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Obama backs 'strong and united' Britain

■ President makes unusual foray into independence vote, before adding decision is "up to the people of Scotland"

Barack Obama has said the interest of the US in the Scottish independence referendum issue was to ensure it retained a "strong, robust, united and effective partner".

But the US president told reporters in Brussels the decision was "up to the people of Scotland".

In response, Scottish First Minister Alex Salmond quoted Mr Obama's campaign slogan: "Yes we can".

Mr Obama also expressed his disquiet at the prospect of the UK leaving the EU.

The president was speaking alongside UK Prime Minister David Cameron at a media conference following the G7 summit.

Mr Obama was asked what the decisions on Scottish independence and the UK's membership of the EU meant to him and the American people.

Referring to the independence debate,

Mr Obama said: "There is a referendum process in place and it is up to the people of Scotland.

'deep interest'

"The United Kingdom has been an extraordinary partner to us. From the outside at least, it looks like things have worked pretty well.

"And we obviously have a deep interest in making sure that one of the closest allies we will ever have remains a strong, robust, united and effective partner.

"But ultimately these are decisions that are to be made by the folks there."

Mr Obama also said he thought it "hard to be advantageous" for the UK to leave the EU.

He said it was good for the UK "to have a seat at the table" and said that, if



STILL SPECIAL? David Cameron and President Obama met at the G7 Summit in Brussels on Thursday

the UK was excluded, it would have an "enormous impact" on the UK's economic and political life.

'very fortunate'

Mr Salmond said independence for Scotland would mean: "America has two great friends and allies here rather than one".

He added: "Rather more

than 200 years ago, America had to fight for its independence.

"We are very fortunate in Scotland that we have a democratically agreed, consented process by which we can vote for our independence.

"So in summary, I suppose my message to President Obama is: Yes we can."

'surprise'

The Scottish government has previously said that an independent Scotland would retain close ties with the rest of the UK and the United States in the event of a "Yes" vote in the referendum, which will be held on 18 September.

In February last year, the

then US ambassador to Britain, Louis Susman, said the Washington government was watching the independence debate unfold and would be staying "neutral".

Meanwhile, a former deputy secretary-general of the United Nations has expressed his "surprise" at

cont. on page 2, col. 1

News From Britain

OBAMA:

cont. from page one

Mr Obama's comments.

Lord Malloch-Brown, who was also a foreign office minister in Gordon Brown's Labour government, had previously said the US would be wise to keep out of the Scottish independence debate claiming "foreign, unsolicited advice is only going to anger Scots".

Following Mr Obama's remarks, he said: "I'm surprised that he has stepped into this. I don't think it will be very helpful for anybody."

But Shadow Foreign Secretary and Scottish Labour MP Douglas Alexander welcomed what he said was an "important contribution by President Obama" to the referendum debate.

Speaking on behalf of the pro-UK Better Together campaign, Mr Alexander said the US president's "clear statement of support for the UK staying together will resonate with many of us here in Scotland".

He added: "As a global statesman President Obama understands that interdependence is a defining feature of our modern world, and that building bridges, not putting up new barriers, is the challenge of our generation."

First time buyers lead the charge as house prices soar to new record

A SURGE in first-time buyers has lifted house prices in the UK to an all-time high, with the average price now topping £186,000.

But the higher prices means that first-time buyers tend to be either wealthier than in the past two decades, or couples receiving financial help from their families to get onto the ladder, according to new analysis by property agents Savills.

Lucian Cook, head of residential research at Savills, said: "There has been a notable shift in the profile of first-time buyers, post-credit crunch, who tend to be wealthier while also obtaining significantly more help from other family members in raising a deposit.

"This is likely to be a long-term feature of the market, with mortgage-owner occupation in decline, and parents and grandparents recycling their housing wealth to help generations get on to and move up the housing ladder."

The baby boomer generation owns nearly half of all equity in the UK property market and is unlocking the gains from average house price rises

of more than 250% since 1991.

The new first-time buyer data came as Nationwide's latest house price index showed the average UK house price had risen 11pc year-on-year, to hit a record high of £186,512 in May, surpassing the previous peak of £183,153 in October 2007.

Nationwide also said market activity had been driven by first-time buyers, who accounted for 48pc of all house purchases in May, a sharp upswing from 38pc in the previous month. Buyers have sought to take advantage of low mortgage rates, improving earnings and rosier employment prospects.

First-time buyers snapped up 24,400 purchases out of a total of 50,500 in May. About 20pc of first-time purchases were in the South East, according to the building society.

Despite criticism this week from the European Commission, which attacked the Government's shared equity and mortgage guarantee scheme, Help to Buy, for driving up demand without



GOING SHOPPING: But many first-time buyers are relying on financial help from parents to get onto the property ladder, a new survey reveals

increasing supply, the Nationwide figures show that the programme has only played a "supporting role" in market activity. However, after 13 consecutive months of escalating house prices, the rate of growth has started to slow, increasing by just 0.7pc from April to May.

McCann's 'encouraged' by Portugal search

Kate and Gerry McCann say they are "encouraged by the progress" being made by search teams in Portugal close to where their daughter Madeleine went missing.

Writing on their Official Find Madeleine Campaign Facebook page, the couple said: "We are kept updated on the ongoing work in Portugal and are encouraged by the progress.

"Thank you for continuing to stand by us and supporting our efforts to get Madeleine home."

Police searching an area of scrubland in Praia da Luz have begun looking inside drains for any clues about her disappearance.

At least three manhole covers were pulled up and mini cameras dropped into underground pipes, on the fourth day of the

search by officers from Britain.

Sniffer dogs started hunting for evidence at first light, scouring areas within the police cordon that had not previously been explored.

Officers have also been using ground-penetrating radar to discover whether anything may be buried there.

The large search zone in the Portuguese resort

cont. on page 6, col. 1



171 Pier Avenue, Ste. 121 • Santa Monica, CA 90405
Tel (310) 452-2621 • FAX: (310) 314-7653
E-mail: editor@british-weekly.com
www.british-weekly.com • twitter.com/BritishWeekly

MANAGING EDITOR: Neil Fletcher

DEPUTY EDITOR: Nick Stark

CONTRIBUTING WRITERS: Alan Darby Drake, John Hiscock, Eileen Lee, Dave Kershaw, Anthony Matthews, Carolan Nathan, Anne Shaw, Bernard Sidman, Nick Stark, Craig Bobby Young

FEATURES EDITOR: Gabrielle Pantera

ADVERTISING MANAGER: Mark Devlin

STAFF ARTIST: Noel Pugh

LEGAL NOTICES & DBAS: Mirelle Woolf

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70 years on, D-Day remembered by a dwindling band of brothers

"It was a killing field. I hope they will not forget the poor devils that died here."

