

# BRITISH WEEKLY



George Michael: tributes flow (page 2-3)

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# HAPPY NEW YEAR!

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## News From Britain

# Sudden death of George Michael shocks nation as the year's heavy toll continues

The grim toll of artists taken in the year 2016 continued unabated on Christmas Day with the death of singer, songwriter and music producer George Michael.

During his heyday in the 1980s and 1990s, first as one half of Wham! and then as an increasingly-mature and influential solo performer, Michael sold countless millions of records and enjoyed global fame and fortune.

But there were times when his battle with drugs and encounters with the police made lurid headlines that threatened to eclipse his musical talents.

George Michael was born Georgios Kyriacos Panayiotou in North London on 25 June 1963. His father was a Greek Cypriot restaurateur who had come to the UK in the 1950s, while his mother was an English dancer.

It was not altogether a happy childhood. Michael later recalled that his parents worked constantly to improve their financial status leaving little room for affectionate moments. "I was never praised, never held. So it wasn't exactly the Little House on the Prairie."

He moved with his family to Hertfordshire while in his teens and met Andrew Ridgeley, a fellow pupil at a

local school. The two discovered they had a shared interest in music and, together with a group of friends, formed a ska band which had a short lived existence.

In 1981 Michael and Ridgeley formed Wham! Their first release, Wham Rap! failed to trouble the charts but the follow up, Young Guns (Go For It) established the group after they were asked at the last minute, to perform it on Top of the Pops complete with dancers. The record quickly rose to No 3 in the UK charts.

The duo initially adopted a leather-clad rebellious image with songs such as Bad Boys, but moved to a more pop-oriented approach with the world-wide hit, Wake Me Up Before You Go-Go, while the band members swapped their leathers for more fashionable attire.

With Michael very much the front man, it was almost inevitable that he would eventually strike out on his own. The 1984 single, Careless Whisper, while co-written by Ridgeley, was to all intents and purposes a George Michael solo effort. Indeed it was credited to Wham! featuring George Michael in the US.

Wham! finally split up in 1986 and in the spring of the following year

Michael released I Knew You Were Waiting (For Me) a duet with one of his musical icons, Aretha Franklin.

He was also beginning to experience doubts about his sexuality. In an interview with The Independent he blamed his depression after the Wham! breakup on the dawning realisation that he was not bisexual but gay.

#### Legal battle

Michael spent most of 1987 writing and recording his first solo album, Faith, which was released in the autumn of that year. It went to the top of both the UK and US charts going on to sell more than 25 million copies and winning a Grammy in 1989.

The first single from the album, I Want Your Sex, caused some controversy, particularly on US radio stations. Many refused to play it at all while others played a version substituting the word love for sex. In any event the single reached the top three on both sides of the Atlantic.

A 1988 world tour cemented Michael's status as a pop superstar although the constant touring and the adulation of thousands of screaming teenage girls left him feeling exhausted and only exacerbated the periods of depression that



**HUMBLE BEGINNINGS:** George Michael (right) with Wham! bandmate Andrew Ridgeley in 1984



**TROUBLED SOUL:** George Michael's later solo work was marked by themes of introspection, reflecting his long battle with depression

he was now beginning to experience on a regular basis.

Indeed he refused to promote his second album, Listen Without Prejudice Vol. 1 and no videos were made to back up the single releases. A

much more introspective work than Faith, the album was aimed at a more adult audience.

It failed to achieve the success of his previous work in the US although there were contrasting fortunes in the UK where

it actually outsold Faith.

While playing a concert in Rio on his Cover to Cover tour in 1991 he met Anselmo Feleppa, the man who would become his partner, although Michael still did not

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## Michael:

cont. from page 2

publicly state that he was gay. Their relationship was to be short-lived as Feleppa died of a brain haemorrhage in 1993.

Plans for Listen Without Prejudice Vol 2 were scrapped amidst a legal dispute with his record company, Sony. In what proved to be a long and costly battle Michael finally severed his relationship with the global entertainment company.

In 1996, Michael released the single, Jesus to a Child, a tribute to his dead lover, Feleppa. It went straight to No 1 in the UK. The single featured on the Older album, which had been three years in the making when it was released in 1996.

### Coming out

A dark and sometimes melancholy work, Older contained a number of references to his sexuality and his change of image saw the long hair and beard replaced by a cropped haircut and leather clothes.

The album was a big success in the UK and Europe but achieved disappointing sales in the US, where audiences still seemed to hanker after Michael the pop superstar rather than the more serious artist that he had aspired to become.

The death of his mother from cancer saw him spiral into another round of depression. He told GQ magazine that he had contemplated suicide and had only been dissuaded by the support of his new partner, Kenny Goss.

April 1998 he was arrested in a Beverly Hills public toilet by an undercover police officer and charged with engaging in a lewd act. He was fined and sentenced to 80 hours of community service.

The incident finally persuaded him to go public about his sexuality and his relationship with Kenny Goss, a Dallas-

based businessman.

He continued to record, releasing an album of cover tracks in 1999 entitled Songs from the Last Century, before spending two years writing and recording the album, Patience, which was released in 2004.

It was seen as something of a comeback, achieving instant success in the UK and even reaching No. 12 in the US, a market that seemed to have rejected him.

Following the release of Patience, he told the BBC that he would no longer make albums for sale to the public, preferring to produce free downloads of his music and ask fans to contribute money to charity.

His private life continued to dominate the headlines. In February 2006 he was arrested and charged with possession of class C drugs and in July of that year the News of the World printed allegations that he had been engaging in sexual activity on London's Hampstead Heath.

Michael threatened to sue photographers for harassment but admitted that he often went out at night seeking what he called "anonymous and no-strings sex."

In August 2010 he was sentenced to eight weeks' imprisonment after pleading guilty to driving while under the influence of drugs. He was released after serving half his sentence.

George Michael was a man whose talent made him a global star but he was never comfortable in that role. He once admitted that, in his younger days, the figure adored by thousands of screaming fans was just a kind of alter-ego he sent out on stage to do a job. He fought hard to be accepted as a serious singer-songwriter and record producer, and successfully adapted his style to suit a more mature audience, all while struggling with depression and doubts over his sexuality.

# Late singer's family touched by 'outpouring of love'

■ Michael's astonishing generosity to charity revealed

**George Michael's family has been "touched beyond words" by an "outpouring of love" for the late star, his publicist has said.**

Fans have been gathering outside the singer's London and Oxfordshire homes following his death on Christmas Day.

Amid the tributes, tales of his philanthropy have emerged - including how he funded a couple's IVF treatment.

The 53-year-old's publicist thanked "those who, rightly, have chosen to celebrate his life and legacy."

Michael secretly paid £15,000 for a stranger's IVF treatment, former Deal or No Deal producer Richard Osman revealed.

