

SNAPSHOTS



Cherie Blair arrives at Luton station for her second day as a crown court recorder - with a train ticket. On Monday she had been fined £10 after she failed to buy a ticket for her trip from Blackfriars station in London to Luton. Picture: Stefan Rousseau/PA

Nurse recruitment campaign pays off

A GOVERNMENT drive to recruit nurses is paying dividends, according to the latest figures for university courses in the UK.

More than 2,700 student nurses took up places on degree courses last autumn, a 24 per cent increase on the year before. In Scotland, there was almost a 14 per cent increase in students taking up degree courses, up from 223 to 254.

The increased numbers follows a £5 million government advertising campaign to fill thousands of nursing vacancies.

Universities and Colleges Admissions Service figures on the take-up of the UK's

university courses also showed increases in the numbers taking up courses in chemistry (6.5 per cent), sports science (13 per cent), and software engineering (10 per cent). There were drops in the numbers taking up courses in mechanical engineering (down 9.1 per cent), general engineering (6.7 per cent), chemistry (6.5 per cent), and physics (6.2 per cent). A total of 334,594 students took up higher education places last autumn, up 1.5 per cent on 1998. In Scotland the number of students accepting places on courses fell by 2.3 per cent.

Free visit after dome chaos

THOUSANDS of guests who queued for hours for the Millennium Dome's opening party on New Year's Eve are to receive compensation. All 6,500 people who travelled from Stratford station in east London will be offered a free visit as well as vouchers worth £15 for food, drink and merchandising.

A letter to the guests from Jennie Page, the New Millennium Experience Company's chief executive, said the circumstances presented an unprecedented

challenge to the company (NMEC), the police and the transport operators. She said: "The most important thing - the safety of all the guests at the dome - was achieved, but the arrangements did not work well at Stratford and certainly fell below our high standards. People will now be able to come back and accept places on courses." The voucher scheme will cost NMEC £130,000.

Search for fallen climber

A SEARCH for a 43-year-old man who slipped and fell on Ben Nevis was due to resume at first light today. Northern Constabulary said the hunt for the man, involving mountain rescue teams from Lochaber and RAF Kinross as well as a helicopter from RAF Lossiemouth, had been called off last night because of appalling "white out" conditions. The man, who is not being identified, had been part of a group of five who were climbing the Five Finger Gully, when he slipped and fell. The alarm was raised at 4:20pm yesterday by one of his companions using a mobile phone. The remaining four group members made their way off the mountain without assistance.

Lulu's show to continue

THE BBC is to screen another series of its lottery-night television show, featuring Lulu, despite it drawing the lowest amount of viewers since the National Lottery began five years ago.

Red Alert, produced by Ginger Productions, is the company run by the DJ, Chris Evans, has consistently lost viewers to rival channels.

Presented by Glasgow-born Lulu and the comedian, Terry Alderton, the show has also been lambasted by critics. However, the BBC is to

persist with the show, which will return for next month. A BBC spokeswoman said: "This is an example of the BBC trying to do something different and we are not in a ratings battle."

"I want to put it all behind me and live my life."

Gary Glitter on his release from Bristol prison.

"People will be able to come back and see the zones ... in happier circumstances."

Jennie Page, chief executive of the New Millennium Experience Company, on the decision to give free invitations to people caught in delays on the dome's opening night.

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Historian sues over writer's accusation that he denied the Holocaust

Irving claims 'waves of hate' ruined his career

STUART NICOLSON

BRITAIN'S most controversial historian claimed yesterday he was the victim of an international conspiracy to discredit him and destroy his reputation as a serious scholar.

David Irving was speaking on the first day of his libel action against an American author and her publisher, whom he accuses of generating "waves of hate" against him by claiming in their book that he had denied the Holocaust.

Irving, 62, told the High Court in London that Deborah Lipstadt and Penguin Books were part of an "organised international endeavour" which was aimed at destroying his career and which had set out to "sland" his legitimacy as a serious historian.

The libel action has been brought by Irving after the publication in 1996 of Prof Lipstadt's book *Denying the Holocaust: The Growing Assault on Truth and Memory*.

He alleges that he is libelled in the book because of his claims that he had denied the Holocaust, had distorted statistics and documents to suit his own ideological views and had knowingly consorted with extremists.

Irving told Mr Justice Gray, the judge hearing the case, that he had been deserted by publishers since the publication of Prof Lipstadt's book and that as a result he could no longer depend on his work as a pension fund and as a legacy to bequeath to his four children.

He said: "By virtue of the activities of the defendants, I have, since 1996, seen one fearful publisher after another



Deborah Lipstadt: Writer pleads justification

falling away from me, declining to reprint my works, refusing to accept new commissions and turning their backs on me when I approach."

Such is the nature of the odium that has been generated by the waves of hatred recklessly propagated against me by the defendants."

Irving, whose books include *Hitler's War* and *Goebbels: Mastermind of the Third Reich*, has courted controversy over the past two decades by questioning the scale of the Holocaust and by claiming in his work that Hitler was not aware of the systematic slaughter of Jews until 1943.