Hundreds of the last surviving D-Day veterans gathered on both sides of the English Channel on Thursday, 70 years on from the momentous World War Two mission.

A spectacular Red Arrows display in Southsea and parachute drop in France came on the eve of the anniversary.

The Princess Royal was at the drumhead ceremony in Portsmouth, where on 5 June 1944 troops were preparing to invade Nazi-occupied France.

Between 2,500 and 4,000 Allied troops are thought to have died the next day.

As many as 9,000 Germans are also estimated to have lost their lives when around 156,000 troops, mainly from Britain, the US and Canada landed on Normandy's beaches in one of World War Two's key turning points.

'Killing field'

On the anniversary of the eve of the landings, the Prince of Wales laid a wreath near the Pegasus Bridge - a strategic crossing which British troops captured within minutes of landing in gliders on the French coast just after midnight during the push.

In a note written on the wreath he said: "In ever-grateful remembrance of your service and sacrifice, Charles."

The prince and the Duchess of Cornwall had lunch with veterans and watched as more than 300 troops parachuted in to Ranville, the first

village to be liberated.

Among them was 89-year-old Jock Hutton, who repeated the jump he made into France 70 years ago.

The Queen, who has arrived in Paris with the Duke of Edinburgh for a three-day state visit, joined other world leaders in Normandy on Friday to mark the day the mission began.

momentous day

Leaving flowers at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier with President Francois Hollande, the two heads of state paused and bowed their heads beneath the Arc De Triomphe.

About 650 UK veterans - most in their 80s or 90s and many making the journey for the last time - were expected at Friday's Sword beach ceremony.

The towns may have French names, but the five Allied landing beaches are still known as Utah, Omaha, Juno, Gold and Sword.

It is 70 years since D-Day, the biggest amphibious assault in military history.

Describing his experience on that momentous day an emotional 88-year-old Sapper Harry Billinge said: "It was a killing field. I hope they will not forget the poor devils that died here."

Navy veteran Charlie Stretch said D-Day was his last day as a teenager.



HEROES: D-Day veterans in Ranville, France, honored those who died taking the strategically-vital Pegasus Bridge

"I was 20 the next day and I didn't think I'd see 20," he said.

"In the navy you didn't get your tot [of rum] until you were 20 so I thought I'd go without having tasted rum."

Fellow veteran Les Reeves said the commemorations were in honour of "the lads that never saw the White Cliffs [of Dover]" after crossing the Channel for the invasion.

Dougle Morton, who was 23 on D-Day and landed on Sword Beach, said he was among a group of soldiers locked in a "prison camp" in Hastings before the invasion as Allied commanders tried to keep their plans secret.

He said he remembered playing cards during the crossing and, asked what he felt about being part of such a massive operation, he said: "We had a job to do and we did it."

Allied troops crossed

the English Channel in the initial D-Day assault on 6 June 1944, paving the way for the defeat of Nazi Germany.

'never forget'

The attack was planned from Southwick House, just north of Portsmouth, which was the main departure point for troops heading to Sword Beach.

The city marked that

history with a ceremony earlier.

In a message in the order of service, Princess Anne wrote that this year was "particularly poignant because it will be one of the last milestones on which there will be sizeable numbers of veterans who were there on the day".

Prime Minister David Cameron said: "Shortly after D-Day, my own

grandfather was wounded and came home.

"We will never forget what they did and the debt that we owe them for the peace and the freedom that we enjoy on this continent."

The Normandy Veterans' Association says its numbers have fallen to around 600 from about 15,000 and has announced it will disband in November.

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Gary Glitter charged with eight sex offences

Gary Glitter has been charged with eight counts of sexual offences against girls.

The charges relate to two women who were aged between 12 and 14 at the time of the alleged offences between 1977 and 1980.

The former pop star - real name Paul Gadd - is due to appear at Westminster Magistrates' Court on 19 June.

The Crown Prosecution Service said no further action would be taken over five allegations made by two other people.

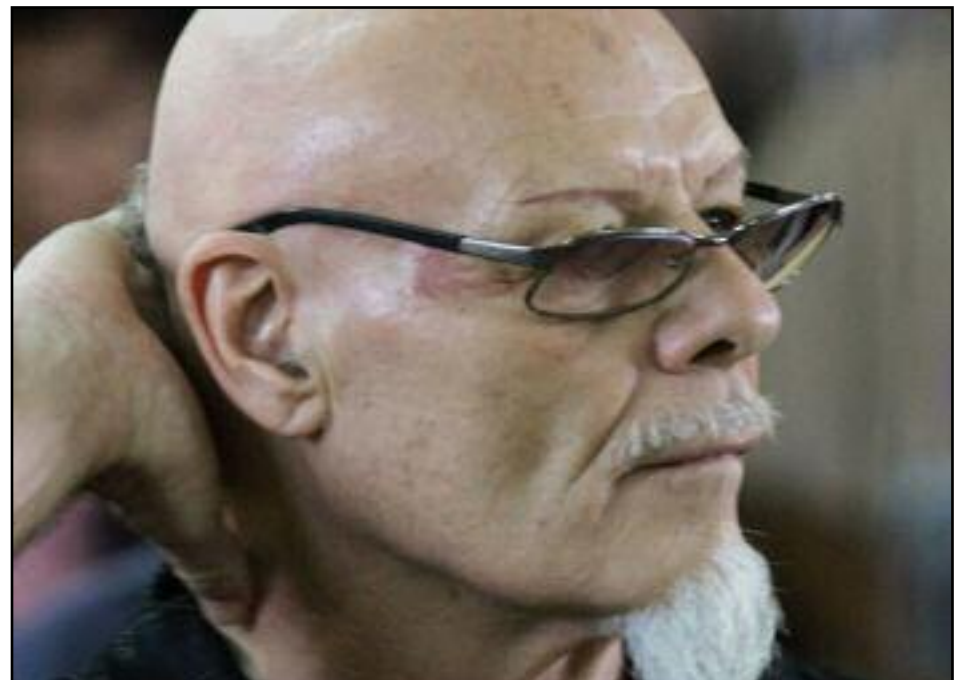
Baljit Ubhey, chief crown prosecutor for CPS London, said: "We have carefully considered the evidence gathered by the Metropolitan Police Service."

Mr Gadd, 70, was

arrested on 28 October 2012 at his London home following an investigation by detectives from Operation Yewtree, which was set up after the Jimmy Savile abuse scandal.

Police material

Ms Ubhey said police had been "providing material to the CPS since July 2013, with the most



FALLEN STAR: Gary Glitter's fame reached its height in the early 1970s

recent material submitted in March 2014".

Glitter rose to fame in

the UK in the 1970s with a flamboyant stage persona and hits such as Rock and Roll (Part 2)

and Leader of the Gang, the latter reaching No 1 in the UK music charts in 1973.

