

'Supreme wake-up call': Prince Charles urges action on ocean pollution, Fiona Harvey,
The Guardian, Thursday 5th October 2017

The world's oceans are at last receiving the attention they deserve, as the scale of plastic pollution is finally becoming clear, the Prince of Wales has said, hailing this growing awareness as the first step to saving the marine environment.

Prince Charles said it had taken years for the enormity of the problem to emerge, but promised to make it a key priority of his campaigning, alongside rainforests.

But he also confessed to mounting despair over how little has been achieved in his four decades of environmental campaigning, fearing we are "no longer a rational civilisation" but are driven by economic ideology.

He pointedly chose not to mention President Trump, who has denied climate change, but warned: "If the unprecedented ferocity of recent catastrophic hurricanes is not the supreme wake-up call that it needs to be, to address the vast and accumulating threat of climate change and ocean warming, then we – let alone the global insurance and financial sectors – can surely no longer consider ourselves part of a rational, sensible civilisation."

He blamed "some strange, ideological urge to test the world to destruction".

The prince, who has long been a campaigner on rainforests, told a marine conference that oceans were now a twin passion for him. "While we should be relieved that the health of the ocean is now understood, alongside rainforests, to be one of the essential prerequisites for our physical and economic survival, I wonder if the ocean's fragility is yet truly grasped and how susceptible it is to the impacts of our economic activities ... We must never mistake [the oceans] for a new frontier for endless economic exploitation."

At the Our Ocean conference, the EU also announced plans to devote more than €550m to protecting the health of oceans, with more than 30 initiatives including efforts to combat piracy and illegal fishing, a satellite monitoring system, and a new plastics strategy for the bloc.

Federica Mogherini, the EU's high representative for foreign affairs and security policy, said: "The sea is a global common. We all have a responsibility to preserve it as a treasure and avoid that it turns into a threat. The EU believes that a globalised world needs a more cooperative global governance. It is impossible to imagine global governance without a cooperative oceans governance." Mogherini hoped that other countries would come forward with funding to bring the total to more than €1bn.

One new EU initiative is to establish the first marine-protected area in the Adriatic. About 90% of fish stocks in the Mediterranean are currently over-exploited.

Another initiative announced at the conference to reduce the impact of plastic pollution was the consumer goods group Procter and Gamble's plan to produce a new Fairy Liquid bottle made entirely of recycled plastic, including some retrieved from the ocean.

Sky announced it would remove all single-use plastic products from its operations and supply chains by 2020. The company will also invest £25m in a fund for startups and other businesses working on technology to solve the plastic problem.

In the Pacific, the small island of Niue, with the help of National Geographic and the UN development programme, is creating a marine-protected area covering approximately 127,000 sq km, more than 40% of its sea area.

'For too long, they have generated harm': the fight to remove offensive monuments in New York, *The Guardian*, December 8, 2017

This summer, a series of Confederate monuments were torn down in Maryland, North Carolina, Florida, Texas and Louisiana after the death of a civil rights activist at a far-right protest in Charlottesville.

It looks like New York City might be next. In a city with more than 800 public monuments, four in particular have irked artists and academics, who have signed a public petition. The 500 signatories are advocating for the removal of monuments of Christopher Columbus, James Marion Sims, Theodore Roosevelt and one adjoined honouring Philippe Pétain and Pierre Laval. "For too long, they have generated harm and offense as expressions of white supremacy," reads the petition, in a city which "preaches tolerance and equity".

To the signatories, the Roosevelt monument, which shows the 26th American president with a Native American chief and an African man, glorifies racial hierarchies. "Roosevelt is a very salient symbol for us of white supremacy and it's often cited as the most hated monument in New York City," said Andrew Ross, an activist and culture professor at New York University. "It has no place outside of the museum."

New York's Columbus statue, located at Columbus Circle in Manhattan, has come under fire for representing genocide. The statue, however, was a gift from the Italian American community, some of whom adopt Columbus as an icon. To Phil Folgia, counsel for the Italian American legal defense and higher education fund, the removal of the statue would be "an outrage to our community".

John Viola, the president of the National Italian American Foundation, said: "In the wake of the lynching of 11 Sicilian Americans in New Orleans, the statue at Columbus circle was gifted to the city of New York by the newly arrived Italian American community. Our community was able to gather small donations from thousands of Italian American families and turn them into that statue – a testament to their belief and confidence in the American dream. That statue is a thank you card to America."

The monument of American physician James Marion Sims at Central Park near 103rd street is especially troubling, as Sims performed experimental gynaecological operations on enslaved African women between 1845 and 1849. "By honouring Sims, New York City honours the American equivalent of Josef Mengele," said Singer. "This statue should be removed."

A series of public hearings were held in each borough last month by the Mayoral Advisory Commission on City Art, Monuments, and Markers, with its final hearing on 28 November. New Yorkers had the opportunity to voice their support or opposition of the monuments and the commission will bring the petition to the attention of New York's mayor, Bill de Blasio, by the end of this month. The commission also had an online survey, which asked New Yorkers questions such as: "What is the best way to achieve public space that is open and inclusive?"

The commission's co-chairs, Tom Finkelpearl and Darren Walker, recently published an op-ed last week in the New York Daily News, which says they are looking "to develop a set of guidelines that allows us to approach these issues in a coherent, transparent way that brings people together in dialogue, instead of driving them apart".