Osman tweeted: "A woman on 'Deal Or No Deal' told us she needed £15k for IVF treatment."

"George Michael secretly phoned the next day and gave her the £15k."

### 'so generous'

There was "no more fitting tribute than the many, many kind words that have been said", Michael's publicist said.

Other stories of the star's benevolence, including a £50,000 Sport Relief donation, have emerged on social media.

In a string of tweets celebrating the singer's music and humour, comedian and author David Walliams said the star had supported his 2006 cross-Channel swim to the tune of £50,000.

The woman who received IVF treatment was later named as Lynette Gillard, 38, from Bolton, whose partner Steve Davies had appeared on Deal or No



George and Elton donated proceeds from their 1991 single to charity

Deal in 2008.

She told the Telegraph: "For many years I wondered who would have been so generous and now I know. What more can I say other than 'Thank you George'."

At the time, Mr Davies had told the Manchester Evening News: "Thank you is not enough. It restores your faith in humankind."

"All the bad news you read about and then something like this happens."

Michael's donations ranged in scope from major charities and appeals to individual acts of kindness.

The proceeds from sales of Don't Let the Sun Go Down On Me, his

1991 live duet with Sir Elton John, were donated to HIV and children's charities, including the Terence Higgins Trust.

It tweeted: "Thank you to George Michael for all he did for the LGBT community and to educate about HIV. RIP George."

### Children's charities

Wham! royalties from Last Christmas went to Ethiopian famine relief efforts, while the founder of the children's helpline charity Childline, Dame Esther Rantzen, said Michael had donated royalties from the song Jesus to a Child to the cause.

"He really wanted to keep his help secret,

it was an intensely personal gift," Dame Esther told BBC News.

"It meant we could answer more children."

She said Michael, who donated about £2m to Childline over the years, "completely understood" the importance of helping children.

Children's charities were also at the fore when he donated each year to Capital Radio's appeal.

Former presenter Mick Brown tweeted: "Every Easter at Capital when I was on air with Chris Tarrant for help a London child, George would call in at 3.30pm with a £100,000 donation."

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# The Queen's Christmas message: We can draw 'inspiration' from the achievements of ordinary people

## ■ Monarch pays tribute to the nation's 'unsung heroes'

The Queen delivered an upbeat Christmas message on Sunday, saying that we can all draw inspiration in the face of difficult times from the achievements of ordinary people.

Her annual Christmas message paid tribute to the country's "unsung heroes".

In it Her Majesty emphasized the theme of inspiration, as she reflected on the achievements of Olympic and Paralympic athletes from the UK and across the Commonwealth at the Rio Games last summer.

The Queen, speaking from the Regency Room at Buckingham Palace, said that "having discovered abilities they scarcely knew they had, these athletes are now inspiring others".

In the broadcast she also cited the "inspirational work" of the many hundreds of charities which she has been patron, together with the achievements of The Duke of Edinburgh's Award and The Prince's Trust, which this past year have celebrated their sixtieth and fortieth anniversaries respectively.

Her Majesty said: "I



**HOPEFUL:** The Queen cited the "inspirational work" of the many hundreds of charities which she has been patron

often draw strength from meeting ordinary people doing extraordinary things: volunteers, carers, community organisers and good neighbours; unsung heroes whose quiet dedication makes them special. They are an inspiration to those who know them."

The Queen's hopeful Christmas message follows Prime Minister Theresa May's Christmas Eve address in which she urged the country to

unite after a year of deep divisions over Brexit.

Mrs May urged people to "come together" and help make a success of the decision to leave the European Union.

She said: "As we leave the European Union we must seize an historic opportunity to forge a bold new role for ourselves in the world and to unite our country as we move forward into the future.

"And, with our

international partners, we must work together to promote trade, increase prosperity and face the challenges to peace and security around the world."

The Queen was understood to have been left "disappointed" with Mrs May after the Prime Minister declined to share plans for Brexit during her first stay at Balmoral in September.

But the PM's allies emphasised on Friday

that Mrs May has the "greatest respect" for the Queen and will share details about her plans for Brexit as soon as they are decided.

For her Christmas message broadcast the Queen, who as usual spent Christmas Day at Sandringham House, in Norfolk, wore a deep jade, silk cloque dress with deep jade velvet trim to the neck and pockets, designed by Angela Kelly.

## Kate and William set to move as they put George's name down for a London school

**THE Duke and Duchess of Cambridge are to move base to London in 2017 as Prince George starts school and they**

**take on more royal duties.**

George, four in July, begins classes in September and has his

name down for £6,865 per term Wetherby, the pre-prep school in Notting Hill, west London, attended by his father Prince William and uncle Prince Harry.

### favourite destination

William, so often portrayed as a reluctant future King, is likely to give up his role as an air ambulance pilot and become a full-time working royal as the Queen and Prince Philip slim down their responsibilities. Sources close to the family say William is spending the New Year period thinking over the options for him and the family.

He and Kate, both 34 have looked at

schools for George in Norfolk, near Anmer Hall, the 10-bedroom mansion on the Queen's Sandringham estate where they have spent much of their time since their son and his 19-month-old sister Princess Charlotte, were born.

But Wetherby, also the alma mater of actor Hugh Grant, has long been the favourite destination for George. The boys' pre-prep - motto "Care, Share and be Fair" - is based in a five-floor double-fronted Italian Ornate-style building overlooking Pembridge Square Gardens, which the boys in their grey and red blazers use as a playground.

## Watership Down author Adams dead at 96

The author of *Watership Down*, Richard Adams, has died aged 96, his daughter has said.

Juliet Johnson said her father had been "ailing for some time" but "died peacefully" on Christmas Eve.

*Watership Down*, a children's classic about a group of rabbits in search of a new home after their warren was destroyed, was first published in 1972.

Adams was 52 when he wrote it, after first telling the story to his two daughters on a long car journey.

It went on to become a best-seller, with tens of millions of copies bought around the world.

*Watership Down* was made into a film version in 1978 and enjoyed huge success, but was notoriously frightening for young children, with its graphic, apocalyptic scenes of impending doom.

The film's theme song *Bright Eyes*, sung by Art Garfunkel, spent six weeks at the top of the UK charts the following year.

### 'Magical night'

Mrs Johnson told BBC Radio 4 she had a "long talk" with her father on the night before he died. "I assured him that he was much loved, that he had done great work, that many people loved his books," she said.

She said an upcoming adaptation, which is due to air on the BBC next year, gave Adams "great composure and comfort".

Describing Christmas Eve a "rather a magical night", she said: "It's the night that traditionally the animals and birds can talk.

"It was absolutely typical of Dad that he would choose such a night on which to leave this world."

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## Sad Gazza left battered and bruised after drunken brawl



**FORMER England football star Paul Gascoigne was left with a fractured skull after being 'jumped' during a boozy bust-up, it emerged this week.**

The former Tottenham and England midfielder (pictured, above) was thrown down some stairs in the melee in an East London hotel following an argument with two other men.