Rolf Harris 'extracted' from female fans, court hears

A former tour manager of Rolf Harris has told a court he had to "extract" the entertainer from female fans when they threw themselves at him.

Ken Jeacle, giving evidence by video link from Australia, described how women would "put their arms" around Harris, who is on trial accused of a series of indecent assaults.

"I would have to gently

intervene," he said. "I would have to be careful (because) it would destroy the admiration of the admirer if I took the wrong attitude."

"I would say, 'Don't forget we're on our way to that radio interview' and keep him moving to extract him from situations."

Mr Jeacle said that in the years he toured Australia with Harris, he had never seen him act inappropriately and described him as a "gentleman".

Under cross-examination from Sasha Wass QC, he was asked what he knew of Harris' private life and his extramarital affairs.

He replied: "If he had extramarital affairs that's none of my business."

"I can't speak and will not speak of that because it is none of my concern."

Broadcaster and TV presenter Sue Cook also testified for the defence at Southwark Crown Court.

Ms Cook, a former presenter of Crimewatch and Children In Need, said she took to Twitter after seeing footage of Harris in a 1978 episode of the TV show Star Games filmed in Cambridge.

Harris is alleged to have groped a waitress in the city between 1975 and 1979 at an It's A Knockout-style event.

Last week he insisted he had never been to Cambridge until four years ago for an exhibition of his paintings.

Ms Cook said she had taken part in two or possibly three episodes of Star Games but she did not appear in the footage of the Harris episode shown in court earlier this week.

Ms Cook said: "I said to my husband, 'Gosh, that's unfair. I was in that show and I wouldn't have remembered it all. I wouldn't have known it was Cambridge either'."

Harris, dressed in a suit and tie, listened to proceedings from the dock with his friends and family in the public gallery.

The 84-year-old entertainer, of Bray, Berkshire, denies 12 counts of indecent assault on four women when they were aged between seven or eight years old and 19 years old between 1968 and 1986.

The defence has now concluded its case and the jury were discharged until Monday when closing arguments will begin

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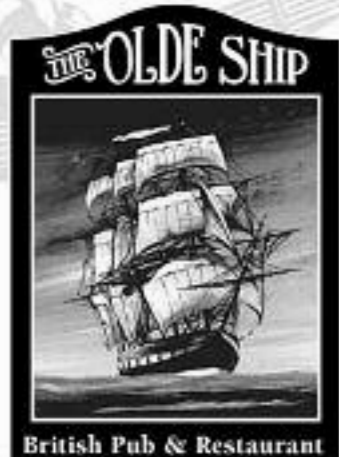
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Huge campaign drive pays off for Tories in Newark by-election

David Cameron was celebrating on Thursday night after a massive effort from the Tories in the Newark by-election was rewarded with a comfortable victory over the UKIP and a majority of nearly 7,500.

Conservative candidate Robert Jenrick held the seat with 17,431 and 45% of the vote, with UKIP's Roger Helmer second with 10,028 and 26%.

Labour's Michael Payne finished in third place with 6,842 votes, 18% of ballots cast.

But in yet another dismal result for the Liberal Democrats, their candidate David Watts came sixth, polling

just 1,004 votes and 2.5%, and was beaten by an independent and the Green Party candidate.

Mr Jenrick said: "The people of Newark have voted to back this government, to back this government's long term economic plan to secure the future of this constituency and of this great country."

Although they failed to capture the seat, UKIP will be delighted at the big increase in its support, leapfrogging from fifth to second place and almost polling as highly as the party did in Eastleigh, where it came second to the Lib Dems.

Mr Helmer said the

result was a "great sign" for the future of his party.

"We stood in this election hoping to win and planning to win and we have not won but we are encouraged by the fact that we have increased our share of the vote since the general election by a factor of six and we have halved the Conservative majority."

Labour's Mr Payne said he was "extremely proud" of the campaign his party fought and added: "Labour has listened to the people of Newark, campaigning throughout on the issues that matter, especially the future of Newark hospital and the local NHS."

The turnout was a respectable 53%, down from 71.5% at the general election, considerably higher than the 2010 average.

The seat was previously held with a majority of 16,152 by the Tory MP and former Army officer Patrick Mercer, who quit after being exposed in a cash-for-questions scandal.

Faced with a UKIP surge, the Conservatives threw everything into the by-election campaign.

Mr Cameron visited the constituency four times during the campaign and Tory MPs - including the most senior Cabinet

ministers - were ordered to make at least three visits. Right up to the very last minute, the Tories left nothing to chance.

Led by party co-chairs Grant Shapps and Lord Feldman, up to 100 MPs and 1,000 activists were in Newark on polling day in an all-out effort to stop UKIP winning its first ever Parliamentary seat.

UKIP found itself heavily outgunned, with only around 200 volunteers rallying support on polling day.

Mr Helmer was not helped by Mr Farage keeping a relatively low profile during the campaign, visiting just once, last Saturday.

On Wednesday he was in Malta speaking at a conference organised by the Institute of Travel and Tourism of the UK in Malta, and did not arrive in Newark until Thursday afternoon. The turnout was 52.8%.

The full result was as follows:

Robert Jenrick (Conservative): 17,431 (45.03%)
 Roger Helmer (UKIP): 10,028 (25.91%)
 Michael Payne (Labour): 6,842 (17.68%)
 Paul Baggaley (Independent): 1,891 (4.89%)
 David Kirwan (Green Party): 1,057 (2.73%)

Churchill's youngest daughter dies at 91

■ Lady Mary Soames "was a truly remarkable and extraordinary woman, who led a very distinguished life"

Lady Mary Soames, Winston Churchill's last surviving child, has died at the age of 91, her family have announced.

She died on Saturday at her home after a short illness.

She was the youngest of the five children of the wartime prime minister and his wife Clementine.

Prime Minister David Cameron described her as "a wonderful, warm-hearted woman who could always put others at ease" and said he and his wife Samantha "felt privileged to know her".

One of her sons, the Conservative MP and former minister Nicholas Soames, said: "She was a truly remarkable and extraordinary woman, who led a very distinguished life."

Born Mary Spencer-Churchill, she served in the auxiliary territorial service during World War Two,

manning anti-aircraft batteries in London, Belgium and Germany.

She accompanied her father on several of his most important trips, including to the 1945 Potsdam Conference, where Churchill, Stalin and US President Harry Truman discussed the future of post-war Germany and Europe.

She enjoyed a lifetime of public service and through both birth and marriage, had life-long association with the Conservative Party.

Her late husband, Christopher Soames, was a prominent Conservative politician who served as a minister under Anthony Eden, Harold Macmillan, Alec Douglas-Home and Margaret Thatcher.

