs only).

Storing clean energy is main challenge

Michael Carter, Exeter.

In arguing against clean energy, Clark Cross (*The Yorkshire Post*, June 30) claims that wind "can only provide 35.3 per cent" of UK electricity and that doubling turbines wouldn't help.

Where to begin.

Wind already generates around 30 per cent more electricity than gas, a fact that will surprise many readers. And because modern turbines are roughly ten times more powerful than the older models, we wouldn't need to double turbine numbers to double output.

We're likely to end up with fewer turbines as old ones are replaced. Once the grid is upgraded, we'll also stop wasting the surplus wind power it currently cannot handle.

Wind is only part of the picture. Solar and hydro add further clean generation, and taken together our renewable assets now deliver an average of 16 units for every 10 produced by gas.

Nuclear, which also avoids burning gas, strengthens that clean supply.

On this basis, doubling all our clean energy sources would produce more than twice the electricity currently generated by gas.

The real question is whether we can store enough for calm or cloudy periods.

The answer is increasingly yes. New pumped-hydro facilities are under construction, with scope for many more. Battery costs have fallen sharply, and new chemistries using abundant materials such as sodium, iron and vanadium, can provide longer-duration storage than lithium.

Do we have every technology needed to eliminate gas entirely? Perhaps not yet. But we can drastically reduce our own reliance right now, while exporting enough surplus clean energy to help our neighbours cut their emissions too.

Mainstream parties must help residents

Paige Turner, Surrey Street, Sheffield.

The rise of Reform UK and the far right in areas of Sheffield is being fuelled by alienation from mainstream parties, namely the right wing of the Labour party and the Green Party who made the baffling decision in the last election to promote it as a two-way race between themselves and Reform, which was not only incorrect (Labour and Lib Dems were and are the two largest parties on the council), it gave Reform free advertising and a platform.

Areas in Sheffield are currently being left adrift by a Labour Party and Green Party who are failing to support the efforts of the areas' residents to fight the sell-off of acres of Green Belt, including vital farmland which produces food.

Labour and Green alike have previously failed to support the areas of Ecclesfield, Grenoside and High Green in their fight to prevent vital library services being cut or closed.

In a precursor to the current 'ban' on Pride in Essex libraries, the previous Green cabinet member for Sheffield libraries, Alison Teal, was later excluded from the party for allegedly anti-trans views.

Subsequent chairs of the committee, which oversees Sheffield Libraries from all parties, including the Green incumbent, seem ignorant to the fact that the broken system of branch library provision,

the majority of which are volunteer-led, have not posted on social media about Pride, creating a de facto ban on it and show no interest in challenging this.

Reform has already won in Barnsley by a landslide. Labour and Green alike in Sheffield need urgently to support residents in Chapeltown, Ecclesfield and Grenoside fighting to stop the sell-off of Green Belt land and lobby for vital services, such as branch library provision on High Green, Ecclesfield and Grenoside, to be reinstated.

Complex issue of Neets needs debate

Jim Buckley, Ackton.

We must prepare the young for work, says Matt Bromley (*The Yorkshire Post*, June 16). Ismail Mulla (*The Yorkshire Post*, June 19) commented on a Government report that one in eight young people are not in education, employment or training (Neet).

Just two examples of concerns being highlighted. This is a complex area, and needs to be properly debated; not become a political football.

There is the Social Mobility Commission, which is long on words, saying it is there to do research, and if asked, advise the Government.

Which brings us to the power struggle by Government. As an example, on June 23 MPs made recommendations, only to be slapped down by the Government. It is what the House of Commons considers which matters; not what the Government considers, but MPs just accept it without whimper.

If we want to see debate on anything, we shall have to do it ourselves. The present political set-up is incapable of doing so.

IN BRIEF

Cricket future is bleak under regime

Peter Rickaby, Moat Way, Brayton, Selby.

Ex-England cricket captain Michael Vaughan is perfectly right, now Stokes has gone, so should Rob Key at the ECB and particularly Brendan McCullum head coach.

Results over the past 12 months have overall been poor, the team is drifting from one defeat to another, seven out of the last nine.

Under this regime the future looks nothing but bleak.

Votes from shirkers

Peter Hyde, Driffield.