And the 49-year-old took to Twitter on Wednesday to update his legions of fans on his condition.

Gazza wrote: "I've been 2 hospital I've a fractured skull (sic) I've 11 stitches in & on my eye lid plus my arm cut to bits where they threw me down the stairs."

Gazza was discharged from hospital on Wednesday, the day after the brawl in Shoreditch's Ace Hotel when he was, according to witnesses, "so drunk he's drooling."

Eyewitness James Eschauzier claimed two men in their 30s "goaded" alcoholic Gazza, who told them their team, Scunthorpe United, were rubbish.

He said Gascoigne, who also played for Newcastle, Rangers, Everton and Middlesbrough during his career, told the pair to "p\*\*s off" moments before he was pushed down the stairs.

A Scotland Yard spokeswoman confirmed that Gazza had been

taken to hospital following the incident and that no arrests were made.

Gascoigne – who also played for Lazio, Rangers, Middlesbrough and Everton – won 57 caps and scored 10 goals for England and was widely regarded as one of the most gifted players of his generation.

But he has had a troubled life since retiring from top-flight football, including well-documented alcohol problems and bouts of depression.

In September, Gascoigne was fined £1,000 and ordered to pay £1,000 compensation for telling a racist joke aimed at a black security guard during an event in Wolverhampton.

Sentencing him at Dudley magistrates court, District Judge Graham Wilkinson told him: "We live in the 21st century. Grow up with it or keep your mouth shut, Mr Gascoigne."

Earlier this month, Gascoigne told how he fell off the wagon and ended up in hospital on a drip.

Gascoigne spoke out after he shocked guests as he staggered around in a hotel bar in Bournemouth following a two-day bender.

He said he had been left devastated by the recent death of his nephew Jay Kerrigan, 22, which also led to him cancelling speaking events.

## Quo guitarist Parfitt dead at 68

Status Quo guitarist Rick Parfitt has died in hospital in Spain aged 68.

He died from a severe infection after going to hospital on Thursday following complications to a shoulder injury.

Parfitt's musical partnership with Francis Rossi, which spanned five decades, made Status Quo one of British rock's most enduring acts.

He had been due to launch a solo career with an album and autobiography planned for 2017.

Status Quo found global success with hits including Rockin' All Over The World and Whatever You Want.

In a statement, Parfitt's manager Simon Porter said the family was "devastated" to announce the musician's death.

"He will be sorely missed by his family, friends, fellow band members, management, crew and his dedicated legion of fans from throughout the world, gained through 50 years of monumental success with Status Quo."

Parfitt had suffered a series of health problems



Parfitt (left) and the Quo happily ignored changes in music and fashion

including having to undergo a quadruple heart bypass in 1997.

In October, he said he would no longer be performing with his band after suffering from a heart attack in the summer.

### 'Rocked our world'

Drummer Jeff Rich, who played in Status Quo with Parfitt for 16 years, said he was "just a really good musician, very under-rated, great rhythm player", but his health problems were "a big issue for him".

"I'm sure he wanted

to give his all on stage and eventually he just couldn't do it any more," he told the BBC.

Fellow rockers have been quick to pay tribute to Parfitt.

Queen guitarist Brian May tweeted: "Shocked and so sad to hear of the passing of Rick Parfitt. Hard to find words, You truly joyfully rocked our world. RIP dear buddy."

Former Ultravox frontman Midge Ure tweeted: "Dreadfully sad. Lovely man. Thoughts go out to his family and friends."

Ure co-organised Live

Aid in 1985, which was memorably opened by the Quo performing Rockin' All Over The World.

With his flowing blond locks, denim gear and Fender Telecaster, Rick Parfitt was one of rock's most recognisable guitarists.

His partnership with Francis Rossi became the core of Status Quo, one of Britain's most enduring bands.

Their brand of boogie-woogie rock survived changes in musical fashion and made them one of the best-loved live acts of their generation.

## "Royle Family" star Liz Smith passes away

**The Royle Family star Liz Smith (pictured, right) has died at the age of 95, a spokeswoman for her family said.**

The actor, best known for her role as "Nana" Norma Speakman in the hit BBC comedy, died on Christmas Eve.

The Lincolnshire-born mother-of-two, real name Betty Gleadle, starred in the sitcom for its three series from 1998 to 2000 and again in the 2006 special *The Queen of Sheba*, which told the story of her character's death.

Some of her other famous roles included as Zillah in *Lark Rise to Candleford*. She appeared alongside Johnny Depp and Helena Bonham Carter in the 2005 film *Charlie And The Chocolate Factory*, playing the role



in *2point4 Children*, and as Zillah in *Lark Rise to Candleford*.

She appeared alongside Johnny Depp and Helena Bonham Carter in the 2005 film *Charlie And The Chocolate Factory*, playing the role

of Grandma Georgina, and also appeared on stage in the West End playing Nell in a production of Samuel Beckett's *Endgame*.

Smith's death comes in the same year as her co-star Caroline Aherne,

who died from lung cancer.

Smith, who was made a Member of the Order of the British Empire (MBE) in 2009, announced her retirement in July of that year.

**Cont. on page 6, col. 1**

## Liz Smith:

cont. from page 5

The then 87-year-old, known for her deadpan comedic delivery, had suffered three strokes within just two days and was subsequently diagnosed with speech-impeding condition aphasia.

Born in Scunthorpe, Lincolnshire, Smith suffered a series of family misfortunes and heartbreaks. Her mother died in childbirth when she was two years old and her father walked out when she was seven, leaving her in the hands of her widowed grandmother.

During the second world war she served in the Women's Royal Naval Service and in 1945 married sailor Jack Thomas whom she met on service in India.

Smith, who divorced Jack in 1959 after their two children were born, broke suddenly and unexpectedly into film and TV in the early 1970s.

The then 49-year-old, who rarely gave media interviews, told how she was selling toys in Hamley's one Christmas when director Mike Leigh OBE, who went on to direct comedy dramas *Life is Sweet* and *Career Girls* as well as biopic films including *Vera Drake*, told her he needed a middle-aged woman to do improvisations.

The former theatre company worker and dressmaker, whose acting experience was limited to small time improvisation plays, starred in Leigh's first film, *Bleak Moments*, which cued up an exhaustive list of TV credits.

She featured in *Last of the Summer Wine*, *Emmerdale*, a David Copperfield miniseries, before *I Didn't Know You Cared*: the story of a working-class household in South Yorkshire. Her casting in *2point4 Children* made her a familiar face for a generation in the 1990s.

# Declutter for a simpler, more productive 2017

## HEALTH & FITNESS with Ricky Parcell

In today's blog, we will discuss something that we often cover in our talks here at The Body Camp in Ibiza.