He also served as the UK's ambassador to France and as the last governor of Southern Rhodesia before the

country's independence in 1980.

Mr Cameron said he was "saddened" by Lady Soames's death.

He added: "In the week of the 70th anniversary of D-Day, we remember that she served her country in World War II and was an eye-witness to some of the most important moments in our recent history as she accompanied her father to key conferences.

"My thoughts are with her family, who can take pride in her distinguished life."

Her son, Tory MP for Mid Sussex Mr Soames, said: "She was not just a wonderful mother to whom we were all devoted, but the head and heart of our family after our father died, and will be greatly missed.

"She was a distinguished writer and led a distinguished life,



LIVING HISTORY: Lady Mary Soames in her eighties (above), and (below) with her rather famous father, Winston Churchill



with her service in the war, and is part of that generation which is passing.

"This is extraordinary timing - just before the anniversary of the Normandy landings,

Churchill's last surviving child dies. It is the great swing of history."

News from Britain

McCanns:

cont. from page two

lies on unused land, five minutes' walk from the holiday complex where the McCanns were staying in May 2007.

Officers had planned to search the area only until Friday but have asked authorities in Portugal for an extra week.

Tents have been put up at several locations, including one above a hole concealed by corrugated iron which was exposed on Tuesday when trees and shrubs were cut down.

Forensics officers dressed in white overalls were seen coming and going from the tents, pushing wheelbarrows around the site and using large sieves to sift through soil for clues.

Evidence bags were carried away as Detective Chief Inspector Andy Redwood, who is leading the investigation, looked on.

Police have not spoken about the intelligence that led them to the scrubland, which is thought to be one of three sites of interest in Praia da Luz.

Madeleine was three years old when she disappeared from the Algarve resort while on holiday with her parents, Kate and Gerry McCann, and her younger siblings.

The renewed search for the missing youngster is a joint effort between police in the United Kingdom and Portugal and follows a Metropolitan Police review of the seven-year-old case.

Officers are expected to be given more time to search the site, which is guarded by local police day and night.

It is not clear whether work will continue over the weekend, while no activity is expected on Tuesday as it is a public holiday in Portugal.

Women jailed after man 'eaten alive' by dog

■ Court hears huge dog was not fed for days before grisly attack on retired porter

Two women who admitted allowing a dog to maul a 79-year-old man to death in his garden have been jailed for a year.

Hayley Sulley, 30, and Della Woods, 29, both of Liverpool were charged under the Dangerous Dogs Act, after retired hospital porter Clifford Clarke died.

In May 2013, Mr Clarke was "eaten alive" by the dog, which had not been fed for 45 hours, when he opened his back door while he cooked a meal.

The dog also bit the end of a police gun, Liverpool Crown Court heard.

Judge Mark Brown said Mr Clarke's death was "entirely avoidable" and he was "literally eaten alive" as he died in "truly horrific circumstances".

Sulley, of Richard Kelly Close, and Woods, of Swallowhurst Crescent, - who were partners - admitted allowing their dog to enter a non-public place and subsequently cause injury in Richard Kelly Close.

'Foaming at mouth'

The pair had left the 70lb dog, known as Charlie, in their garden without water and shade while

they went to a barbecue.

Neighbours reported the animal, a Presa Canario and bull mastiff cross-breed, was foaming at the mouth and one said it appeared to be eating Mr Clarke's arm.

The court heard the "wild" and "out of control" dog sank its teeth into the 79-year-old's arm and dragged him around his garden; chewing his one arm off at the elbow and mauling the other.

Neighbour Michael Rankin heard Mr Clarke shout "get off me" and ran out to see the dog "pulling his arm off", the court was told.

Mr Clarke died from multiple injuries and blood loss.

Judge Brown said Sulley and Woods were fortunate not to have been charged with manslaughter.

The dog was so aggressive it bit at the end of an armed police officer's gun and was shot twice by a police marksman, the court was told.

The women also pleaded guilty to three counts of causing unnecessary suffering to a dog at an earlier hearing and have been



'TRULY HORRIFIC CIRCUMSTANCES' Hayley Sulley and Della Woods (left) had left their Presa Canario-Mastiff cross unattended in their back garden prior to the attack which left Clifford Clarke (top, right) mauled to death

banned from keeping dogs.

Both bull mastiff and Presa Canario dogs are large powerful breeds but they are not banned in the UK.

'Stood no chance'

In May, tougher penalties were introduced for dog owners in England and Wales who allow their pets to attack people.

Judge Brown said: "I hope that the recent changes to the law will be of some small comfort to Mr Clarke's family.

"Figures released recently show that the number of dangerous

dogs seized by the police have risen 50% in just two years in some police forces around the country."

The two women admitted the charges before the changes came into force and the new rules cannot be applied retrospectively.

The maximum sentence the judge could impose was two years.

Mr Clarke's brother Kenny's witness impact statement was read out in court.

It said: "My brother did not deserve this. It must have been the most horrific death in

peacetime.

"While we cannot bring my brother back, I think we should make sure this should not happen again."

After the hearing, Mr Clarke's brother Kenny said: "If they can afford the dog, they can afford a muzzle."

In a statement after the court case, Det Ch Insp Julie Milburn said: "Clifford Clarke, an army veteran, stood no chance when he was attacked at his home.

"There is no doubt that Mr Clarke's death was a direct consequence of the neglect of this dog."

Spacey snaps as phone rings during solo show

An audience member who let their phone ring during the opening night of Kevin Spacey's new one-man show in London found themselves being reprimanded by the Oscar-winner.

The House Of Cards actor is starring in the legal drama Clarence Darrow to celebrate the end of his 10 years as artistic director of the Old Vic theatre in

Waterloo near London's South Bank.

The story focuses on Darrow, the pioneering 19th and early 20th century civil rights lawyer, reliving some of the experiences which led him to become a courtroom giant and civil rights hero.

applause

It was during a scene where Spacey's character is on trial that

the mobile phone began to ring.

As the music increased in volume and the phone's owner continued to pretend it wasn't happening, Spacey was forced to say, in character: "If you don't answer that, I will!"

He received a round of applause.

The 54-year-old has played the character before, on stage in

Inherit The Wind, which focused on the events of the 1925 Scopes Monkey Trial and 22 years ago in the PBS film Darrow.

He said: "Clarence Darrow was a unique and courageous man. Several of my favourite actors have played Darrow ... Henry Fonda, Orson Welles and Spencer Tracy.

"Wanting to get up on my beloved Old Vic stage in our 10th

anniversary season was also important to me. And taking on a play that I feel very close to seems right."

Spacey, who has appeared in several Old Vic productions during his decade's tenure, including Richard III and The Philadelphia Story, is stepping down as artistic director at the end of this year.

