

Message from the Ambassador to Paraguay on the Queen's Birthday Party

[Video message of Ambassador Navai for the Queen's birthday party](#)

Hello everyone, I am Ramin Navai, British Ambassador to Paraguay. Welcome to the first virtual celebration of the birthday of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II in Asunción.

For now, the pandemic has drastically changed the way we come together, and the way we celebrate the traditions of our nations around the world. But neither the pandemic, nor any other crisis, will ever change what we celebrate and why. Today we have the opportunity to recognise not only the longest reign in British history, but also the special relationship that exists between the United Kingdom and Paraguay, and its bright future.

In honor of the occasion, I would like to explain a little more, and I will start with the most striking thing people wonder: why does the Queen have two birthdays? When I was little, I was jealous of Her Majesty for this reason, believing that she got two sets of presents. But that is not the case. The answer to the question is very British: it is all due to the famous London weather.

The tradition dates back to 1748 during the reign of King George II. His birthday was in late autumn, a very rainy season in the UK to celebrate on the streets as he wanted it, who would not? So they combined it with the already existing "Trooping the Color" military parade in the summer, when with any luck, the weather would be nicer.

So, while the Queen's birthday is on 21 April, the official day is the second Saturday of June. This event takes place every year on the streets of London, so that everyone can enjoy a colorful and important British celebration. We celebrate this occasion all over the world, in our Embassies and High Commissions.

This year is also extra special as it is the last Queen's Birthday Party before the Jubilee of Platinum. In 2022 she will celebrate her 70th anniversary as regent of the United Kingdom, the first British monarch to reach this milestone. Our Embassy will also be part of it. For more details, I invite you to keep an eye on our social networks in the coming weeks.

Now, a piece of advice I got before I became an Ambassador was not to make such long speeches. Unfortunately (sorry Robert), I am not going to achieve that today, as I have to summarize what would normally be spread out at a reception of several hours, during an evening of culture, of fraternity between our countries. But I will try to finish soon, and I invite you to have a glass ready for the toast at the end of my speech.

Whilst we cannot enjoy this occasion together and in person, one significant

advantage of doing it virtually is that many more people across Paraguay can join us on this special day. This would not have been possible otherwise, so I would like to make a special welcome to those of you listening in, especially from outside Asunción.

Now I would like to talk about something close to my heart – your beautiful country, Paraguay. I have only been here seven months and I already have very strong feelings for your remarkable history, your unique culture, the Guarani language, your cuisine and my favorite place to be: the “quincho”. The incredible nature and impressive trees. I have even fallen in love with the albirroja national team, although – as with England – I imagine that this emotional commitment causes me more pain than happiness.

But more important than my feelings are my convictions about what our two countries can achieve by working together. There are opportunities for our economies to grow, to build greater ties between our talented young people through education, and a shared ambition to protect the environment. I am committed not only to strengthening the ties that unite us, founded on a history of friendship and shared values, but also to building new bridges and deepening the relationship based on inclusion, equality and an investment in a sustainable future.

Back to the celebrations, I am pleased to announce that in addition to the materials we have prepared, we also have content produced by the British Royal Household as well as other surprises. I invite you to see them and continue sharing with us from the safety of your homes. You will find them on our social networks and on our website, which appear on the screen. Follow us to find out more. [On screen appear the words “gov.uk/world/Paraguay/news” and below “@UKinParaguay”]

And now, three final thanks. First, I would like to thank our partners who have supported us: Diageo, Jaguar and Land Rover, Wines and Spirits, Monalisa and AJ Vierci. To the Paraguayan government for its continued support in this important relationship between our nations. And finally, and most importantly, I want to thank you, the Paraguayan people who have made me and my family feel incredibly welcome here, even during such a difficult time like this. I know that many of you are facing very difficult situations and I want to take a moment for all who have recently lost loved ones, including in our thoughts His Royal Highness Prince Philip, the Duke of Edinburgh. They will always be with us, as will the friendship from the UK.