Sir Keir Starmer had lost the trust of quite a few of his Cabinet, in particular Minister of Defence.

His multiple U-turns were no help. The question is 'Will his successor be any better?'

I very much doubt it as the system of borrowing and spending will continue and probably be even worse as Labour MPs are aware that doling out money to the idle brings votes for Labour from the shirkers.

Plans for NPR?

James Smith, Sheffield.

You're right to ask questions of the Government's plans for Northern Powerhouse Rail (The YP, July 1). It is a lack of questioning of HS2 that allowed the vultures to sweep and milk the project for every penny.

And, yes, HS2 should have started in Leeds and not London.

Then it would have been completed because London never misses out.

'It's just the NHS'

Maria Jamil, Huddersfield.

The other day my other half received a letter for a supposed missed appointment when they had actually not received the appointment in the first place.

The tone of the letter very much putting them in the dock when it was the hospital that was guilty for not informing us of the appointment in the first place.

Do they think we're psychic? When I queried the consultant at the appointment, he just shrugged and said it's the NHS.

HORACE & DORIS



"MY HUSBAND DIDN'T WANT TO COME BUT I INSISTED."

DATELINE

JULY 7

1307: Edward I, having conquered the Welsh, died on his way to Scotland to fight Robert the Bruce.

1814: The first authentic historical novel, Sir Walter Scott's *Waverley*, was published.

1816: Richard Brinsley Sheridan, Irish-born playwright of *School for Scandal* (1777), died. He became manager of the Drury Lane Theatre as well as a politician but died in poverty.

1860: Composer Gustav Mahler was born in Kaliste, Bohemia.

1927: Christopher Stone became the first 'disc jockey' on British radio when he presented his *Record Round-up* from Savoy Hill.

2005: A series of explosions ripped through London in co-ordinated terrorist strikes. Suicide attacks on three London Underground trains and a double-decker bus killed 56, including the bombers, and more than 700 were injured.

2013: Andy Murray made history as he became the first British man to take the Wimbledon singles title in 77 years.

BIRTHDAYS: **Ringo Starr**, ex-Beatle, 86; **Michael Howard**, former Conservative Party leader, 85; **Bill Oddie**, comic actor/wildlife presenter, 85; **Tony Jacklin**, former golfer, 82; **Rob Newman**, comedian/author/political activist, 62.

PICTURE PAST



BEST DEFENCE: The Thames Barrier pictured under construction on the River Thames on July 7, 1980. Work began on the barrier in 1974 and it came into operation in 1982.

How to ensure that our heritage crafts survive

Nirma Jayawardena and Isuru Koswatte

THE UK's traditional crafts sector is under mounting pressure. According to the Heritage Crafts Association Red List, the number of critically endangered crafts has risen to 72, with nearly 100 more classified as endangered. From hand-thrown pottery and traditional basketry to niche textile techniques and woodwork, entire skill ecosystems are approaching collapse within a single generation.

While public funding, museum-led preservation, and heritage grants provide essential support, they increasingly serve as safety nets rather than growth strategies. While they keep crafts alive, they are not necessarily economically viable. The deeper issue is not about a lack of skill or cultural value, but about a lack of scalable market access and modern commercial infrastructure.

Specifically, international models from South and Southeast Asia offer a different perspective. Craft ecosystems in Sri Lanka have evolved into structured export engines, connecting rural artisans with global retail demand. A prominent example of this is Lakarcade, a large souvenir and handicraft retail brand that transforms village-level craftsmanship into curated, design-led products.

Rather than treating craft as static heritage, Lakarcade-style models treat it as a living supply chain: evolving, market-responsive, and brand-driven.

A large proportion of the craft production in many communities in the UK is still very fragmented. Individual makers often operate as sole traders, marketing by themselves and may not always have access to buyers. In

contrast, the souvenir industry in Sri Lanka is a perfect example of how aggregation can make all the difference. When small artisan outputs are pooled under a unified brand, they gain bargaining power, quality consistency, and access to export logistics.

Survival of craft is closely tied to the preservation of technique, but also to its incorporation into modern retail systems, as it is with Lakarcade, which is well known in the regional craft and tourism landscape, and through which is actively involved in international craft networks, such as the World Crafts Council ecosystem.