Congress Is ‘Too Scared’ of the AMA to Really Attack Opioids, 05.29.18, The Daily Beast

As the opioid epidemic ravages the country, lawmakers pushing for reforms to how the drugs are prescribed have encountered a series of roadblocks from a surprising source: the lobby for physicians. Advocates for further restrictions and physician education on the highly addictive drugs say the American Medical Association (AMA) has actively lobbied against the inclusion of several recommendations by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and that many members of Congress are unwilling to go up against the powerful lobby.

Several of the CDC guidelines were included in a bill called Comprehensive Addiction & Recovery Act 2.0, introduced by Sen. Rob Portman (R-OH) and Sen. Sheldon Whitehouse (D-RI) in February. Portman’s office confirmed that lobbyists from the group have told the Ohio senator’s staff they would not support provisions in the CARA 2.0 about the three-day rule or any mandatory physician education included in the bill.

The AMA opposition to proposals like limiting prescriptions of the highly addictive drugs to three-day supplies, mandating that physicians have courses about drugs and addiction, or even requiring physicians to check databases before prescribing certain drugs has confused and infuriated advocates.

During a meeting of advocates to curb opioid abuse last week, Sen. Joe Manchin (D-WV) summed up the lack of progress on certain proposals, telling the group that some of his colleagues were “too scared to take on the AMA.” The AMA was the seventh highest lobbying spender in 2017, with \$21.5 million spent. Nearly \$6.8 million has been spent in 2018 so far, according to OpenSecrets.com. It gave nearly \$2 million to members of Congress in 2016 and has given \$519,500 so far this election cycle.

It’s a message that’s been passed on to advocates for change from other offices as well. Gary Mendell, CEO of Shatterproof—a nonprofit aimed at “ending the devastation addiction causes families”—said he has been told by congressional staff that “the AMA will resist anything that regulates health care” on a number of issues.

Mendell added that the AMA had also pushed against other opioid-safety related measures like federal grant money that required states to require their prescribers to check the Prescription Drug Monitoring Programs before they prescribed certain controlled substance medications and shared that information with other states. PDMPs help doctors analyze a patient’s prescription drug history prior to distributing additional medication and are mandatory in more than half of states but not regulated on the federal level.

“The AMA doesn’t dispute that doctors should check the Prescription Drug Monitor Program, but they resist a law that requires them to do that,” Mendell said. “I’m not about regulating health care. I don’t care if it’s regulated or not. I just care that they are safely taken care of... if doctors were doing it on their own, then we wouldn’t be having this conversation.

“It’s tragic,” Mendell, who founded Shatterproof after his son Brian died in 2011 after nearly a decade-long battle with addiction, said of the resistance to implementing potentially life-saving recommendations. “I’ll never see my son again. Other families shouldn’t have to go through this.”

In Britain's Playgrounds, 'Bringing in Risk' to Build Resilience

Educators in Britain, after decades spent in a collective effort to minimize risk, are now, cautiously, getting into the business of providing it.

Now, Ms. Morris says proudly, “we have fires, we use knives, saws, different tools,” all used under adult supervision. Indoors, scissors abound, and so do sharp-edged tape dispensers (“they normally only cut themselves once,” she says). Limited risks are increasingly cast by experts as an experience essential to childhood development, useful in building resilience and grit.

Outside the Princess Diana Playground in Kensington Gardens in London, which attracts more than a million visitors a year, a placard informs parents that risks have been “intentionally provided, so that your child can develop an appreciation of risk in a controlled play environment rather than taking similar risks in an uncontrolled and unregulated wider world.”

This view is tinged with nostalgia for an earlier Britain, in which children were tougher and more self-reliant. It resonates both with right-wing tabloids, which see it as a corrective to the cossetting of a liberal nanny state; and with progressives, drawn to a freer and more natural childhood. It is also supported by a growing list of government officials, among them Amanda Spielman, the chief inspector of Ofsted, the powerful agency that inspects British schools.

Ms. Spielman has poked fun at schools for what she considers excessive risk aversion. Late last year, she announced that her agency's inspectors would undergo training that will encompass the positive, as well as the negative, side of risk.

Britain is one of a number of countries where educators and regulators say a litigious, protective culture has gone too far, leaching healthy risks out of childhood. Guidelines on play from the government agency that oversees health and safety issues in Britain state that “the goal is not to eliminate risk.”

Australia last fall introduced new standards for playground equipment, instructing operators to consider the benefits, not just the risks, of activities that could result in injuries. Cities and school districts in Canada and Sweden are following suit. In the United States, a country with far higher litigation costs, government agencies overseeing play safety are not known to have made any such changes. In addition, American families must “find someone to blame to cover the cost” of medical care, unlike their counterparts in European countries, which have socialized health care, said Ellen Beate Hansen Sanseter, a Norwegian professor of education.

The shift to seeing some benefit in risk, advocates say, signals the end of a decades-long drift toward overprotecting children. Beginning in the late 1970s, parents were buffeted by warnings about hidden dangers on playgrounds and predators lurking in suburban neighborhoods. Behavior changed: In England, the percentage of schoolchildren who went to school unaccompanied dropped from around 85 percent of 9-year-olds in 1971 to around 25 percent in 1990, a team of British researchers found.

The New York Times, March 10 2018

UK Has A Minister Of Loneliness: This Is How Bad Loneliness Has Gotten Bruce Y. Lee, Forbes Magazine, January 21, 2018

Does the song "Owner of a Lonely Heart" describe you? Yes? Yes, the rock group Yes sang the song. But does it describe you?