I reiterate my commitment, and that of the Embassy and the United Kingdom, to continue to strengthen our commercial, cultural, educational and people-to-people relations with Paraguay. This enormous challenge that we face, we face it together. We will overcome it, hopefully in the best way and in the shortest time possible, and we will meet again soon.

Until then, I hope you will join me in raising your glass to toast Queen Elizabeth II. Friends, let’s wish together happy birthday to Her Majesty!

1,000th hazel dormouse reintroduced to the UK

This week, the 1,000th hazel dormouse (*Muscardinus avellanarius*) will be reintroduced to the UK by wildlife charity People's Trust for Endangered Species (PTES), Natural England and the University of Cumbria.

PTES and partners will release 15 breeding pairs or trios of rare hazel dormice into an undisclosed woodland location in the Arnside and Silverdale Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (a nationally protected landscape covering parts of north Lancashire and south Cumbria), in an attempt to save this endangered species from extinction in the UK.

Dormouse reintroductions have taken place annually since 1993, but excitingly the dormice reintroduced this June are part of a wider species recovery programme, 'Back On Our Map' (BOOM). Led by the University of Cumbria and Morecambe Bay Partnership and supported by The National Lottery Heritage Fund, BOOM is a multispecies, landscape scale project which aims to reinstate 10 locally threatened or extinct native species back into the area, including hazel dormice.

With their soft caramel fur, furry tail and big black eyes, hazel dormice are undoubtably endearing, but sadly their numbers have declined by a staggering 51% since 2000, according to PTES' State of Britain's Dormice 2019. They are also considered extinct in 17 English counties. Carefully releasing healthy, captive bred dormice into the right habitat (that is maintained via correct woodland management practices) is the key to bringing these charismatic creatures back from the brink.

Ian White, Dormouse & Training Officer at PTES, explains:

Reintroductions are crucial to the long-term recovery of many species, but particularly hazel dormice as their decline has been so dramatic. Our first reintroduction took place in 1993, so we are thrilled that this year we're releasing our 1,000th dormouse. This is a great milestone for conservation and a huge moment for hazel dormice in Lancashire too, as there are no known populations currently living there.

Jo Sayers, BOOM Project Manager, University of Cumbria, says:

Dormice have long captured the hearts of everyone after finding fame through Alice in Wonderland, but despite their popularity they are incredibly rare, so it's time to take action. This is the first

of two hazel dormouse releases planned for the Arnside and Silverdale woodlands, and we hope by next summer there will be around 80 dormice living in our woodlands.

Jim Turner, Reserve Manager, Natural England, says:

Today's activity is part of Natural England's work with the People's Trust for Endangered Species to provide an ongoing programme of funding, coordination and monitoring of the dormouse recovery project. We know hazel dormice thrive in well managed woodlands, which is why we chose an area with a range of tree species and ages – from mature oaks to newly coppiced hazel – which will give the dormice plenty of food and opportunities to nest. The Arnside and Silverdale AONB is rightly proud of their fantastic woodlands, which have been cared for over many years by local landowners, conservation organisations, volunteers and woodland businesses.

This year's reintroduction would not be possible without months of dedication from all organisations involved, including the Common Dormouse Captive Breeders Group (CDCBG), Wildwood Trust (a key member of the CDCBG) and ZSL (Zoological Society of London). Each partner plays a key role in the reintroduction programme:

- This year's woodland site has been carefully chosen by the BOOM team, Natural England and PTES, ensuring that the right habitat is in place and that it'll be maintained correctly to secure the long-term survival of the reintroduced dormice.
- All dormice being released have been captive bred by members of the Common Dormouse Captive Breeders Group, including Wildwood Trust.
- Before being released into their new home, every dormouse undergoes a nine-week quarantine period at ZSL (Zoological Society of London), where vets conduct regular and thorough health checks. This ensures that each animal is fit and healthy prior to release, giving them the best chance of forming a healthy population in the wild.
- Once all dormice have been given the green light, they are carefully transported to the reintroduction location, where staff from PTES, Natural England and the University of Cumbria, along with several volunteers, will be on hand to ensure the smooth transition from travel nest-boxes to their new woodland home.