He will be replaced by Matthew Warchus.

England World Cup fans warned over Argentina 'revenge' plot

- 'Hundreds of Argentinian football thugs planning to attack' England fans
- Many heading to Belo Horizonte where Argentina and England will both play

Argentinian football thugs are planning to ambush and attack England fans during the World Cup, police have warned.

More than 650 violent 'ultras' are believed to be travelling to the tournament in Brazil from neighbouring Argentina, according to reports.

Many are heading to Belo Horizonte, where Argentina will be based and where both sides play group games just days apart later this month.

Police in the city suggested that members of the notorious Argentinian Barra Brava groups have made alliances with equally violent Brazilian ultras - and are preparing attacks on rival England fans.

One Brazilian ultra group, Mafia Azul, have reportedly rented a ranch on the outskirts of the city in southeast Brazil to accommodate dozens of Barras Bravas linked to Argentinian club San Lorenzo.

The Mafia Azul group, linked to Belo Horizonte side and current league

leaders Cruzeiro, were banned from stadiums in Brazil earlier this year after violent confrontations with rival fans which left several people dead.

Military police chief Col Divino Brito told Brazil's Estado de Minas newspaper he believes Argentinian and Brazilian soccer thugs are preparing to team up to attack English fans while they are in town.

He said: 'Our worry is that in the interval between one match and another, when we are going to have thousands of fans from Argentina and then from England, there are going to be clashes.'

'We will deal forcefully with any foreigner who comes here wanting to commit violence and vandalism.'

But Col Alberto Luiz Alves admitted: 'We can normally monitor groups with a history of violence.'

'But we would only know of dangerous fans if they enter by air, and in the case of the Argentinian Barra Bravas most will be



TROUBLE IN STORE? Argentina's notorious 'Barra Brava' groups claim to have teamed up with Brazilian 'ultras'

arriving by land. It will be very difficult to keep track of them.'

At least 11,000 Argentinian fans have bought tickets to see their side play Iran on June 21 in Belo Horizonte.

Three days later, over 7,500 England fans are expected in the city in southeast Brazil for their final group game against Costa Rica.

The Barras Bravas are known as some of the world's most violent supporters, and have been blamed for at least 120 football-related deaths in Argentina in the past 20 years.

Earlier this year Debora Hambo, a lawyer representing the Barras Bravas, warned that Argentinian fans were preparing to face the English in Brazil - in revenge for losing the Falklands War.

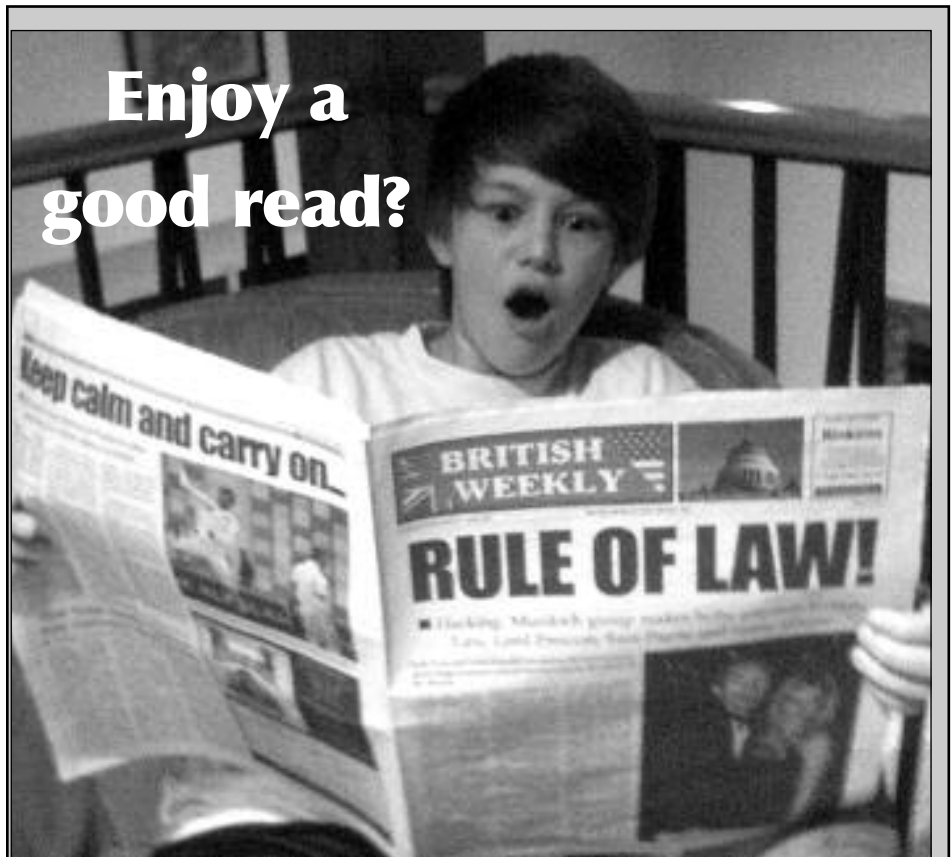
Supposedly relaying a message from the group's leader, she said: 'The Argentine people have a good memory and they will never forget nor forgive.'

'We will always remember what happened in 1982.' She added: 'They are not cowards. They are not concerned about their physical integrity. It doesn't matter to them,

they risk their lives every minute.'

'They are brave beyond life and death. That is why they have a violent reputation.'

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Imagine! Lennon's works fetch \$2.9m at New York auction

Sketches and manuscripts by Beatle John Lennon have sold at auction for four or five times their estimated prices.

The 80 lots on offer from Sotheby's in New York were snapped up in just two hours on Thursday.

The auction house had described the collection as "the most extensive collection of John Lennon's original artwork, autograph manuscripts and corrected typescripts ever to come to auction".

Estimated at between \$850,000 (£506,000) and

\$1.2m (£710,000), the pieces ended up pulling in \$2.9m (£1.7m).

The items comprise the original material that appeared in two books by Lennon - In His Own Write, published five decades ago this year, and A Spaniard in the Works, which hit the bestseller lists in 1965.

The most expensive piece to be auctioned off - a nine-page, handwritten manuscript titled The Singular Experience of Miss Anne Duffield with an estimated price of \$50,000 to \$70,000 - went for \$209,000, fees included.

Stargazing with Annie Shaw

ARIES: If life at work is not all it could be, look at the positive side of things. As we move into mid-month the planets will open new doors, which you would have missed. You will have time to get to where you want to be in life.

TAURUS: Your emotions are probably in a mess regarding some area of life. It is more than likely a past situation that has brought things up and this should be resolved once and for all right now.