These days the song seems to describe more and more people. In fact, loneliness has become such a problem in the United Kingdom (UK) that the country now has a Minister of Loneliness. While Minister of Loneliness may sound like a new song or a *Lord of the Rings* character, it is a real new position addressing a real increasing problem.

On Wednesday, January 17, British Prime Minister Theresa May announced the creation of this new position. May stated, "For far too many people, loneliness is the sad reality of modern life." The announcement cited the statistic that more than 9 million people always or often feel lonely in the UK.

But people in the UK are not alone in feeling lonely. In a *Harvard Business Review* article, the 19th Surgeon General of the United States Vivek Murthy, who served from 2014 to 2017, wrote that "Loneliness is a growing health epidemic. We live in the most technologically connected age in the history of civilization, yet rates of loneliness have doubled since the 1980s." He continued by saying that "Today, over 40% of adults in America report feeling lonely, and research suggests that the real number may well be higher."

It's a health epidemic because loneliness doesn't just lead to good songs and song titles. Loneliness may have a number of negative health consequences. For example, feeling isolated may increase your risk of sleep disturbances, substance abuse, depression, and suicide. Feeling lonely may increase your stress hormones and blood pressure and decrease your ability to cope with different obstacles and challenges. Moreover, maintaining a healthier lifestyle such as eating healthy, getting physical activity, and seeing the doctor can be more challenging when you don't have social support.

The current UK Minister for Sport and Civil Society Tracey Crouch will serve as the inaugural Minister of Loneliness. Of course, Crouch's goal will not be to create more loneliness, and she won't be alone in the battle against loneliness. Instead, Crouch's office will now help spearhead a number of initiatives including developing an overall strategy on how to address loneliness in England and a dedicated fund to germinate innovative solutions and provide seed funding for communities to combat loneliness.

Everyone feels lonely sometimes, because some degree of loneliness is part of the human existence. Otherwise there wouldn't be so many popular songs about feeling alone (such as The Police's "So Lonely" and Roy Orbison's "Only the Lonely") and instead there would be more songs about other important things such as macaroni and cheese. But statistics suggest that the rates of loneliness is increasing, which means that some things are changing in our society for the worse (e.g., decreased social interactions and decreased responsibility for each other). And the UK government has decided that they can't leave these problems alone.

Google loses landmark 'right to be forgotten' case

Businessman wins legal action to force removal of search results about past conviction

Jamie Grierson and Ben Quinn, The Guardian, Fri 13 Apr 2018

A businessman has won his legal action to remove search results about a criminal conviction in a landmark “right to be forgotten” case that could have wide-ranging repercussions.

The ruling was made by Mr Justice Warby in London on Friday. The judge rejected a similar claim brought by a second businessman who was jailed for a more serious offence.

The claimant who lost, referred to only as NT1 for legal reasons, was convicted of conspiracy to account falsely in the late 1990s; the claimant who won, known as NT2, was convicted more than 10 years ago of conspiracy to intercept communications. NT1 was jailed for four years, while NT2 was jailed for six months.

Granting an appeal in the case of NT1, the judge added: “It is quite likely that there will be more claims of this kind, and the fact that NT2 has succeeded is likely to reinforce that.”

Both men demanded that Google remove search results mentioning the cases for which they were convicted. These include links to web pages published by a national newspaper and other media. Google refused their request and the men took the company to the high court.

The decision in NT2’s favour could have implications for other convicted criminals and those who want embarrassing stories about them erased from the web. Warby ruled out any damages payment, however.

Explaining his decision, the judge said NT1 continued to mislead the public, whereas NT2 had shown remorse. He also took into account the submission that NT2’s conviction did not concern actions taken by him in relation to “consumers, customers or investors”, but rather in relation to the invasion of privacy of third parties.

“There is not [a] plausible suggestion ... that there is a risk that this wrongdoing will be repeated by the claimant. The information is of scant if any apparent relevance to any business activities that he seems likely to engage in,” the judge added.

He said his key conclusion in relation to NT2’s claim was that “the crime and punishment information has become out of date, irrelevant and of no sufficient legitimate interest to users of Google search to justify its continued availability”.

In the case of NT1, however, the judge was scathing about the claimant’s position since leaving prison. “He has not accepted his guilt, has misled the public and this court, and shows no remorse over any of these matters,” he said.

“He remains in business, and the information serves the purpose of minimising the risk that he will continue to mislead, as he has in the past. Delisting would not erase the information from the record altogether, but it would make it much harder to find.”

In 2014 the European court of justice (ECJ) ruled that “irrelevant” and outdated data should be erased on request. Since then, Google has received requests to remove at least 2.4m links from search results. Search engine firms can reject applications if they believe the public interest in accessing the information outweighs a right to privacy. (...)

Philadelphia Soda Tax Cuts Consumption of Sugary Drink by 40%

By Kashmiri Gander, 4/13/18, *Newsweek*

Philadelphians are now 40 percent less likely to drink soda every day, after a tax was placed on sweetened drinks in the city, a new study has shown. The city started taxing sweetened drinks at 1.5 percent per ounce from in January 2017. The money raised was used to pay for community projects, including prekindergarten programs. Now, a study of almost 900 residents surveyed a month before and two months after the tax was enforced has shown that Philadelphians were 40 percent less likely to drink sugary drinks, compared with residents of nearby cities including Trenton, Camden and Wilmington.