Dr Deborah Brady, Research Fellow at the University of Cumbria, who is managing the reintroduction for BOOM, adds:

Once the dormice arrive they are placed into mesh cages that mirror the woodland. The cages are filled with the right mix of foliage, buds, berries, nuts, insects and water, and this is where the dormice will live for the first 10 days. Each cage is connected to a tree, so the dormice become acclimatised to their new

surroundings. Our local volunteers will check each cage daily and will also act as monitors over the next two years to ensure all the dormice remain healthy.

After 10 days, the cage doors are opened to allow the dormice to explore their new home. In due course, when the dormice no longer need them, the mesh cages will eventually be removed.

PTES, Natural England and the University of Cumbria are aiming to coordinate a further two dormouse reintroductions in the area in June 2022, in partnership with the National Trust, the RSPB and the Arnsdale and Silverdale AONB.

Ian White concludes:

This is the start of a positive new chapter for hazel dormice. With two further reintroductions planned, we hope to see more dormice released in this area that can one day create a self-sustaining meta-population, which we hope in turn will result in stable populations once again living all across this beautiful region.

[Press statement on trade talks between UK and New Zealand](#)

Minister O'Connor's visit concludes the fifth round of talks, in which strong progress was made in agreeing key issues across the deal including reaching consensus on disputes, transparency and gender equality in trade. Both countries have agreed to accelerate negotiations to finalise the details of the deal.

Both countries want a high quality, comprehensive free trade agreement that supports jobs, broadens consumer choice and provides more opportunities in key industries such as services, digital trade and the green economy.

International Trade Secretary Liz Truss said:

We have intensified negotiations and moved closer to an agreement that works for both nations. I want to thank Damien for the progress we have made over the past few days.

Both sides are committed to striking a modern, liberalising agreement that forges closer ties between two island democracies that believe in free and fair trade. I am pushing UK interests hard

in areas like services, mobility and investment, and want a deal that cuts tariffs on our exports, makes it easier for our service providers to sell into New Zealand, and delivers for consumers here at home.

A deal would be an important step towards joining the Trans-Pacific Partnership, a £9 trillion free trade area of half a billion consumers, which would open new opportunities for our farmers, manufacturers and services firms to sell to some the largest and fastest-growing markets in the world.

Background

New Zealand is already an important partner for the UK and a trade agreement can further increase our trading relationship, worth £2.3bn in 2020.

An agreement could see the removal of tariffs on UK and New Zealand goods, such as New Zealand Marlborough wine and British McVitie's Digestives biscuits, making products available to shoppers at a markedly lower cost.

Opportunities will also include additional access for UK services and investment, including in mobility, professional qualifications, and investment screening thresholds.

A free trade agreement with New Zealand will open another important gateway to the Comprehensive and Progressive Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTTP), a £9 trillion free trade area of 11 Asia-Pacific nations, including New Zealand and Australia. Membership will open huge new opportunities for our farmers, manufacturers and services firms, with two-thirds of the world's middle classes set to be in Asia by 2030.

New Zealand and the UK also share a particular ambition to work together to lead the global fight against climate change and promote clean growth through trade – a key contribution to a low-carbon economic recovery.

An agreement can enable Small to Medium Enterprises (SMEs) to export more goods and services to New Zealand.

We will not sign trade deals that compromise our high environmental protections and food standards. We are a world leader in these areas and that will not change.

International Trade Secretary Liz Truss and Minister O'Connor met for a private dinner in New Zealand House before talks yesterday.

In addition to the bilateral free trade agreement, International Trade Secretary Truss and Minister O'Connor also discussed other trade topics, such as the CPTPP and WTO reform.