GEMINI: It's not the best time or the worst time, it just is. Often we think that the world has it in for us. Not so, life should be lived in the moment and if you miss a moment, well, it's because your "boss" Mercury is strolling backwards. Happy Birthday!

CANCER: This week bear in mind that old saying 'Leave it to Karma'. With Mercury going backwards you must let go of any unfinished emotional business. Expect a dramatic upturn in your fortunes by the end of the month.

LEO: You may be in the mood to get far from the madding crowd. With Mercury going backwards a window of opportunity will soon open, and by then you will have money and energy to do whatever you want.

VIRGO: This month ahead will not be as smooth as you would desire. This is due to your "boss" Mercury strolling backwards. Expect things to improve by the last couple of weeks of the month.

LIBRA: Mars is beaming his bright light on you for the rest of the month. This means for you can expect a lot of unfinished business to get resolved. Only when you know you have done everything that is outstanding will it be time to relax.

SCORPIO: This past month has been more than a little stressful in some areas of your life. This is due to Saturn moving in your life and bringing up your hidden "stuff". Expect changes in the areas where you resist change. Good news is heading your way mid-month.

SAGITTARIUS: Your boss Jupiter is sitting in watery sign Cancer and he will soon move into the financial area of your life for a long while. This can mean several things to you, in the short term don't take risks. The long term is probably better so be patient.

CAPRICORN: Jupiter moving in your opposite sign of Cancer will assist you to get the job done as this month is a great opportunity to complete any thing. Mercury is moving backwards now and so nothing much else is happening until late month.

AQUARIUS: You are probably feeling like a break away, so even if you cannot get out of town take time out to relax. If you can swing a weekend away now is the time as next month will be busier. You have plans that may not come to fruition - not to worry all will be good in the end.

PISCES: Jupiter in your cousin sign Cancer is bringing up past emotional situations. Make sure you understand that you have to move forward and deal with situations as they are now. It's good to have memories but not to live in the past.



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The Romanov Sisters: brief and gilded lives

■ Exclusive interview with author Helen Rappaport and a review of her biography of the daughters of Nicholas and Alexandra

Rating: ★★★

"I felt such an empathy with the girls," says *The Romanov Sisters* author Helen Rappaport. "As a mother of daughters myself, they haunted me. I wanted to tell their story, to bring them to the foreground for once, and give them back their identities as four very different young women, who were not an anonymous collective, as they are so often portrayed."

The Romanov Sisters: The Lost Lives of the Daughters of Nicholas and Alexandra sheds new



light on Olga, Tatiana, Maria and Anastasia Romanov, whose short lives came to a sad end after the 1917 Revolution. Before their gilded world came crashing down around them, their lives revolved around their parents and their brother Alexei, the heir. Rappaport uses photos previously unseen, unpublished letters, diaries and archival sources to bring the girls to life. Unfortunately, there's little interaction

with the notoriously charismatic Rasputin.

"I have been thinking about the four Romanov sisters since I walked the city of Ekaterinburg in Western Siberia when researching my previous book *The Last Days of the Romanovs*," says Rappaport, who conducted exhaustive research over a very wide range of published, online, archival and private sources. She focused on contemporary accounts, the newspapers and magazines of the day. She looked for material in foreign language sources: not only Russian, but French, German, Danish and Swedish.

"I found much more material than I had expected to," says Rappaport. "The best surprises were being contacted by people with a connection in some way to the story, and in

discovering the cache of Anastasia letters, written during 1917-18, that had recently been donated to the Hoover Institution in California."

She searched many archival catalogs online. Other material was sent as scans or photocopies, either by her researcher at Hoover or by libraries including the Bakhmeteff Archive at Columbia. She also oconsulted archives in Oxford, Nottingham, Leeds, and the Royal Archives at Windsor.

Rappaport is the historical adviser and appears in the two-part BBC2 documentary *Russia's Lost Princesses* due to air in the UK soon and may broadcast in the U.S. The Romanov Sisters has not yet been optioned for film or television.

This is Rappaport's 11th book. She's won a U.S. library award, RUSA, for Women Social Reformers.

Charlie Spicer, Rappaport's U.S. editor at St Martin's Press, told me: "When I read the finished a draft of *The Romanov Sisters*, what Helen Rappaport had done was take these four young women, usually background scenery to the story of the Russian imperial family, and bring them alive on the page as living, breathing, people, with their own joys and sorrows and loves and heartbreaks, and finally their own courage in the face of doom. ...During the production of the book, Helen discovered not only new letters and diaries, but photographs that have never before been seen that make these four beautiful, tragic grand duchesses seem so contemporary, so real to a reader in the early 21st century."

Rappaport was born in Bromley and now lives in



BY

Gabrielle Pantera

West Dorset. Her next book will also be set in Russia. Her website is: www.helenrappaport.com

The Romanov Sisters: The Lost Lives of the Daughters of Nicholas and Alexandra by Helen Rappaport, Hardback, 512 pages, Publisher: St. Martin's Press; First Edition edition (June 3, 2014), Language: English, ISBN-13: 978-1250020208 \$ 27.99. Kindle, File Size: 2223 KB, Print Length: 513 pages, Page Numbers Source ISBN: 1250020204, Publisher: St. Martin's Press (June 3, 2014), Sold by: Macmillan, Language: English, ASIN: B00H6EOMDO \$12.74

Sean Borg goes LA!



Harry's jewels (almost) on show

Those boys from One Direction are certainly learning the art of headline grabbing...

Last week Louis Tomlinson and Zayn Malik were caught up in a pot smoking scandal and this week "dirty" Harry Styles caused a stir on the internet when his cousin Matt Selley posted a snap of Harry starkers (well almost) hanging out and watching the big Froch-Groves boxing match.

Selley posted the pic with the caption: "Just watched the fight from last night! Class!"

Oo-er!



Twitter predictably went into meltdown when the pic hit the news showing the star with his hand strategically placed on his upper thigh. The image was shared and 'favourited' more than 20,000 times. Another knockout for Harry Styles, I'd say!

Amazon adventure for bandanna Becks!

David Beckham has added the Amazon to his conquests.

No, he's not leaving Victoria for a long-legged model but rather he's made a TV show for the BBC. In *David Beckham: Into The Unknown*, the former footie-hottie star journeys to Rio de Janeiro and then into the heart of the Amazon jungle with a group of friends.

We're used to seeing Becks scrubbed up for awards ceremonies and H&M modeling gigs, so it seems the jungle adventure was the perfect opportunity for him to let his hair down and get off the beaten track.

Speaking about the programme, which follows the former Manchester United and Real Madrid midfielder on an 800-mile, 12-day trip into the Amazon rainforest by motorbike, canoe and plane, Beckham said: "For the last 22 years my life and career has been on a schedule. So, I had the opportunity to do something with my friends on motorbikes, which obviously I'm a big fan of."