The likelihood of residents consuming energy drinks every day plummeted by 60 per cent, but they were 58 percent more likely to drink bottled water every day. Yichen Zhong, a doctoral student at the Dornsife School of Public Health and the lead author of the study, said in a statement: "If distributors fully pass the tax on to customers, it could increase the price of soda and energy drinks by about 20 percent. "It is expected that a price increase of that magnitude will influence some consumers to stop purchasing non-essential items like sugary soda and possibly switch to a lower-priced beverage, like bottled water - and our results are in line with that."

The results come as the U.S. attempts to tackle its obesity epidemic. More than one third of U.S. adults are obese, according to the Center for Disease Control. Diseases related to the condition, including heart disease, strokes, type 2 diabetes and certain types of cancer, are among the leading causes of preventable deaths. Auchincloss stressed that there is ample evidence to show the extra calories in sugary drinks contribute to weight gain.

"Frequent consumption of sugary beverages has also been linked to higher risk of type-2 diabetes, heart disease and tooth decay. Considering that 30 percent of Philadelphians have at least one sugary beverage each day, any kind of cut in consumption could be impactful," she said.

Dr John D'Attoma, an expert in tax behavior at the University of Exeter business school, said the Philadelphia study was strong and supported of research that demonstrates taxes can be used to influence people's behavior. "At the more macro-level, it's a great example of how institutions can shape behavior, and over-time, social norms. A great example of this is cigarette taxes," he told *Newsweek*.

"However, although this might seem like good policy to some, there are those who would argue that good tax policy should be neutral. By that, I mean, tax policy should have no distorting effects on individual choices. As such, the goal is to raise this revenue without distorting the decisions that individuals would otherwise make for purely economic reasons.

He added: "Taxing sugary drinks clearly defies principles of tax neutrality. In this case, nudges (limiting sugary drinks to a certain size) might be a better instrument than taxes for discouraging behaviour with negative societal impacts. Nudges, however, can't increase revenue to fund programs that encourage positive behaviour."

'He's one of us': modern neighbours welcome Cheddar Man

Rachel Andrews, who was tending the bar at the Black Dog Saloon, a wild west-themed cider pub at the foot of Cheddar Gorge, was not going to have a word said against the village's most famous former resident. "We're very proud of Cheddar Man," she said. "

Like the rest of the world, the village had long believed that Cheddar Man, a human hunter-gatherer who lived here 10,000 years ago and whose bones were found in the gorge, had pale skin and fair hair. But DNA analysis suggests he actually had a very dark to black complexion, dark hair and blue eyes. "It doesn't matter what he looked like," said Andrews. "What's colour got to do with it?"

It is no surprise that Andrews is clued-up about prehistory; after all, her history teacher at the village school, the Kings of Wessex academy, Adrian Targett, can boast a distant familial connection with Cheddar Man. Twenty years ago, Targett and a group of pupils underwent tests to find out if there was a DNA link between modern residents and Cheddar Man. Targett was found to have a connection. "Cheddar Man and I share a common female ancestor," explained Targett, 62, who is now retired from the school.

Like Cheddar Man, Targett has blue eyes and his skin is quite dark. "I've also got his nose and perhaps his hairline," he said. Intriguingly, Targett revealed that two 14-year-old girls were also found to have links to Cheddar Man. But to protect them, they were not told.

The latest DNA tests suggest Cheddar Man's ancestors left Africa, moved into the Middle East and headed west into Europe.

Current students at the academy are excited and inspired by this idea. "It's incredible," said Aiden Malik, 16. "The fact that he has the darker skin tone reminds us that we are all one race – the human race. That's what's most important. We should all respect one another."

Up at Gough's Cave, where Cheddar Man was found more than a century ago, the operations manager, Leon Troake, said he was pleased the new research was helping humanise the Mesolithic *Homo sapiens*. Like Andrews, Troake feels protective of Cheddar Man. "I think there's a perception he would have been a primitive person. He wasn't," he said. "Cheddar Man's contemporaries would have hunted with a bow and arrow, fished with a harpoon and lit fires. They might have traded flints and had domesticated dogs. They also had to dodge cave bears and wolves."

But it is not only in Cheddar that the revelations have caused a stir. The story has been carried across the world, and in Australia, a CEO called Craig Dent has followed developments with particular interest. He too has a DNA link with Cheddar Man via his maternal ancestors, and five years ago visited Gough's Cave with Adrian Targett. Looking at the most recent image has stirred a mix of emotions. "So much intrigue surrounds his life and early, possibly violent, death; if only he could reveal what really happened," said Dent, who has dark hair, dark eyes and a "fair to olive" complexion. "I can't say there is much resemblance, although you can't help but feel a connection."

The Guardian, February 9 2018

Looking at Indians, white Americans see themselves

From *The Economist*, Feb 10th, 2018,

IN EARLY 1924 the blue-bloods of Virginia found themselves with a problem. To criminalise interracial marriage, the state had drafted a law that classified anyone possessing even “one drop” of non-white blood as “coloured”. Awkwardly, that would include many of the so-called First Families of Virginia, because they traced their descent to a native American woman, Pocahontas, who had been abducted and married by a member of the Jamestown colony three centuries before. This ancestry had been considered far from shameful. It was a mark of American aristocracy, the real-life Pocahontas having been reinvented as an “American princess”. To fix matters, a clause known as the “Pocahontas exception” was added to the racist law, to exempt anyone with no more than one-sixteenth Indian blood.