The historian, who is representing himself in the case and is now his own publisher, told the court that he would not have generated such opposition if Nazi Germany and what he described as its "criminal leadership" had not been his area of expertise.

He said that the phrase "Holocaust denier", coined by Prof Lipstadt and attached to

him and others, was the verbal equivalent of the yellow star that the Nazis forced the Jews to wear. He said: "If a writer, no matter how well reviewed and received until then, has that phrase stuck to him, then he can regard his career as crumbling off the edge of a precipice."

Irving said that, although he considered the word Holocaust to be a meaningless description of what happened during the Second World War, he did not question the essence of what had occurred. "The word Holocaust is an artificial label commonly attached to one of the greatest and still most unexplained tragedies of this past century," he said.

"No person in full command of his mental faculties, and with even the slightest understanding of what happened in World War Two, can deny that the tragedy actually happened, however much we dissident historians may wish to quibble about the means, the scale, the dates and other minutiae."

He said that he had no intention of re-litigating the Second World War during the trial and added that the issue to be decided was what he had said in his published work.

He said: "I shall not argue, and have never argued, that the wrong side won the war, for example, or that the history of the war needs to be grossly rewritten."

"This trial is not really about what happened in the Holocaust or how many Jews and other persecuted minorities were tortured and put to death. The issue before us is not what happened, but how I treated it in my works of history."

Penguin and Prof Lipstadt,



David Irving says he is the victim of an international conspiracy. Picture: Photovest

the holder of the Dorot chair in modern Jewish and Holocaust studies at Emory University in Atlanta, Georgia, deny libel and lead justification.

They claim that Irving has denied the Holocaust and that gas chambers were used to carry it out. They also allege that he holds extremist views and distorts history.

Richard Hampton, QC, representing Penguin and Prof Lipstadt, said: "Mr Irving calls himself an historian. The truth is, however, that he is not an historian at all, but a falsifier of history. To put it bluntly, he is a liar."

"Mr Irving has used many different means to falsify history - invention, misquotation,

suppression, distortion, manipulation and, not least, misrepresentation."

The case is expected to last three months and is being heard without a jury due to the volume of documentation involved. The trial is scheduled to resume today.

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Beliefs turned historian into international pariah

DAVID IRVING has become the ultimate hate figure for many, a pariah whose views on the Holocaust make him an apostate of the 20th century.

In a prolific career in which he has published in excess of 20 books, Irving, 62, has challenged some of the most fundamental assertions about the Second World War and the fate of Europe's Jews.

He presents himself to the world as a revisionist historian, performing valuable work in questioning the commonly held views about the Holocaust, in which he claims far fewer than the widely held figure of 6 million Jews actually died.

However, to those such as Professor Deborah Lipstadt,

who describes him as "a dangerous spokesman for Holocaust denial", Irving is reviled as a malign force intent on wiping the horrors of Auschwitz and other death camps from the pages of history.

In May 1992, he was fined by a German court after being convicted of breaching the country's laws which prohibit public denial of the Holocaust.

The case followed a public meeting two years earlier, in which Irving had told a gathering of around 800 people in Munich that there were no gas chambers at Auschwitz and that the Nazi death camp itself was built as a fake for the purpose of a movie.

He described Auschwitz as "a brutal slave labour camp", at which he believed around 100,000 people died, but insisted

that no prisoners had been gassed there. He appealed against his conviction.

In January 1993, he told the court: "There were no gas chambers at Auschwitz. I will not change my opinion."

However, Munich's appeal court rejected the appeal and trebled the original fine to 30,000 marks, about £10,000. He is now banned from entering Germany, and has also been refused entry to Canada, Italy, Austria and Australia in recent years.

However, in court yesterday he repeated his claim that the gas chambers at Auschwitz were only installed by the Poles after the war had ended.

"This may raise eyebrows," he said. "It might be found to be offensive by sections of the

community and if they take such offence, I can assure this court I regret it and that such was not my intention."

"The fact remains that these remarks were true. The Poles admitted it in January 1959 and under English law truth has always been regarded as an absolute defence."

"We shall hear, indeed from the defence's own expert witnesses - though perhaps the admission will have to be bludgeoned out of them - that the gas chamber shown to the tourists at Auschwitz was indeed built by the Polish Communists three years after the war was over."

Irving has asserted that the killing of Jews by the Nazis was more the fault of bureaucratic bungling than a systematic

programme of genocide. His work, *Hitler's War*, claimed that Hitler himself remained unaware of the Holocaust until 1943.

Although shunned by many in the academic establishment, he does have a number of supporters, some of whom are believed to be providing financial backing for the libel action.

However, one historian said: "He is not alone, but those who support his views are the historical equivalent of the Flat Earth Society, because the evidence for the Holocaust is incontrovertible. It would make more sense to believe pigs can fly than to assert Hitler knew nothing about the Holocaust."