I heard once that the late, great Steve Jobs (or was it Albert Einstein?) had ten identical outfits hanging up in his wardrobe - he didn't need to make any decisions in the morning, leaving even more space in his amazing mind to create and innovate!

I remember when friends would visit me at my pad in England, to watch a classic '80s movie sometimes they would comment about how I lived. Clutter was nowhere to be seen - everything was for a functional purpose - and I wore the same 80's outfits but had no mullet (yet) no wonder I was brimming with ideas all the time!

For example, in my living room there was just a few things....a huge brown leather sofa, a fish tank coffee table, congo drums (I think) and a massive flat screen TV. No clutter anywhere like ornaments or carpets. On the walls, I only had

a couple of pictures from golden days in the Navy and positive images of the successful moments from my life. In fact as I write this, I realize that I had pictures of where I would be few years from then - America! Talk about a built-in daily vision board....

Purposeful pictures, some furniture, memories and success stories from my life. This made me realize that whilst back in the Navy, I had learned an important skill, to simplify everything, as life is complicated enough!

In the Navy, I remember everything onboard; the deck head (ceiling) the bulkhead (the walls) and the mess (the living area) all contained items that had purpose or were needed in times of emergency! Fire fighting equipment, signs for escape exits and instructions for daily routines were the only things you saw around the crew every day. Everything else was clutter, dangerous in the event of rough seas and not required.

With life becoming ever-more complicated,



**MUCH BETTER:** a clean, uncluttered home fosters clean, uncluttered thinking...

it's more important than ever to declutter, simplify and focus on the basics, so here are some ideas for how to keep it simple in 2017:

**Travel** - Use one piece of hand luggage and pack only essential items of clothing.

**Home** - Keep it clear of clutter by having only minimal furniture in the living room.

**Workouts** - Picking one body part only to work on every day e.g. chest/arms/shoulders/back/legs

**Nutrition** - Eating the same healthy food groups and sticking to them no

matter what

**Sleep** - Ensuring the bedroom remains electronic free and devoid of clutter

**Friendship** - Making sure we keep in touch with the REAL friends... and getting rid of the so-called friends on Facebook and other social media.

**Kitchen** - Having just enough pots and pans to cook. Ensuring cupboards are not full of unnecessary cups and plates/crockery

**Hydration** - Drinking only water or coconut water and not confusing the body with pop / alcoholic drinks

**Transport** - Use your

legs as much as possible or buy a bike

**Clothes** - Only own 5 pairs of pants, socks, sports kits, tops, shorts, shoes etc!

Maybe some of these are unrealistic - but reducing something in each category could help you in 2017. By keeping it simple, you can reduce the clutter in your mind - which can help you make much clearer, sharper, better decisions in every day life.

**HAPPY 2017 TO ALL!**

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# Global Adventurer completes her cross country run in LA

■ Great Brit Rosie Swale-Pope finished her remarkable Run Across America at the Queen Mary

**Manhattan Beach:** While the vast majority of folks half her age spent the festive season winding down with a few drinks and plenty of grub, global adventurer and remarkable Brit Rosie Swale-Pope spent Christmas in the South Bay, advancing toward the Queen Mary for the December 29 finish of her Run Across America. Not bad for a 70-year-old grandmother...

The purpose of Rosie's amazing, ten-mile-a-day journey was to raise cancer awareness and to inspire people to live life to the fullest. Rosie traversed the country pulling her 300lb cart, "Ice Chick," in a journey that began when she disembarked the Queen Mary 2 in New York in October 2014.

A native of Wales, Rosie is an ambassador of good will. She has

covered approximately 10 miles per day on this adventure, with plenty of time to stop and visit with people she meets along the way. Rosie and, Ice Chick, are an eye-catching duo. Ice Chick is a bright red, three-wheeled, carbon fiber cart made by the Amish, which carries Rosie's "kit" and provides her shelter.

Rosie is lively and blond, and her ebullient personality alongside Ice-Chick bedecked in her Christmas finest including tinsel, flashing lights and a miniature Christmas tree, make a joyous impression that is impossible to miss and can't help but foster conversations and friendships.

Rosie follows in the footsteps of a long line of British adventurers – she is the only person (man or woman) to complete



**INSPIRATIONAL FIGURE:** the indefatigable Rosie Swale-Pope ran around the world, solo and self-supported

an epic solo, self-supported run around the world – 21,000

miles, following a route that took her through multiple bitter Siberian and Alaskan winters. Considered one of the world's top women ultra-marathoners, her adventure CV includes completing 27 marathons in 27 days, completing the Marathon des Sables twice, a speed trek to Everest Base Camp, a record-breaking solo transatlantic voyage in a 17 foot sailboat,

and riding 3,000 miles on horseback through Patagonia. Rosie runs for humanitarian causes, and was awarded an MBE for her charity work by Queen Elizabeth II. A beloved advocate for all who could use a little inspiration, not surprisingly Rosie makes friends easily by sharing her joie de vivre with those whom she meets along the way. Swale-Pope somehow

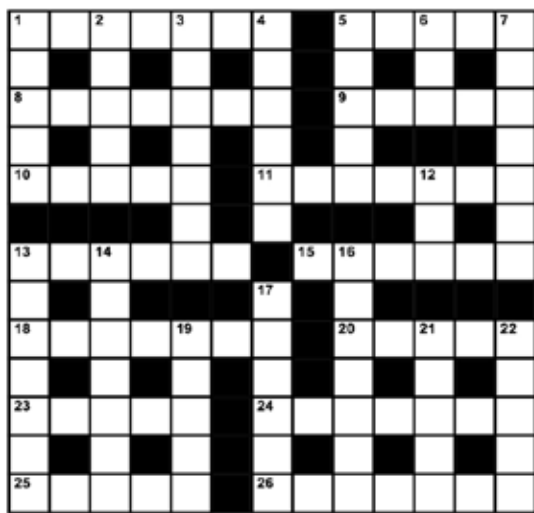
also finds time to be a prolific author, having documented her adventures in several books. She arrived in LA ahead of schedule, and is spending her days exploring the Southland with Ice Chick, meeting and winning the hearts of Angelenos, and working on her current book.

For additional information, visit [www.rosieswalepoppe.co.uk](http://www.rosieswalepoppe.co.uk).