This episode, documented in a new exhibition in Washington, DC, on Indian myths and reality, helps explain a cultural puzzle. It has become clear that the pre-Columbian Americas were much more densely populated, by more sophisticated civilisations, than was previously thought. Yet in the popular imagination Northern America remains a vast wilderness, peopled by a few buffalo-hunters.

The reason for this gigantic misunderstanding, suggest the Smithsonian’s curators, is fuelled by the ways Americans use real and mythical Indians, such as Pocahontas, to express their own ideas of citizenship and national identity. At a time when those things are contested by white nativists as well as natives, “Americans”, as the exhibition is called, lives up to its name: it is about all Americans.

From their first flush of revolutionary zeal, Americans used images of Indians to represent themselves. The exhibition’s oldest example is a sketch by Paul Revere from 1766. It represented the revolutionaries’ self-identification as a new race of men, free of European tyranny. An association between Indians and liberty has been prominent in official iconography ever since. Some officials were also keen to bring Enlightenment principles to their dealings with actual Indians.

Many North American Indians were settled cultivators. The nomadism of the plains was atypical and shaped by Europeans. The Sioux, formerly farmers, had shifted to hunting the herds of bison that grew in a land depopulated by imported diseases, using horses they got from the Spanish and guns from the French. Yet by the time of their futile last stand, they had come to represent all native Americans in the popular imagination. This was in some ways pernicious, a means to associate all Indians with violent resistance, justifying their eradication. Even so, Americans fell in love with the myth of the warrior-like Sioux.

With their eagle feathers and fiery expressions, Plains Indians became synonymous with the rugged individualism Americans liked to see in themselves. That is evident in the many sports teams with Indian-related names—the Cleveland Indians, Kansas City Chiefs and so on. It is also apparent in the endless consumer and military goods, from butter to missiles, marketed with images of Indians—to suggest trustworthiness; durability; environmental soundness; efficacy at killing people. Any residual negative connotations are being scrubbed from that list. The remaining Indian-related brand values share a sense of authenticity. “Today, nothing is quite as American as the American Indian,” writes one of the Smithsonian’s curators, Paul Chaat Smith, a Comanche scholar with a dry wit.

Will Tourism Ruin the Rainbow Mountain of Peru? By Iliana Magra and Andrea Zarate, May 3, 2018, *The New York Times*

At first glance, the mountain in the Peruvian Andes, with its bands of soil the color of turquoise, lavender, red-violet and gold, seems Photoshopped. But the otherworldly sight, standing 16,000 feet above sea level, is real. People living nearby call it Vinicunca, the Rainbow Mountain.

The varicolored mountain, with sediment created from mineral deposits over millions of years, was discovered only about five years ago. But it has become a must-see attraction for hikers, bringing much-needed cash to the area but also prompting concern about possible damage to the previously unspoiled landscape.

Santos Machacca, 29, a mountain guide in the Cusco region, said that the Rainbow Mountain might have been discovered only recently because of climate change. “We have asked the elders that live in Pitumarca,” a town near Vinicunca, “and they said that the mountain was under the snow,” Mr. Machacca said in a recent interview. “Global warming has caused the ice to melt, and a colorful mountain appeared from under it.” Mr. Machacca said the mountain was an appealing destination for trekkers not only because of its beauty, but also because of the climate. “They love to go because when you are up there, you can feel the pure air and you forget everything,” he said.

The big crowds have breathed new life into the economy of the remote region around the mountain, creating jobs for residents in the area, many of whom have been alpaca herders. Roughly 500 villagers have now moved back to their ancestral land in order to act as guides to tourists. Guides lead about 1,000 hikers a day to the site. They charge \$3 per person, bringing in around \$400,000 a year.

But there may be a high price to pay for the tourism boom. A severe impact on the environment is already evident. A swamp that had been a refuge for migrating ducks was turned into a huge parking lot for tourist vans. A 2.5-mile trail has been severely eroded by hikers. And a Canadian mining company, Camino Minerals Corp., has applied for mining rights in the area. “From the ecological point of view, they are killing the goose that lays the golden eggs,” Dina Farfan, a Peruvian biologist, told The A.P.

A local Pampachiri leader, Gabino Huaman, questioned whether enough had been done to prepare members of the community to host and guide the tourists streaming to the Peruvian Andes. “We don’t know one word in English,” he was quoted as saying in The Associated Press, “or first aid.”

The high altitude and long distance of the trail can make for a challenging hike. John Widmer, an American tourist who visited Vinicunca in April 2017, detailed a “not so colorful experience” in a blog post dripping with irritation. “It was the bad weather combined with irresponsible guides, unprepared hikers and horrendous trail conditions that made this one of the worst treks we’ve ever been on,” Mr. Widmer wrote. He lamented the environmental destruction occurring from the large numbers of tourists, adding that “the beautiful and fragile alpine environment is getting completely demolished” by the hordes of eager hikers who journey to the mountain. “I’m ashamed at the fact that we, too, personally destroyed a bit of the Andes during our trek to Rainbow Mountain.”