The source added: "He is one of those who has decided to counter the common view of

World War Two, and historians like to have sparring partners when it comes to matters of academic dispute."

"But we are dealing with a conflict in which many millions of people died, so it is not just a debating club matter, there are very serious issues at stake."

"Irving's track record is that of somebody who has made misleading statements about the Holocaust and who has supported others making such statements, and I would be very surprised if any serious historian gave him the time of day."

"However, this is a man who is very well acquainted, and he knows all sorts of established institutions in Britain, the United States and Germany."

STUART NICOLSON

Trimble pleads for calm after UVF leader killed

DAVID MONTGOMERY and MALACHI O'DOHERTY

DAVID Trimble, Northern Ireland's first minister, appealed for calm yesterday as the murder of an Ulster Volunteer Force leader, Richard Jameson, raised tensions between loyalist forces.

Security sources said that the killing of the father of three on Monday night was the latest escalation in a feud between the Loyalist Volunteer Force and the UVF, from which it broke away four years ago.

The UVF is being blamed for the shooting of Mr Jameson, 46, outside his isolated Derryville Road home, five miles from Portadown, Co Armagh.

Police were last night questioning several people from mid-Ulster in connection with the murder.

Mr Trimble, whose Westminster constituency includes Portadown, visited the home of Mr Jameson and appealed to the public for calm and no retaliation.

He called for "justice not gun law", adding: "I condemn entirely those responsible for the murder of Mr Jameson. I would appeal to people to leave the police to investigate this murder."

Peter Mandelson, the North-



Richard Jameson: UVF leader shot near his home

Irish Secretary, was put under pressure to remove the right to early release for the murder of members of the public and the security forces."

Security sources said that Mr Jameson was the UVF commander in Portadown, but his brother Bobby strongly denied that the dead man had any paramilitary links.

He said: "This man had worked for both sides of the community. Richard had only one fight and that was the fight against drugs."

However, Portadown sources said that Mr Jameson had been involved in a fracas between the UVF and UVF on 27 December, when 12 men were injured at the Shamrock football supporters' club in the town.

Northern Ireland to have actually decommissioned some weapons and benefits from the early release scheme.

Andrew MacKay, the Conservatives' spokesman on Northern Ireland, said: "It is confirmed by the chief constable that the UVF or any other terrorist group on ceasefire were responsible, then the government and the members of the public and the security forces."

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One source said he feared "all hell could break loose" if the UVF struck back. He said: "People are living in trepidation. Six or seven leaders in both organisations have god cause to keep looking over their shoulders and the fear is there could be a bloodbath."

In a worst-case scenario, this could mean an end to the UVF and UVF ceasefire, putting off hopes of loyalist and IRA de-commissioning and thus threatening the peace process.

From inside the Maze, the UVF's leader, Mark "Swinger" Fulton, appealed for calm. Fulton was the sidekick of the murdered loyalist gunman Billy Wright. They left the UVF together to form the UVF.

Tension between the groups dates back to a death sentence which was passed on Wright in 1996 after his men broke the ceasefire.

Fulton said yesterday that he had respected Mr Jameson, but that he was being used by the Belfast leadership of the UVF to recruit members in the Portadown area.

The UVF appears to believe that the UVF is expanding to reclaim the power it had in the area before the split with Wright and his men.

ALISON GRAY

BRITAIN'S top sports stars are to be recruited by the tourism industry to help promote activity holidays in the UK.

The decision to use sport to sell holidays follows an announcement last October by the Scottish tourism minister, Henry McLeish, that golf tourism would be used as a key strategy to reverse the decline of the industry in Scotland.

Sporting heroes are to be encouraged to fulfil the role of ambassadors in a drive to attract more overseas visitors.

Great "cathedrals of sport" including Wimbledon, the Old Course at St Andrews and the Cardiff Millennium Stadium are to receive special promotion.

Phillipa Swain, a spokeswoman for the British Tourism Authority, said: "Sport is a huge part of the British lifestyle and we are often known abroad for our football teams or our athletes. This is a way to capitalise on their popularity in other countries and encourage people to visit Britain."

The world tourism market is growing at a global rate of 4 per cent a year, but in Scotland there has been a downward trend with the market falling 6 per cent in 1998 and an es-

timated 7 per cent when last year's figures are collated.

The sports strategy - to be used in 27 key overseas markets - will be co-ordinated nationally by a new body, the Sports Tourism Forum. Among its responsibilities will be to help the bidding for, and marketing of, major international sporting events.

The BTA said British stars would be asked to give up two to three hours of their time while abroad competing in events to help promote UK tourism.

John Lindsay, a spokesman for sportscotland, said the links between sport and tourism in Scotland were routinely underestimated. "Around a quarter of all the holidays taken in Scotland are activity holidays which often surprise people who neglect the importance of the role of sport in economic success."

In 1997, the World Badminton Championships in Glasgow brought in £1.9 million through the spending of competitors, spectators and officials, he said.

Edinburgh will get a similar chance to make money in September when it hosts the Millennium Commonwealth Youth Games.

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