## The British Weekly Crossword by Myles Mellor. #257

**Across**

- 1 Older relative (7)
- 5 Camel's back breaker (5)
- 8 Shower item (7)
- 9 Scout (5)
- 10 Back at sea? (5)
- 11 Change (7)
- 13 Leftover (6)
- 15 Obsessed (6)
- 18 Below (7)
- 20 Roofing supplies (5)
- 23 Skeleton part (5)
- 24 He can't stand the heat (7)
- 25 Football field divisions (5)
- 26 Recoils (7)



**Down**

- 1 Anesthetizes (5)
- 2 Not out (5)
- 3 Relies (upon) (7)
- 4 On the QE2 (6)
- 5 Precipitous (5)
- 6 Tabloid (3)
- 7 Time off, often (7)
- 12 Query (3)
- 13 Overseas government office (7)
- 14 Vanquish (7)
- 16 Alfresco (7)
- 17 Treasure holders (6)
- 19 Country album? (5)
- 21 Bitter fruit full of vitamin C (5)
- 22 Squeals (5)

**Solution to Puzzle #256**



## The British Weekly Sudoku by Myles Mellor & Susan Flanagan #257

SUDOKU by Myles Mellor and Susan Flanagan

Each Sudoku puzzle consists of a 9X9 grid that has been subdivided into nine smaller grids of 3X3 squares. To solve the puzzle each row, column and box must contain each of the numbers 1 to 9. Puzzles come in three grades: easy, medium and difficult.

Level: Medium



**Solution to Sudoku #256**







# Stargazing with Annie Shaw

A VERY BLESSED AND HEALTHY NEW YEAR FOR ALL IN 2017 AND A VERY BIG GOOD BYE TO 2016.

**ARIES:** Its time to enjoy and relax this holiday season as we move into the spring you will be a busy bee as Jupiter will be in your money house until spring this can and will rattle your energy in a good way and it will be a busy year.

**TAURUS:** You have been somewhat overwhelmed these past few weeks so start your new year with baby steps. You have the powerful healer Jupiter with you until mid-June and then it will be a good time for new beginnings

**GEMINI:** You have not always wanted to deal with the realities of life this past year but life has a way of waking you up to just that. It has been tough for you in some areas and good in others. You will still be under pressure for a while longer...until February or so.

**CANCER:** Expect a positive beginning to the New Year and a good time make peace or amends with any one or anything that has caused you grief. Avoid holding onto some kind of grudge and by March life will be calmer.

**LEO:** The good news is if you take control of your finances with another or by yourself when the March winds blow it will be blowing away your current problems in this area. A big year all round for catching up in person with all family and friends.

**VIRGO:** If any area of life currently is not going as smoothly as you expect, you can let go

of the need to change it as most likely it will move on with (or without) your help. Don't sweat the small stuff this year. Jupiter in your cousin sign Taurus will assist you.

**LIBRA:** The main lesson of this coming year is that its time to make decisions easier and quicker, not something Libra is good at. However as it is the beginning of New Year make at least one resolution by February that will break the mold for you and change the patterns of the past.

**SCORPIO:** In many ways you will be happy to see the back of 2016. Not only are most of the changes in your life not for the better these part twelve months, but your strong will has taken you to places you'd be better off avoiding. The good news is that come springtime a new significant other could well appear, so keep your eyes peeled and your mind open!

**SAGITTARIUS:** That vibrant and inquisitive personality of yours will stand you in good stead in the early part of the year, as new contacts and social situations will benefit your finances if you pay attention. But beware of neglecting a loved one who is not forthcoming with their needs.

**CAPRICORN:** Among the signs you are among the most practical and determined and that will be reflected with some strong resolutions in the New Year. The good news is that the planets will align to help you keep those resolutions and go from strength to strength, both financially and personally. But be sure to keep an eye on your health as winter turns into spring.

**AQUARIUS:** Once the New Year's parties are behind you expect to get back into the grind of work, big time. There will be a lot of demands put on you at work this year, so expect some challenges ahead. However, your romantic life will be strong, so use that base to forge ahead in the world.

**PISCES:** You are a sweet soul most of the time and this New Year will be no different. A creative project you recently finished will bring you much pleasure in the upcoming months, and should spark a more artistic side of you that has lain dormant for much too long.



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## Giving The Innkeeper of Ivy Hill a warm welcome

■ Exclusive interview with author Julie Klassen about her new novel, which is set at a Regency coaching inn

"The specific setting, a coaching inn in Wiltshire along the old London to Devonport Royal Mail route, was inspired by the many historic coaching inns I've visited in England," says *The Innkeeper of Ivy Hill* author Julie Klassen.

"Their main function was to provide fresh horses, though they provided many other services as well. Coaching inns were restaurant, hotel, "Grand Central station," travel agency, livery, and repair shop all rolled into one. I think it's wonderful setting for a book, providing a backdrop for a cast of regulars who work in or frequent the inn, as well as new people traveling through to add interest... like royal mail guards and coachmen, traveling performers, aristocrats, and men, and sometimes women, of business."



The book opens with widow Jane Bell becoming the owner of The Bell, a coaching inn situated in the village of Ivy Hill in Wiltshire. Jane does not know how to run the inn, her husband did that, so Jane needs to learn fast. Things get more complicated when it emerges that a loan is due on the inn, and Jane does not get along with Thora, her mother-in-law. The two will need to learn to work together to save the inn.

"I have wanted to write a village-based series for years," says Klassen. "As an author of historical fiction and an Anglophile, I have loved several BBC series set in English villages...like *Larkrise to Candleford*, *Cranford*, and *Middlemarch*, as well as the *Thrush Green* series of books. I am drawn to their close-knit communities filled with unforgettable characters, the romances, family drama, and of course, the British accents. Now I hope readers will enjoy my first series, *Tales from Ivy Hill*, beginning with *The Innkeeper of Ivy Hill*.

Klassen loves to travel to England. "Twelve novels out of four trips. I think that's a pretty good return on investment, at least that's what I tell my husband. I've also become an active member of the Jane

Austen Society of North America as a result of writing books set in Jane Austen's era. This has led to friendships and wonderful experiences, like learning English Country Dancing, and parading through the streets of Bath, England in Regency attire during the Jane Austen Festival there last September."

For research, Klassen visited many old coaching inns in England. She also read books on the subject, including *Historic Inns of England* by Ted Bruning, *The Romance of the Road* by Cecil Aldin, *Royal Mail Coaches* by Frederick Wilkinson, and *Stagecoach Travel* by Louise Allen. "Several research books included images of original documents," says Klassen, "including tally forms [bills] from coaching inns in the book *Encyclopedia of*

*Ephemera*."

Klassen has eleven published novels, all set in early 19th century England. Her books have won three Christy Awards, The Minnesota Book Award, and The Midwest Book Award. An option has been taken out on them, and one screenplay written, but a film adaptation has yet to be greenlit.

"One of the other interesting things I had not anticipated was my books being published in several languages," says Klassen. "German, Dutch, Slovakian, French, and more. I love receiving emails from readers who live in distant countries and speak different languages. Thank goodness for Google Translate."

Klassen is currently writing her next book in the *Tales from Ivy Hill* series, *The Ladies of Ivy*



**Book Corner with  
Gabrielle Pantera**

Cottage.