The dad of four describes the trip with his



Winning over the locals: Becks makes a new friend

boys as both "humbling" and "terrifying" at times.

Beckham hung up his boots last year after winning the French league title with Paris St Germain, bringing the curtain down on a 20-year career, but he clearly misses playing.

"There's never been a player-owner but maybe?" he said with a trademark grin.

Oo-er... And even if Beckham doesn't come out of retirement, dropping THAT hint is a surefire way of guaranteeing exposure for his new documentary...

Clever boy!

You can watch "David Beckham: Into The Unknown" on Monday, 9th June, at 8.30pm on BBC One (UK).

(Editor's note: there are a variety of tools available on the internet for British expats with little or no technical savvy to watch live BBC programming via the Beeb's iPlayer app in addition to other British television channels. Two of our favorites are the VPN supplier www Unblock-us.com or the Hola! extension for Google's Chrome browser).

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The drought is starting to bite....how to do YOUR bit to save water

HELLO BREEPS:

I hear that Britain is in for a two-week period of non-stop rain - whereas here in LA we are again suffering a very serious drought situation. We definitely need more rain here - so if you're reading this in the UK please send some over and we'll happily share some of our sunshine with you!

Last Friday, following the lowest rainfall year in

the state's 163-year history, and with the Sierra snow pack at 17 percent of normal, Gov. Jerry Brown called a drought emergency and asked California residents to cut their water use by 20 percent. So I started researching and looking at all the different ways we can help - we can all do a little bit right? Even mending that leaky tap, you've been putting off for

months can save 1500 gallons per month.

My Top 5 Tips To Help Save Water:

1. **The Garden.** If you have a garden, Irrigation sprinklers can waste so much water - make sure they are pointed directly at your plants, as trust me, the sidewalk doesn't need watering. If you have them set for 20 minutes in the morning - make it 10-15 mins instead - because it's much cooler right now than it will be when high summer really kicks in - your plants don't need that much at the moment. At our home in Hollywood we recently switched over to drip irrigation, which uses 30% less water and irrigates throughout the day - so the earth stays moist all day as apposed to drenching and drying out! It's good for the



SAVE SOME GREEN: consider reducing your sprinkler usage or installing a drip-system to cut your costs during the hot summer months

plants too.

2. **Shower/Bath.** We all have our morning shower routine/ritual-but try switching it up. A fun game I've started is by playing a song and seeing if I can get in and out by the time the song ends. But no 'Stairway to Heaven', I'm taking a 3 1/2 minute shower - which saves around 12.5 gallons of water compared to a ten minute one, water and money literally going down the drain. You can also change your shower head to a low-flow version. Also if you take a baths don't keep running it to keep warm - spend around 10-15 minutes soaking - dont top up with hot water - after that amount a time you start turning into a prune anyway.

3. **Sink.** Turning off the taps in the sink while brushing your teeth and shaving saves about 10 gallons a day.

4. **Laundry and dishwashing.** Your washing - Don't wash little knick-knacks - wash once your hamper is full up - this way you will do less loads of washing. Same with your dishwasher - don't run it till its full. This will save



SHOWER WITH A FRIEND: it's a great way to economize and love the earth, too

on detergent. We also just bought a low-water washing machine that saves up to 16 gallons of water each time. One thing I found out is that you don't need more water to make the clothes cleaner. In fact it's the opposite - the longer the clothes have to sit in dirty water - guess what? - makes sense right?

5. **Going to the Potty.** Think about replacing a pre-1990 toilet with a high efficiency model and you can save close to 40 gallons DAILY. And in some cities you can get rebates for switching to hi-efficiency models. Fore more tips on how to save water, visit www.wrd.org/conservation.

World Cup Viewing Conservation is great. But one place where we need to spend as much

energy as possible is supporting England at the World Cup in Brazil. The big kick-off is just days away and we have secured possibly the best viewing space in town, so come join us for a great big British get-together of World Cup screenings at Mixology 101, the super-stylish cocktail lounge at Planet Dailies in the Farmer's Market at the corner of Fairfax and Third St. Tickets (starting at just \$20) are available at worldcuphq.eventbrite.com with guaranteed reserved seating, entertainment giveaways and free drinks!

And I'll leave you with one of my favorite sayings currently...Save Water...Spray Champagne!

Bottoms Up!
Craig

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FROCH: superb victory over George Groves

High-flying Froch seeks Vegas date following Wembley victory

BOXING

Carl Froch is seeking to capitalize on his dramatic victory over George Groves at Wembley stadium by inking a big-money fight in Las Vegas.

The IBF and WBA super-middleweight champion dazzled in his rematch with Groves last Saturday, knocking the 25-year-old out in the eighth round of Britain's biggest fight of the year.

And Froch has brushed aside the prospect of meeting James DeGale, who is the IBF's mandatory challenger, suggesting he look elsewhere before contemplating stepping into the ring with him.

"James DeGale? Yes he is mandatory but I don't need to fight my mandatory and let's not forget that James DeGale lost to St George Groves," Froch told Sky Sports News.

"I'll repeat that. George Groves beat James DeGale and I've just absolutely annihilated George Groves so that's not a big fight.

"James DeGale needs to earn his stripes and fight somebody else before he thinks about fighting me."

Froch is still undecided over his future and hinted he may retire unless he secures a dream against a top-ranked opponent in Las Vegas.

"I'm in two minds over what to do to be honest," he said. "We've talked

about fighting in Las Vegas which is something I want to do before I hang my gloves up.

"Eddie Hearn needs to come back to me with the options before I can make that decision to be honest.

"Personally I want to fight in Las Vegas before I hang my gloves up and if that can't happen and doesn't happen then to bow out on the back of the fight I've just had at the national stadium against Groves in such an emphatic and satisfactory (fashion)."

The 36-year-old was asked if a potential Vegas showdown with Mexican Julio Cesar Chavez Jr is a proposition that would appeal to him.

"I think that's a good name, Chavez Jr," Froch replied. "He's big among the Americans, the Latin Americans and Mexicans especially because of what his father did before him.

"That's a massive fight the American broadcaster HBO would want to show. I know Sky would definitely be involved so that would be a fight of some serious magnitude.

"It would be lucrative but on top of that it would be two top names, two top fighters that leave it all in the ring in Las Vegas which is the fight capital of the world.

"For me that would really get my appetite going and get me motivated. At this stage of my career that's what I need motivation."

- Neil Fletcher

Diego Costa plenty for goal-shy Blues

Diego Costa has completed a medical examination at Chelsea and is poised to seal his £32m transfer from Atlético Madrid.

The Brazil-born striker, who is a part of the Spain squad preparing for the World Cup finals, has been identified by José Mourinho as being what Chelsea need to win the Premier League title.