Facial recognition to save elephants from poachers Charlie

Parker, January 24 2018, *The Times*

Advanced facial recognition technology that will help conservationists to track elephants and send alerts when poachers are near by is being worked on by London Zoo and Google. The software was initially used to tag people in photos posted online, but now animal and tech experts hope that automatic cameras hidden in the wild and triggered by heat and motion will allow local authorities to monitor endangered species and keep them safe. Elephants are among the mammals being tracked with the new technology. While the Google App imaging system was designed to scan people's eyes, nose and chin, the conservation project will use it to identify trunks, tusks and tails. As well as recognising animals, the Google machine learning software will also search for the shape of potential poachers and will send out warnings if they appear to be suspicious. The Zoological Society of London (ZSL) said that the technology could be effective in the battle against poachers as it would be able to "get to know" pachyderms: very large mammals such as the elephant, rhinoceros and hippopotamus. When new animals are captured by the automatically activated cameras, a conservation worker will initially record their features and put the data into the system. If the same individual wanders into frame again, the software will manage new images independently and will be able to build a profile for the animal.

About 1.5 million of the animals on ZSL's database have been scanned onto Google's servers so far, including giraffes in Kenya and orangutans in Borneo. It is hoped that entire herds will eventually be tracked by the computers. The software was released last week to allow organisations to build their own machine learning programmes without the need for specialists. The chief scientist at Google Cloud's artificial intelligence branch said that the company had released a more user-friendly version of the software to "lower the barrier of entry" and make AI accessible to the "largest possible community". Wildlife workers said that AI could also help to protect endangered species by saving manpower, removing the need for humans to trawl through large volumes of images. Technology developers also hope to program it to recognise when animals are injured. "We are tracking wildlife populations to learn more about their distribution and better understand the impact humans are having on these species," Sophie Maxwell, ZSL's conservation technology chief, said. "We have deployed a series of camera traps in the wild that take pictures of animals when triggered by heat or motion. The millions of images captured by these devices are then manually analysed and annotated with the relevant species, such as elephants, lions and giraffes, which is a labour-intensive and expensive process. "Our conservation technology unit has collaborated closely with Google's Cloud team to help shape the development of this exciting technology, which ZSL aims to use to automate the tagging of these images."

Millicent Fawcett: The story behind the unveiling of the suffragette statue in Parliament Square, by [Claire Cohen](#), Women's Editor, The Telegraph, 24 April 2018

I am standing in the middle of a hot and noisy East End foundry, with two of the nation's most prominent feminists. One is the Mayor of London, the other died almost 90 years ago.

When she is unveiled on Tuesday, Millicent Fawcett will be the first statue of a woman in Parliament Square. She will also be the last - the public space is at 'monument saturation'. Where 11 men, including Churchill, Ghandi, Disraeli and Mandela already stand outside our nation's seat of democracy, one woman just managed to squeak in.

The bronze, designed by Turner-prize winning artist Gillian Wearing, was given the green light following an open letter published in *The Telegraph* in May 2016, compiled by activist Caroline Criado-Perez (she who put Jane Austen on the new £10 note), and a petition signed by almost 85,000 people.

'Hi Claire, I'm organising an open letter to the new London Mayor asking if they will pledge to have a statue of a suffragette erected in Parliament Square by 2018 to mark the centenary,' she emailed me back then. "Would you be interested in publishing it?"

Yes, I most certainly would. And today, I will be standing alongside Sadiq Khan as he makes good on his first commitment as Mayor and unveils the bronze of Fawcett; 100 years on from the 1918 Representation of the People Act, which gave some women in Britain the right to vote for the first time.

The statue ended up, not as a suffragette as we first discussed, but a suffragist leader - one of those lesser-known, more peaceful freedom fighters who preferred to lobby behind the scenes rather than chain themselves to railings. Fawcett was perhaps the most dedicated of their number and remained at the forefront of the movement for some 50 years. She also gave her name to women's rights organisation the Fawcett Society, which campaigns for women's rights and, to mark the statues unveiling, this week published a Sex and Power Index.

The results make for grim reading. Simply: men still dominate in every area of power in our society. FTSE 100 CEOs? Just six per cent are women. Supreme court justices? 16.7 per cent. Cabinet ministers? 26 per cent. Oh, and statues of women? 2.7 per cent.

The Fawcett Society is calling for quotas to address this imbalance - but I can't help but wonder whether Millicent and her fellow campaigners would have agreed. There is some evidence that they work, of course: when Labour used all-women shortlists in the 1997 general election, a record number of female MPs were elected. But I worry that this masks a higher truth : equality on paper is not the same as equality in real life.

Clearly, we desperately need to ramp up the number of women in positions of power in Britain. Dr Helen Pankhurst, the great-granddaughter of suffragette leader Emmeline, has repeatedly written that she thinks her ancestors would still be fighting today. But positive discrimination? Quotas above merit? That, to me, is not the road to true equality. It fails to address deep-rooted gender bias and it risks alienating men.

No One Knows What Britain Is Anymore, by Steven Erlanger, *The New York Times*, Nov 4, 2017

Many Britons see their country as a brave galleon, banners waving, cannons firing, trumpets blaring. That is how the country's voluble foreign secretary, Boris Johnson, likes to describe it. But Britain is now but a modest-size ship on the global ocean. Having voted to leave the European Union, it is unmoored, heading to nowhere, while on deck, fire has broken out and the captain — poor Theresa May — is lashed to the mast, without the authority to decide whether to turn to port or to starboard, let alone do what one imagines she knows would be best, which is to turn around and head back to shore.