Klassen is based in St. Paul, Minnesota. She was born in Chicago, Illinois. You can find her online at [talesfromivyhill.com](http://talesfromivyhill.com) and [www.julieklassen.com](http://www.julieklassen.com). She is also on Twitter @Julie\_Klassen and Facebook at [facebook.com/AuthorJulieKlassen](https://www.facebook.com/AuthorJulieKlassen).

*The Innkeeper of Ivy Hill (Tales From Ivy Hill) by Julie Klassen Series: Tales From Ivy Hill (Book 1) Paperback: 448 pages Publisher: Bethany House Publishers; Reprint edition (December 6, 2016) Language: English ISBN: 9780764218132 \$14.99*



## Enjoying unspoilt Mexico: the perfect end to an imperfect year....

This week's column comes to you from one of Mexico's hidden treasures - although I suspect not for too long!

Holbox (pronounced 'Olbosh') is an unspoilt island north of Mexico's Yucatán Peninsula, in Quintana Roo State. It's part of the Yum Balam Nature Reserve and separated from the mainland by the Yalahau Lagoon, which is home to flamingos and pelicans.

Only 26 miles long and containing just 2000 residents, Holbox is located invitingly where the Caribbean Sea and the Gulf of Mexico meet. Boasting white sands and crystal clear water, it's fast becoming the go-to spot for Mexico City's elite. Untouched and very rustic, not yet spoilt by the fashionistas who have taken over Tulum. Cars are not allowed on the island, meaning you travel via bicycle, foot or golf carts. The food is also pretty great, with fishing unsurprisingly being the island's number one industry. If your travels take you here, I recommend you try three great local places: Sandra's, Tortuga and Los Pantelones.

To visit Holbox

you can take United Airlines direct from LAX to Cancun, then drive north for two hours to catch a ferry for the twenty minute ride over to the island.

### Playing tour guide

Before my little vacation I was playing daddy in LA, as my ten year-old niece Rainna came for a visit. LA sometimes gets a bad rap in regards kids' activities, and having none of my own I was in a bit of a bind as what to do to entertain this rather energetic, beyond her years, not-so-little girl. So I called up my friend Zoe, whom you probably know from Express-Rent-A-Car who happens to have a daughter of the same age. Result!

Ice skating was first on the agenda, followed by the **Wizards of Harry Potter** at Universal Studios the next day. Then a shopping trip to Rodeo Drive, plus watching a screener of both Moana and Fantastic Beasts and Where To Find Them. After that a quick visit to the Christmas Tree at the Grove and to top it all off a brilliant night of entertainment at the Pasadena Playhouse for this year's Panto, "Cinderella". The

Lythgoe family have outdone themselves – AGAIN - this year. It was such fun for the whole family, Great Dames, great songs, and great celebs. We all had a complete ball. So FYI if you didn't have a chance to see this great show before Christmas you still have chance. Visit [www.pasadenaplayhouse.com](http://www.pasadenaplayhouse.com) for details and tickets and if you join our newsletter at [www.britsin.la](http://www.britsin.la) you will get a discount code for 20% off. Run don't walk!

I hope you all have a wonderful start to 2017. And please let's hope another celebrity doesn't die, I don't think I can take it. (RIP: **Carrie Fisher and Debbie Reynolds and Brits George Michael and Rick Parfitt (Status Quo)**). And even that nice Liz Smith from the Royle Family. Enough already!

**Happy New Year to All!  
Craig**

**YOU ARE HERE:** Sleepy Holbox island reposes off the tip of the Yucatan Peninsula, just a 20-minute ferry from the mainland



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# Burns' Night Supper set for Jan. 28

Local St. Andrews Society hosts event at Sportsman's Lodge

THE LOS ANGELES chapter of the St. Andrew's Society will host its 2017 Robert Burns Supper on Saturday, January 28th at the historic Sportsmen's Lodge in North Hollywood.

The annual celebratory tribute to the life, works and spirit of the great Scottish poet, Robert Burns (1759-1796), will be celebrated in the usual tradition established at the formation of the Society in 1930, starting the evening with the time-honoured procession of the Haggis, led by the society's pipers and drums. Burns poem "Address to A Haggis" will follow and then the haggis will be served accompanied by the traditional sauce (whisky for the uninitiated). Then follows the meal, tri-tip, Scottish salmon, or vegetable lasagna with sautéed spinach and fresh marinara, dessert and coffee. Each table will be served a complimentary bottle of white and red wine.

Recitation of works by about, and in the spirit of the Bard will occur throughout the evening as well as the traditional "Toast to the Immortal Memory", "Toast to the Lasses" and the "Lasses Reply".

Photo booth to capture those unique moments will be onsite.

Before the event attendees can enjoy a reception complete

with a whisky tasting sponsored by Alexander Murray & Co., passed hors d'oeuvres, and full no-host bar. Dancing to Emmy Award winner Susan Winsberg and the Blackwaterside Trio, and entertainment will round out the evening.

For tickets or information email [iskoneres@saintandrewsla.org](mailto:iskoneres@saintandrewsla.org) or phone (818) 769-5166.



## It's Time For Tea...

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BRITS AT THEIR BEST: Jenna Coleman and Rufus Sewell star as Queen Victoria and Lord Melbourne in the forthcoming PBS drama Victoria


## 'Victoria' to debut on PBS on January 15th

JANUARY in California traditionally means settling down in front of the telly every Sunday night with a big British costume drama. With Downton Abbey now just a fond memory it's time to engage with another stellar British import courtesy of our friends at PBS - namely the critically-acclaimed ITV series Victoria.

The eight-hour drama follows Victoria (Jenna Coleman) from the time she becomes Queen in 1837 at the age of 18 through her relationship with Lord Melbourne (Rufus Sewell), her first prime minister and intimate friend, and her courtship and marriage to Prince Albert (Tom Hughes). Famous for her candor and spirit, Victoria was the first woman who seemed to have it all: a passionate marriage, nine children and the job of being queen of the world's most important nation. Her often tumultuous reign lasted for 63 years.

The show's writer Daisy Goodwin imaginatively depicts what it was like for an ill-educated, emotionally deprived teenager to wake up one morning and find that she is the most powerful woman in the world. Victoria charts how the new ruler rose to the challenge and weathered a series of crises - some of her own making - without ever losing her youthful charm and innate sense of justice. Indeed she became such a towering figure during her monumental reign that the era is now named after her - as well as referring to a bygone world of strict moral codes, duty, honor and sacrifice.

Victoria debuts on Sunday, January 15th from 9-11pm on PBS. Definitely not to be missed!