Chelsea were four points short of champions Manchester City, and their challenge came in spite of the lack of goals from their centre-forwards. Samuel Eto'o, Fernando Torres and Demba Ba contributed a total of 19 in the league, with Eto'o scoring nine of them. Mourinho would bemoan the shortfall at various junctures of his first season back at Chelsea.

He believes that the powerful and ruthless Costa can make the difference. The 25-year-old is fresh from his break-out season, in which he scored 27 goals

in 34 league starts for Atlético, plus eight in nine in the Champions League, as his club won La Liga and were beaten by their city rivals, Real, in the European Cup final.

One of Costa's Champions League goals came from the penalty spot against Chelsea in the semi-final second leg at Stamford Bridge, which his team won 3-1 to progress by the same scoreline on aggregate. It was Costa's first season in the Champions League.

Chelsea have already agreed a deal with Paris Saint-Germain to sell David Luiz for an initial £40m – the fee could rise to £50m – although the French champions have yet to confirm officially the Brazil defender's arrival. That is only a matter of time. Mourinho likes Real Madrid's French centre-back Raphaël Varane, while the club are also monitoring the situation of Cesc Fàbregas, who could be available for £30m from Barcelona.



COSTA: £32m move from Atletico Madrid

Lamps out at the Bridge

Also at Chelsea, Frank Lampard has urged Chelsea to "keep making history" after confirming he will leave Stamford Bridge this summer.

The midfielder, who is in Miami with England's World Cup squad, has been linked with a move to new MLS franchise New York City FC and reportedly held exploratory talks with them over the weekend.

Lampard spent 13 seasons at Chelsea and made 648 appearances, becoming the club's leading goalscorer with 211 goals.

During his time at Stamford Bridge, he won the Premier League on three occasions to go with four FA Cups, two League Cups, a Champions League title and one Europa League.

In a statement, Lampard said: "When I arrived at this fantastic club 13 years ago I would never have believed that I would be fortunate enough to play so many games and enjoy sharing in so much success.

"This club has become part of my life and I have so many people to thank for the opportunity."

Real preparing £70m Suarez bid

LIVERPOOL may face a tough battle to hold onto their star asset if Real Madrid make good on reported plans to make a £70m bid for the striker.

Real president Florentino Perez, coach Carlo Ancelotti and director general Jose Angel Sanchez met for talks last week and agreed that Suarez should be the club's main transfer target.

The Uruguay international (pictured, right) enjoyed a terrific season for the Reds last term, scoring 31 Premier League goals and winning the PFA And Football Writer's Association Player of the Season awards. Despite recently undergoing knee surgery he has been

included in Oscar Tabarez's final squad for the World Cup, which starts next week.

The 27-year-old desperately wanted to quit Anfield last summer and was the subject of a £40m plus £1 bid from Arsenal, which Liverpool rejected.

Suarez signed a new four-and-a-half year deal worth £200,000 a week in December, although it was reported it included a £70m release clause.

Liverpool are determined to keep hold of their prize asset as they compete for the Premier League and Champions League next term.

However, the notorious voice-piece of Real, Spanish newspaper Marca, are confident



Suarez can be lured to the Spanish capital to help the club's bid to retain the Champions League.

In a similar tactic which was used to acquire Cristiano Ronaldo from Manchester United in 2009 and Gareth Bale from Tottenham last summer, Marca significantly revealed news of Real interest on their front page on Thursday.

The hope is Suarez will push for the move to the Bernabeu, just as Ronaldo and Bale did.

Last month Suarez insisted that he was happy at Liverpool and when asked about a potential bid from Real, said: "My head now is focused on the World Cup.

"My agent tells me what's there. It's more speculation than reality."

End of the World for the Ox?

■ Nervous wait for Hodgson as Arsenal star suffers ligament damage during warm-up game

England midfielder Alex Oxlade-Chamberlain faces an anxious wait to see if his World Cup dreams are over following a knee injury suffered in England's warm-up game with Ecuador this week.

The Arsenal star put in a strong performance before leaving the game with the knock and England have put no timescale on his recovery. The squad has until June 13th to name a replacement.

"I'm staying positive and getting to work with the medical team on recovery," he tweeted.

Oxlade-Chamberlain, who added he had his "fingers crossed" over his prospects of being fit for Brazil, will continue to receive treatment and be monitored, the FA added on Twitter.

"It is very disappointing for Alex and the team that he sustained an injury on Wednesday," said manager Roy Hodgson.

"It's too early to make any decisions about what happens next - it is only 24 hours since the match so we have to wait and see.

Playing for the first

time since 20 April because of a groin injury, Oxlade-Chamberlain produced an energetic display in the 2-2 draw before being substituted after 63 minutes of the game against Ecuador in Miami following a tackle by Carlos Gruezo.

Reports suggest he could be out of action for between 10 days and three weeks following scans on the injury.

Oxlade-Chamberlain took part in some recovery work at England's Barry University training base on Thursday wearing a knee support.

The rest of the squad also attended the session at Barry, with those who did not play on Wednesday undergoing a more intense session than those who did.

The England boss had described the performances of Oxlade-Chamberlain, fellow Arsenal midfielder Jack Wilshere and Manchester United defender Phil Jones as "outstanding", while also praising Rickie Lambert's "magnificent" goal.

Enner Valencia gave Ecuador an early lead but Rooney bundled in his



BAD TIMING: Alex Oxlade-Chamberlain's ligament injury is expected to take at least two weeks to heal, leaving the player in serious doubt for the World Cup, which begins on Thursday in Brazil

39th goal for his country before half-time.

Lambert put England ahead just after the interval, but the South Americans levelled through substitute Michael Arroyo's stunning strike.

Raheem Sterling, a second-half substitute for England, and Ecuador's Antonio Valencia were dismissed in the second half after the Manchester United winger reacted to a challenge by his Liverpool counterpart.

Rooney 'happy to play any position'

Wayne Rooney says he is happy to play in any position for England at the 2014 World Cup in Brazil.

The Manchester United striker, 28, scored in Wednesday's 2-2 draw with Ecuador, despite playing in an unfamiliar left-wing position.

"I enjoy playing for my country whether it is left wing, right wing, midfield or up front,"

said Rooney.

"I am always proud to play for England and that won't change no matter where I am on the pitch."

Rooney has scored 40 goals in 91 international appearances, but has failed to score in his eight World Cup matches, during the 2006 and 2010 competitions.

He missed the last three games of Manchester United's season with a

groin injury and has been substituted after 66 and 64 minutes in the friendlies against Peru and Ecuador respectively.

England have other attacking options including Daniel Sturridge, Rickie Lambert, Danny Welbeck and Raheem Sterling and Rooney says he is not taking his place for granted.



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