I've lived and worked for nine years in Britain, first during the Thatcher years and then again for the last four politically chaotic ones. While much poorer in the 1980s, Britain mattered internationally. Now, with Brexit, it seems to be embracing an introverted irrelevance.

The ambitious Mr. Johnson was crucial to the victory of Brexit in the June 2016 referendum. But for many, the blusterings of Boris have lost their charm. The "great ship" he loves to cite is a nationalist fantasy, a remnant of Britain's persistent post-imperial confusion about its proper place in the world, hanging on to expensive symbols like a nuclear deterrent while its once glorious navy is often incapable of patrolling its own coastline.

Britain — renowned for its pragmatism, its common sense, its political stability and its unabashed devotion to small business ("a nation of shopkeepers") — has become nearly unrecognizable to its European allies. "People need to look again at Britain," said Daniel Brössler, a correspondent for the German daily *Süddeutsche Zeitung*. "It's no longer the country they understood it to be their whole lives."

The divorce negotiations with the European Union are not going well, to say the least. The most visible fight is over the cost of the divorce. But other difficult and essentially political issues about the authority of the European Court of Justice and a customs border with Ireland must also be clarified before the other 27 member states agree to move on to the next stage, Britain's future relationship with the bloc. That decision next month once seemed pro forma, but no longer, with some even predicting a breakdown in the talks.

Mrs. May's Conservative government is now so split that some Brexit supporters are calling on her to simply quit the bloc with no deal at all — probably the worst alternative for the country, but just the kind of populist, tub-thumping gesture favored by the Brexit elite and the right-wing tabloids. Meanwhile, with the Conservative government so riven and rudderless, the old hard lefty Jeremy Corbyn is leading the opposition Labour Party back into an equally fantastical socialist past.

Britain is undergoing a full-blown identity crisis. It is a "hollowed-out country," "ill at ease with itself," "deeply provincial," engaged in a "controlled suicide," say puzzled experts. And these are Britain's friends. "The sense in the rest of Europe is bewilderment; how much worse can it get?" said Tomas Valasek, a former Slovak diplomat who lived in Britain for many years and now directs Carnegie Europe, a Brussels-based research institution. "After Brexit, no one is trying to help now. They've given up. Nobody on the Continent really cares that much about Britain anymore.

(Steven Erlanger, the chief diplomatic correspondent for *The New York Times*, just completed four years as London bureau chief.)

I want to eat a 'veggie sausage', not a 'mycoproteinous food tube', by Phoebe-Jane Boyd, The Guardian, Mon 23 Apr 2018

Mycoprotein, fermentation, albumen, cultures, coagulating, curdling – these aren't tasty words. Some of them are quite disgusting, actually. But if you're vegan or vegetarian and incorporate meat substitutes into your daily diet, you'll recognise them as the words on the side of the packaging, you might even know how some of them are made. Of course, more palatable descriptors are used for the purposes of marketing, such as "bean curd sausage", "tofu steak". The name-substitutes given instead of "gelatinous fungus" are like kind lies; distancing what we put in our mouths from the reality of how it came into being.

But these kind lies appear to be on the way out, following the vote by French MPs to ban producers of vegetarian meat substitute from using meat-related phrasing in their descriptions. Products not partly or wholly composed of meat can't be "steak", "bacon", or "sausage" any longer, just in case it's "misleading" for consumers. This assumes, though, that no one has ever tasted both meat and meat substitute. Because anyone who has tasted, seen, or smelled them both *knows*. You *know* the difference between the look and texture of a meat steak and a meat-substitute steak. Fake bacon? Nothing like actual bacon; it's a chewy slab of something that vaguely tastes of bacon crisps, and smells a bit like cinnamon when cooked. Soya mince – cut-up rubber bands mixed with a yeasty flavour. If you use substitutes, you know what they are. Some of us love them.

However, associating these products with meat – even with meaty words – just isn't right, according to the new regulation. "It is important to combat false claims, our products must be designated correctly," said French MP Jean-Baptiste Moreau on the issue. But since when has food been described correctly or honestly? Is there going to be a change across the whole of the food industry? Dairy milk isn't going to be described on the bottle as "mammary secretions", even though that's what it is. Beef is not yet "carcass" or "body part", and offal is not "viscera". Pork has not become "parts of pig".

Pig, cow, and sheep are more easily divorced in the mind from what arrives on plates when they're called "pork", "beef", and "mutton" instead (just ask the children who don't know that bacon comes from pigs, or what fish fingers are made of). You don't have to think about it if you don't want to. "Sausage", "burger" and "steak" further remove the foodstuff from the animal they come from. They're words that make the disconcerting worth eating – also lies, of a sort.

It turns out that the truth just isn't tasty, whether you eat meat or not. I don't want to eat a tofu tube, instead of a sausage. Or disks, or balls of coagulated soy milk pressed into white blocks of matter. I like the shorthand of words like "sausage" and "steak" for substitutes, because I don't want to eat something that sounds like it came out of a horror film.

If meat producers can distance consumers from the reality of where their products come from, the substitute industry should be able to do the same. Otherwise, what will we all eat instead when confronted with the unvarnished truth of what our food is?