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# BRITISH WEEKLY SPORT

## Premier League Boxing Day Results

<b>ARSENAL (0).....1</b> Giroud 86	<b>WEST BROM (0).....0</b> Att: 59,925
<b>BURNLEY (0).....1</b> Gray 80	<b>MIDDLESBROUGH (0).....0</b> Att: 21,562
<b>CHELSEA (1).....3</b> Pedro 24 Hazard 49 (pen), Cook 90 (og)	<b>AFC BOURNEMOUTH (0).....0</b> Att: 41,384
<b>HULL (0).....0</b>	<b>MANCHESTER CITY (0).....3</b> Toure 72 (pen) Iheanacho 78 Davies 90 (og)
Att: 23,134	<b>EVERTON (0).....2</b> Mirallas 51 Lukaku 90
<b>LEICESTER (0).....0</b>	Att: 75,325
Att: 31,985	<b>SUNDERLAND (0).....1</b> Borini 90
<b>MANCHESTER UTD (1).....3</b> Blind 39 Ibrahimovic 82 Mkhitarjan 86	<b>WEST HAM (1).....4</b> Ayew 13 Reid 50 Antonio 78 Carroll 90
Att: 20,757	Att: 20,304
<b>WATFORD (0).....1</b> Deeney 71 (pen)	<b>CRYSTAL PALACE (1).....1</b> Cabaye 26

## Tuesday's Results

<b>Premier League</b> LIVERPOOL (2).....4 STOKE (1).....1 Lallana 35 Walters 12 Firmino 44 Att: 53,094 Insube 60 (og) Sturridge 70	<b>Sky Bet Championship</b> BRIGHTON (1).....3 QPR (0).....0 Baldock 11 Att: 30,176 Murray 53 (pen) Knockaert 69
<b>DERBY (0).....1 BIRMINGHAM (0).....0</b> Bent 64 (pen) Att: 32,616	<b>Ladbrokes Scottish Prem</b> ABERDEEN (1).....2 HAMILTON (1).....1 Taylor 34 Imrie 38 (pen) Rooney 68 Att: 13,131
<b>HEARTS (2).....4 KILMARNOCK (0).....0</b> Peterson 8 Djoum 42 Walker 48, 70	

## Football Shorts...

Chelsea want to sign a backup for their main goalscorer Diego Costa, and have set their sights on former Manchester United striker Javier Hernandez, according to German publication Bild.

The Mexican striker has been a revelation

## Wednesday's Results

<b>Premier League</b> SOUTHAMPTON (1).....1 TOTTENHAM (1).....4 van Dijk 2 Alli 19, 87 Att: 31,853 Kane 52, Son 85	<b>Scottish Premiership</b> CELTIC (2).....2 ROSS CRY (0).....0 Sviatchenko 38, Armstrong 45
<b>INVERNESS CT (0) 1 MOTHERWELL (0) 2</b> Tansey 90 Clay 50 Att: 3,097 McDonald 87	<b>Partick (2).....2 DUNDEE (0).....0</b> Booth 16, Doonan 44 Att: 3,758
<b>ST JOHNSTONE (1).....1 RANGERS (1).....1</b> MacLean 28 McKay 23 Att: 7,979	

for Bayer Leverkusen, prompting current Manchester United boss Jose Mourinho to lament the club's selling him to the Bundesliga outfit for just £7.3 million. According to Bild, the Germans would listen to offers of around £34 million.

PSG's Jese Rodriguez is a January target of Liverpool, according to sources close to the player.

The Spanish U-21 star made his name at Las Palmas before making a big money move to Paris, where his performances this season have alerted attention from the Merseysiders, as well as AC Milan and Roma.

West Ham have been offered Patrice Evra in a swap deal for Simone Zaza from Italian giants Juventus. The Sun reports that Evra has spent much of the season on the bench in Turin and Juve are now looking to loan the 35-year-old Frenchman out for the remainder of his six-month contract.

The Sun adds that Evra still believes he can compete at the highest level and would welcome a return to the Premier League.

Manchester City will go head-to-head with Barcelona this summer in pursuit of Borussia Dortmund's Julian Weigl.

## Christmas Day Scotland

<b>Ladbrokes Scottish Championship</b> DUNFERMLINE (0).....1 FALKIRK (1).....1 McCabe 59 (pen) Hippolyte 10 Att: 6,134	<b>Ladbrokes Scottish League One</b> PETERHEAD (0).....0 STENHSMUIR (0) 2 McAlister 70 (og) McCormack 79 Att: 427
<b>Ladbrokes Scottish League Two</b> FORFAR (1).....4 CLYDE (2).....3 Swankie 9 McNeill 20 Fotheringham 51 Gormley 43 Lister 81 MacDonalid 68 (pen) Cox 90 Att: 659	<b>Scottish League One</b> ALBION (0).....P EAST FIFE (1).....P Due to adverse weather conditions.

## Swansea:

cont. from back page

Francesco Guidolin only in October, leaves the club 19th in the Premier League, and Swansea chairman Hugh Jenkins admitted he made the decision in order to give the Jacks every chance to escape the relegation battle with a new man in charge.

But the former USA coach has accused the club hierarchy of pulling the plug too soon, insisting he and the team were on the right track to turn around their miserable run of luck.

"I'm a little bit pissed off this morning," Bradley told talkSPORT host Jim White on Wednesday.

"I don't think it's the correct decision.

"I believe in my work and I certainly knew that I was going into a difficult situation and I also understand that when you go in the clock's already ticking, so it's not like you're expecting all sorts of time.

"The discussions we had always included the work that needed to be done in January - we had talked about players.

"I'm frustrated because I feel like every place I've been, I've been able to put my stamp on the team in terms of the mentality and the tactics."

Bradley continued: "I knew when I arrived at Swansea I knew the most difficult thing was just to secure points, and that any new football ideas needed to be introduced very gradually.

"What we needed more than anything was just to do well enough and I'm disappointed in myself that in the short run I couldn't make that happen.

"I think they [the club board] need to realise that the work was good and even though the results haven't been what we would have wanted, turning around a team at the bottom of the table and low on confidence is one of the most difficult things you can do as a manager."