This is the first visit a New Zealand Cabinet minister has made overseas since New Zealand closed its borders due to COVID-19.

York company director must pay £40,000 in proceeds of crime

Press release

A court has ordered a former security company director who knowingly worked without a licence to pay £40,000 as the proceeds of crime.



Security Industry Authority

Last Friday, 11 June 2021, Christopher Downes appeared at York Crown Court and was ordered to pay £20,000 within six weeks. He must also pay another £20,000 within six months or he faces 18 months in prison. The court's Proceeds of Crime Act (POCA) order follows Downes' conviction at York Crown Court on 11 February 2021. The court gave Downes a 60-hour community order, which he must complete within 18 months. He was also required to pay prosecution costs of £2,735 within six weeks plus a victim surcharge.

The court heard on Friday that Downes had received a criminal benefit of £40,000.

For several years, Downes was a director of F1 Security Services Ltd in York. He was identified by the Security Industry Authority (SIA) investigators as working without a licence. It is a legal requirement that a director of a security company should be in possession of a valid SIA licence.

On 22 April 2020 Downes applied for an SIA licence. The following week, on 28 April 2020 he resigned his directorship from F1 Security Ltd, however the investigation had identified his illegal directorship. On 11 September 2020, Downes was formally interviewed by the SIA's investigation team. He made a full and frank admission to working as a director without any type of SIA licence and failing to notify the SIA within a reasonable time of his previous conviction.

The SIA investigation identified that Downes' previous SIA licence had expired on 24 September 2017. From that time until April 2020 he continued to direct the company while unlicensed. He supplied security industry services

to a number of clients, and managed licensed security operatives who conducted licensable activity until he resigned his directorship.

In addition, Downes had received a criminal conviction at York Crown Court on 3 November 2014 which he failed to disclose to the SIA.

Nathan Salmon, the SIA's Criminal Investigations Manager, said:

Downes profited significantly from working illegally in the private security industry. His actions demonstrated that he was not fit and proper to work in the industry. The court order will help to redress the imbalance that operating illegally has on the private security market. The confiscation demonstrates that crime does not pay. Downes has a criminal record and a significant financial penalty to pay.

Notes to editors:

- The [Proceeds of Crime Act 2002](#) (POCA) sets out the legislative scheme for the recovery of criminal assets, with criminal confiscation being the most commonly used power. Confiscation occurs after a conviction has taken place.
- If a person has a POCA Order against them they have to pay it, regardless of whether they serve a jail sentence
- By law, security operatives working under contract must hold and display a valid SIA licence
- [Read about SIA enforcement and penalties](#)
- The offences relating to the Private Security Industry Act (2001) mentioned above are:
 - Section 3 (working without a licence)
 - Section 5 (deploying unlicensed guards)
- [Read the Private Security Industry Act 2001](#)

Further information:

- The Security Industry Authority is the organisation responsible for regulating the private security industry in the United Kingdom, reporting to the Home Secretary under the terms of the Private Security Industry Act 2001. Our main duties are: the compulsory licensing of individuals undertaking designated activities; and managing the voluntary Approved Contractor Scheme.
- For further information about the Security Industry Authority visit www.gov.uk/sia. The SIA is also on [Facebook](#) (Security Industry Authority) and [Twitter](#) (SIAuk).

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Joint statement on UK-New Zealand trade talks

News story

A joint statement between the United Kingdom and New Zealand on trade talks.



The UK and New Zealand yesterday (Thursday 17 June) held constructive and productive discussions towards the conclusion of a high-quality and comprehensive Free Trade Agreement that will support sustainable and inclusive trade. Both countries are confident that the remaining issues will be resolved, with talks on track to deliver a fantastic agreement.

UK International Trade Secretary Liz Truss and New Zealand Trade and Export Growth Minister Damien O'Connor concluded a day of detailed talks yesterday in London.

Negotiating teams will now accelerate talks and spend the coming weeks finalising details with the aim of reaching agreement in principle in August.

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