The UK already has comparable raw material in its artisan base. What it lacks is a commercial intermediary layer capable of scaling production without eroding authenticity.

Sri Lanka's craft export model teaches us that demand has to be designed, not assumed. A successful souvenir chain doesn't just sell handmade goods – they curate them as lifestyle objects, travel memories, and premium cultural artifacts.

UK craft strategy often falls short here. We focus too much on heritage value instead of consumer relevance. Although cultural significance is important, global buyers rarely buy objects purely for preservation. Story, design, utility, and identity are what they buy.

Sri Lankan craft retailers blend traditional techniques with contemporary design consulting, seasonal collections, and tourism-driven channels. Heritage isn't diluted, but repackaged into scalable commercial formats.

For the UK, this suggests a shift: from 'protecting crafts as endangered practices' to 'positioning crafts as premium cultural exports'.

There are significant economic implications. There is a shortage of alternative em-

ployment opportunities in rural or semi-rural areas in both the UK and Sri Lanka where craft production is concentrated. Craft ecosystems are decentralised engines of rural income when properly commercialised.

Sri Lanka's model demonstrates how structured procurement from village artisans can generate stable livelihoods, particularly for women. Many cottage industries are female-led, meaning craft export systems can function as quiet but powerful mechanisms of women's economic empowerment and financial independence.

Instead of importing a model wholesale, the UK could borrow a number of key features: First, the development of the so-called 'craft aggregation hubs' as intermediaries between independent makers and buyers from the international market.

Secondly, the opportunity for collaborative working between the UK designer and the traditional crafts person, with the product remaining part of the tradition and reflecting contemporary tastes and sensibilities.

Thirdly, retail partnerships in which craft products are not considered to be niche souvenirs, but elevated as cultural products in the luxury homeware and lifestyle category.

Fourth, digital cataloguing and storytelling systems that enable traceable origin stories to be attached to each product, thus promoting authenticity in global markets. These ideas are similar to the successful souvenir export industry in Sri Lanka where craft is not a separate production process, but a commercial export pipeline.

Dr Nirma Jayawardena is an Assistant Professor at the University of Bradford and Dr Isuru Koswatte is an Assistant Professor at the University of the West of Scotland.



Key role in protecting data centres

Deborah Hall

FROM steel and textiles to advanced manufacturing, our region has built its reputation on practical ingenuity, technical skill and an ability to solve difficult problems. Today, that same tradition is helping us respond to one of the fastest-growing global infrastructure challenges: the rapid expansion of artificial intelligence and the data centres required to power it. This has created new opportunities for specialist manufacturers like ours.

At Andel, based in Barnsley, exports have grown by 75 per cent over the last year and our distributor network continues to expand around the world. That growth has not happened by chance. It has come because demand for robust leak detection, flood defence and environmental protection systems is rising at exactly the moment when our products, experience and Yorkshire manufacturing base are most needed.

The boom in data centres is driven in large part by AI, cloud computing and the growing digital economy. To put the scale into perspective, some data centres are comparable in size to several football pitches, while the

largest can feel like small industrial towns. They contain vast amounts of electrical and computing equipment.

Such critical environments must operate continuously, often at enormous scale, with complex electrical, cooling and building management systems. In that setting, a water leak is not a minor maintenance issue. It can threaten uptime, damage expensive equipment and disrupt services that businesses, public bodies and communities rely on.

In such a high-value and highly controlled environment, even a small leak in the wrong place can have serious consequences. Early detection allows facilities teams to isolate affected areas, respond quickly and avoid unnecessary disruption.

Leak detection has moved from being a niche consideration to an essential part of resilience planning. As the UK has recognised data centres as critical national infrastructure, the importance of protecting these sites has become clearer. If the digital economy is to keep growing, the physical infrastructure behind it has to be protected with the same seriousness as power and cyber security.

Fortunately, the UK and Ireland have strong credentials in flood prevention, leak

detection and environmental resilience. You might say we have plenty of experience of water management. In Yorkshire, where manufacturing, engineering and problem-solving are part of our industrial identity, that expertise is creating international opportunity. We are immensely proud that a business headquartered in Barnsley can contribute to the protection of critical infrastructure across the world.