## Football League Boxing Day Results

<b>sky BET CHAMPIONSHIP EFL</b> ASTON VILLA (1).....2 BURTON ALB (1) 1 Bacuna 15 Ward 31 McCormack 78 Att: 41,337	<b>sky BET LEAGUE ONE EFL</b> BOLTON (2).....2 SHREWSBURY (0) 1 Wheater 24, 28 Brown 84 Att: 16,238	<b>sky BET LEAGUE TWO EFL</b> CHELTENHAM (1).....1 BARNET (1).....2 Wright 44 Weston 8 Att: 3,441 Akide 51
<b>BARNSELY (1).....2 BLACKBURN (0) 0</b> Winnall 14 Att: 14,192	<b>BRADFORD (0).....0 SCUNTHORPE (0) 0</b> Att: 21,874	<b>CREWE (1).....1 CARLISLE (1).....1</b> Cooper 45 S Miller 35 Att: 4,962
<b>BRENTFORD (0).....2 CARDIFF (1).....2</b> KaiKai 83, 90 Whittingham 24 (pen) Att: 11,098 Zohore 89	<b>BRISTOL RVRS (1) 4 COVENTRY (0).....1</b> Hartley 18 Willis 57 Bodin 54, 74, 83 (pen) Att: 11,200	<b>GRIMSBY (1).....2 ACCRINGTON (0).....0</b> Bolaninwa 32 Chambers 88 Att: 3,767
<b>BUDDERSFLD (0).....2 NOTTM FOR (1).....1</b> Palmer 53 Pereira 25 Mancienne 59 (og) Att: 22,100	<b>FLEETWOOD (0).....0 BURY (0).....0</b> Att: 4,017	<b>HARTLEPOOL (0).....0 BLACKPOOL (0).....1</b> Att: 3,767 Cullen 64
<b>IPSWICH (0).....0 FULHAM (1).....2</b> Martin 36 Sigurdsson 78 Att: 19,723	<b>MILLWALL (1).....2 SWINDON (0).....0</b> Gregory 10, 65 Att: 8,515	<b>L ORIENT (3).....3 CRAWLEY TN (0) 2</b> Dalby 4 Mezaque 54 (og) McCallum 11, 45 (pen) Boldwinj 78 Att: 4,486
<b>NEWCASTLE (0).....0 SHEFF WED (0).....1</b> Att: 52,179	<b>MK DONS (0).....0 CHARLTON (1).....1</b> Att: 10,257	<b>LUTON (0).....0 COLCHESTER (0) 1</b> Att: 9,164 Slater 83
<b>PRESTON (1).....1 LEEDS (3).....4</b> Vernij 27 Roofe 17, Sacko 23 Doukara 31 Att: 21,255	<b>OXFORD UTD (0).....0 NORTHAMPTN (0) 1</b> Att: 11,790 Richards 90	<b>MANSFIELD (0).....0 MORECAMBE (1) 1</b> Att: 3,237 Fleming 13
<b>READING (1).....3 NORWICH (0).....1</b> Kermorgant 37 Oliveira 60 McCleary 68 Att: 21,180	<b>PETERBORO (0).....1 GILLINGHAM (0) 1</b> Angol 78 Att: 6,239	<b>NEWPORT (1).....2 PORTSMOUTH (0).....3</b> Sheehan 25, Healey 51 Rose 56, Stevens 80 Att: 3,714 Naismith 87
<b>ROTHAMHAM (3).....3 WIGAN (0).....2</b> Belaid 8 Wildschut 51 Ward 32 Gomez 79 Burn 45 (og) Att: 10,158	<b>PORT VALE (0).....0 WALSALL (1).....1</b> Att: 5,854 Laird 27	<b>NOTTS CO (0).....0 DONCASTER (0).....1</b> Att: 5,828 Williams 60
<b>WOLVES (1).....3 BRISTOL C (2).....2</b> Edwards 3 Abraham 38 Helder Costa 57 Flint 44 I Cavaleiro 84 (pen) Att: 24,669	<b>ROCHDALE (1).....3 CHESTERFLD (0) 0</b> Henderson 44, 84 Att: 3,863	<b>PLYMOUTH (2).....3 WYCOMBE (1).....3</b> Siew 18, Jervis 40 Kashket 8 Songo'o 56 Akinfenwa 59 Att: 12,210 Weston 89
	<b>SHEFF UTD (0).....2 OLDHAM (0).....0</b> Sharp 72, 88 Att: 25,821	<b>STEVENAGE (0).....1 CAMBRIDGE (1).....2</b> Kennedy 47 Legge 21 Att: 3,957 Mingols 82
	<b>SOUTHEND (2).....3 AFC WIMB'DN (0) 0</b> Cox 10, 84 Atkinson 41 Att: 8,493	<b>YEovil (0).....0 EXETER (0).....0</b> Att: 6,086

Chelsea manager Antonio Conte is planning a €60 million (£51 million) January offer for Roma midfielder Radja Nainggolan when the transfer window reopens... but it will be rejected, The Daily Star reported on Thursday.



**SIR BRADLEY WIGGINS:** "I've been lucky enough to live a dream"

# Wiggins calls it quits

## ■ British world-beater hangs up his bike

Sir Bradley Wiggins has announced his retirement from cycling, calling time on a 16-year career as a professional in which he won the Tour de France and a record eight Olympic medals.

In a statement posted on his Instagram account the 2012 Tour winner said he had "been lucky enough to live a dream and fulfil my childhood aspiration of making a living and career out of the sport I fell in love with at the age of 12".

He added: "What will stick with me forever is the support and love from the public through thick and thin, all as a result of riding a pushbike for a living."

Wiggins posted his message alongside a photograph of many of the prizes bestowed on him; a career snapshot including five gold, one silver and two bronze Olympic medals as well as many of the jerseys he was zipped into on assorted podiums after successful tilts at stage races such as the Tour de France.

For all his Olympic medals, and world and Olympic time-trial titles, it was perhaps a photo of Wiggins lounging on a golden throne in front of Hampton Court Palace, flicking victory Vs at photographers in the wake of his time-trial win at the London 2012 Olympics, that officially elevated him to the status of national treasure during a summer in which he also won the Tour de France with Team Sky. It was classic Wiggins: effortless cool mixed with contrarianism, the Kilburn mod playing up to the cameras as he sprawled in regal recline in surroundings that, despite being located less than 20 miles from

where he grew up, could scarcely be further removed from Dibdin House in Kilburn.

As popular for his outspoken comments, dry sense of humour and fondness for the musical stylings of Paul Weller as he was for his talent as a cyclist, Wiggins went on to win that year's BBC Sports Personality of the Year Award before making something of a mockery of his man of the people credentials as he accepted a knighthood from the Queen at Buckingham Palace a year later.

"It was quite nerve-racking actually," he said after his investiture. "I'm still shaking now, to be honest. I mean, it's quite humbling being here."

## Bob: Swans were wrong to sack me

A frustrated Bob Bradley vented his anger on talk radio this week, insisting Swansea were wrong to sack him after only 85 days as manager.

The American was

given the boot by the Welsh club on Tuesday night after a run of just two wins from 11 games in charge.

Bradley, who was the chosen successor to

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**Fri 12/30 English Premier League**  
Noon Hull v Everton  
**Sat 12/31 English Premier League**  
7am Man. Utd v Middlesboro  
7am Chelsea v Stoke

7am Leicester v West Ham  
7am Southampton v WBA  
7am Burnley v Sunderland  
9.30am Liverpool v Man City  
Mon 1/2 **English Premier League**  
7am Sunderland v Liverpool  
7am Man City v Burnley  
7am Everton v Southampton  
9.30am West Ham v Man Utd.  
Tue 1/3 Mon 1/2 **English Premier League**  
11.45am Bournemouth v Arsenal  
Noon Crystal Palace v Swansea

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