Colin Kaepernick Wins Amnesty International's Highest Honor, By Sean

Gregory, Time, April 21, 2018

Colin Kaepernick may not have a job on the football field, but much of the world is still cheering for him. Amnesty International, the global human rights organization, gave Kaepernick its highest honor — the 2018 Ambassador of Conscience Award — in Amsterdam on Saturday. Past winners of the award, which “celebrates individuals and groups who speak out for justice,” include former South Africa president Nelson Mandela, Malala Yousafzai, the education activist from Pakistan who survived an assassination attempt by the Taliban, and rock group U2.

The organization recognized Kaepernick for his protest against police violence: his action, kneeling during the national anthem before NFL games, sparked a movement replicated across America and the world, starting a debate about free speech and patriotism that was inflamed by Donald Trump, one of Kaepernick’s most relentless critics.

“When high-profile people choose to take a stand for human rights, it emboldens others,” says Augusta Quiney, Amnesty International’s director of Art for Amnesty, a program that works with artists and entertainers on human rights activism.

“This is an award I share with all of the countless people throughout the world combating the human rights violations of police officers, and their uses of oppressive and excessive force,” Kaepernick said in statement released by Amnesty International. “To quote Malcolm X, when he said that he, ‘will join in with anyone — I don’t care what color you are — as long as you want to change this miserable condition that exists on this earth,’ I am here to join with you all in this battle against police violence.

“While taking a knee is a physical display that challenges the merits of who is excluded from the notion of freedom, liberty, and justice for all, the protest is also rooted in a convergence of my moralistic beliefs, and my love for the people,” said Kaepernick. His former teammate Eric Reid, who knelt in solidarity with Kaepernick during the anthem — and remains unsigned as a free agent this NFL offseason — presented Kaepernick with the award.

Quiney points out that this summer marks the 50th anniversary of the 1968 Mexico City Olympics, where U.S. track stars John Carlos and Tommy Smith raised a fist on the medals stand to protest Civil Rights abuses in America. Activist athletes like Carlos, Smith, and Muhammad Ali, who refused to serve in Vietnam and spoke out against the war there, faced consequences for their actions: Carlos and Smith were vilified and received death threats, Ali was stripped of his titles and lost the prime earning years of his career. Kaepernick is a successor to the 1960s activist athletes, says Quiney. The protests have likely cost him his playing career. Despite superior credentials to many quarterbacks signed to contracts by NFL teams, Kaepernick has not played in the NFL since the 2016 season. This month, the Seattle Seahawks reportedly cancelled a workout with Kaepernick when he refused to say whether he’d continue to kneel during the anthem.

“People have a choice in their everyday lives whether to act on their conscience, or carry on as usual,” says Quiney. “We rely on people like Colin, when they feel like they simply cannot be silenced, to speak out and inspire huge numbers of people, despite the professional and personal risks.”

The NRA just broke a 15-year fundraising record, By Alex Daugherty, The Miami Herald, April 23, 2018

As the student-led March for Our Lives movement captured the nation's attention in the weeks after the Parkland shooting, the other side of the gun control debate enjoyed a banner month of its own.

The National Rifle Association's Political Victory Fund raised \$2.4 million from March 1 to March 31, the group's first full month of political fundraising since the nation's deadliest high school shooting on Valentine's Day, according to filings submitted to the Federal Elections Commission. The total is \$1.5 million more than the organization raised during the same time period in 2017, when it took in \$884,000 in donations, and \$1.6 million more than it raised in February 2018.

Most of the donations came from small donors who gave less than \$200. The NRA doles out money to political campaigns from the victory fund, but most of its spending is on activity that isn't directly linked with a lawmakers' campaign where the group is not bound by state and federal campaign finance limits. For example, Florida Republican Sen. Marco Rubio received only \$9,900 in direct contributions from the NRA during his 2016 U.S. Senate campaign, but his campaign benefited from \$3.3 million in outside spending from the NRA to help him defeat Democratic Rep. Patrick Murphy.

In Florida, the NRA has donated to four Republican members of Congress during the 2018 cycle, but the four donations are \$2,750 or less, a pittance when a competitive congressional campaign typically costs millions. The NRA hasn't donated to candidates at the state level in Florida for years. Instead, the group's political power comes from its thousands of members who are typically a powerful voting bloc in Republican primary elections.

Marion Hammer, the NRA's powerful lobbyist in Florida, recently circulated a letter to members titled "It's Time to Name the Betrayers Who Voted For Gun Control," an attack on Republican members of the Florida Legislature who helped to pass a gun bill that raised the age to legally purchase a firearm from 18 to 21, instituted a three-day waiting period for purchasing rifles and shotguns, and banned devices called bump stocks that allow semi-automatic rifles to fire at a higher rate.

"We did NOT support the gratuitous gun control provisions added to the bill by REPUBLICANS," the letter reads. "Republican legislators are responsible for passage of the 'gun control bill.' They lacked the courage to uphold their oath of office and keep their word to constituents who voted for them. They were in total control. They no longer deserve your trust."

The NRA spent \$31 million to attack Hillary Clinton or support Donald Trump during the 2016 campaign, and the NRA's lobbying arm also spends millions on federal elections, but it does not have to report information on its donors or finances to the FEC.

Gun control groups haven't been able to match the NRA's fundraising. Everytown for Gun Safety's Political Action Fund raised \$13,580 in March while former Rep. Gabrielle Giffords' Political Action Committee raised \$129,589 in March.

The March for Our Lives group founded after the Parkland shooting has raised \$3.5 million since Feb. 18 via the online service GoFundMe, though that money was put toward organizing marches around the country and helping families of the victims.

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