Leak detection has always been at the core of our business. Andel has been developing and manufacturing systems for nearly 35 years, giving us deep experience in protecting buildings and infrastructure from water damage, pollution incidents and flooding. Data centres may be a relatively modern growth market, but the underlying challenge is one we understand well: how to detect a problem early enough to prevent it becoming a crisis.

The world's digital infrastructure is expanding rapidly. The challenge now is to make sure it expands safely, responsibly and resiliently. From Barnsley, we are proud to be playing our part.

Deborah Hall is export and key project support at Andel.



ANDREW VINE
on Tuesday

Time for a crackdown on e-scooters menace

THE e-scooter rider hurtling through Leeds city centre the other day wasn't stopping for anybody. Old, young, pushing a pram or disabled, everybody in pedestrianised Commercial Street was expected to get out of the way and the broad grin on the rider's face as people jumped aside to avoid being hit spoke eloquently of what a menace e-scooters have become.

They have turned our pavements and shopping streets into places of real danger, where people are being knocked down, hurt and even killed, but virtually nothing is being done about it.

If somebody was speeding through a pedestrian precinct on a motorbike, the police would be scrambled to stop them, but e-scooters get a free ride despite arguably being a greater hazard because you can't hear them approaching.

And they're everywhere. In the last few years, they have gone from being a rare sight to being so common that watching out for them has become as routine as looking both ways before crossing a road.

Just what a danger they are is proven by police figures showing 10 people were killed in accidents last year and 1,484 injured. That's no surprise, given that these things are travelling along pavements at 15mph or even faster. It is a fair assumption that many of those hit by e-scooters were elderly or disabled and unable to move swiftly enough out of the way as one bore down on them.

Had they been victims of people driving under the influence of alcohol or drugs, those responsible would be hauled into court and at least some sent to prison. But because e-scooters are regarded as little more than toys, the riders causing deaths and injuries are getting away with it, despite their arrogant disregard for the safety of pedestrians whose spaces they invade.

The normalisation of them has been reinforced in Leeds by the LNER Beryl Bike hire scheme, which also provides e-scooters, allowing people to whizz away without any training or aptitude for riding one safely. But it is the estimated 950,000 in private hands that are the real problem and one of the most disgraceful aspects of this plague on our pavements is that leading retailers are complicit in it and profiting from a dangerous illegal activity.

Last week, it emerged that Currys, Argos, Halfords and Amazon had been marketing e-scooters for commuting, with some pitches promoting them for "urban riding". Privately-owned e-scooters are banned from public spaces, including roads, pavements and cycle lanes, and can only be legally used on private land. Only rented e-scooters, like those provided by Beryl Bike, can be used on the roads, and those hiring them must have a driving licence.

The companies concerned said they provided legal warnings about the use of e-scooters, but once they are out of the door of a shop or delivery van, the laws are being flouted. Police can stop and seize e-scooters, and the users risk prosecution for driving without insurance, but mostly they are not facing either losing them or being fined, despite a co-ordinated nationwide crackdown last month.

The pressure police forces are under is partially responsible for that, as are the scarcity of foot patrols in our urban areas where e-scooters are so prevalent, and the sheer numbers on the streets. If getting on for a million of them are being ridden, the police face a near-impossible task in enforcing the law.

Like the epidemic of shoplifting, this is a crime being carried out with impunity in plain sight every day of the week while the public looks on and despairs. And criminality is undoubtedly part of the e-scooter culture. Many of the riders cover their face with a scarf, the only possible conclusion being that they want to avoid identification.

The e-scooter has become an essential part of drug dealers' activities, allowing them to speed along pavements and alleyways safe from pursuit by police. An internet search on how to disable speed-limiting technology on e-scooters immediately turns up detailed instructions and even video tutorials. You can bet those videos were the first thing all those masked riders turned to when they took delivery of their shiny new toy.

It is time for a crackdown, and not just by the police. As e-scooters continue to proliferate, so will the numbers of those being killed or injured by them, and the government should not stand by and do nothing about one of our worst road and pedestrian safety problems.

The answer is to ban the sale of e-scooters until a proper system for enforcing their safe use is established, including requirements for registration and insurance that would make tracking owners easier.

