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Christopher Martin-Jenkins, Sport



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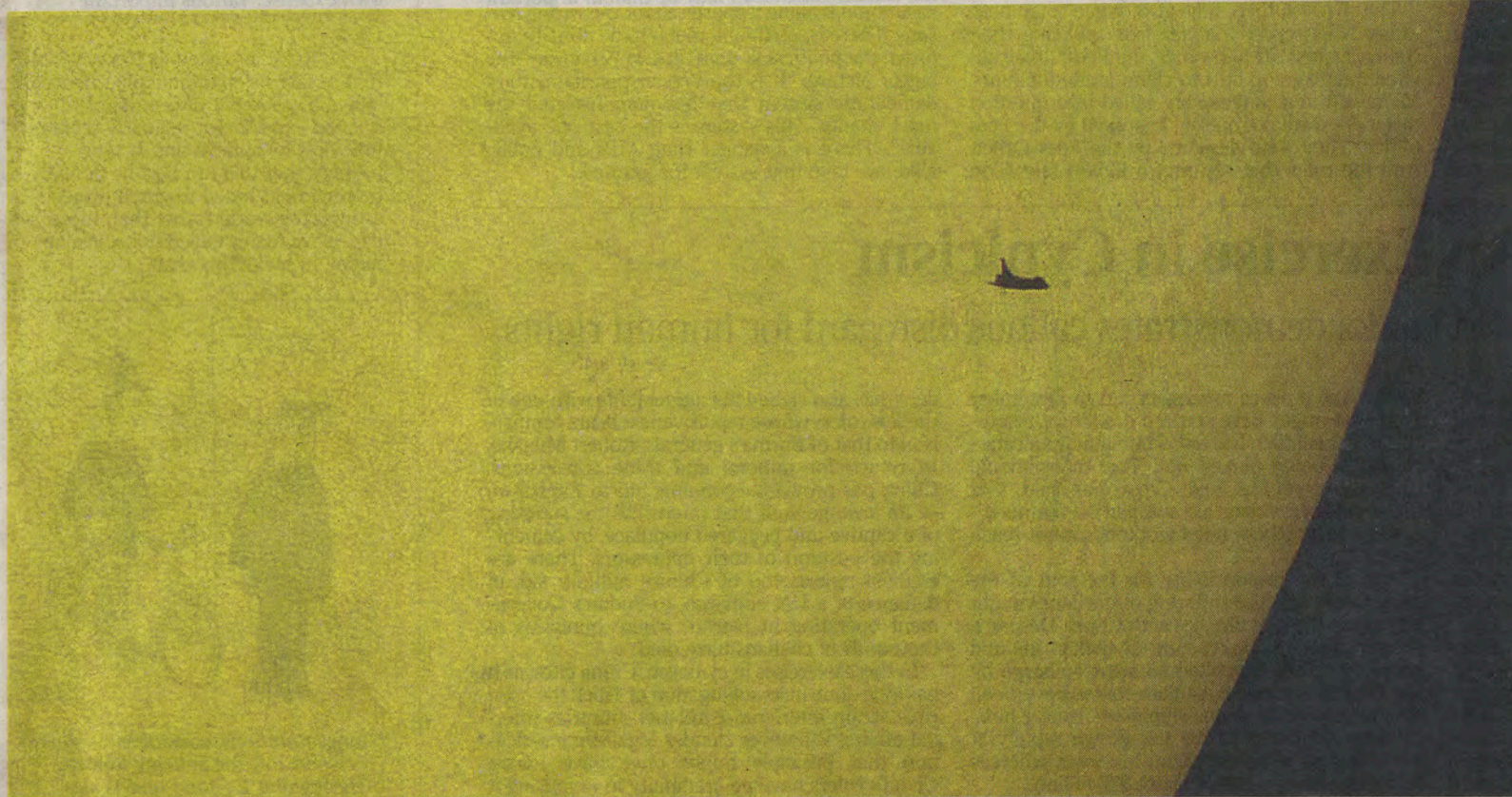
20-page guide inside **Weekend** with top chefs and celebrities



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Atlantis seen from Florida during a solar transit. The picture of the space shuttle was taken with a solar filter before its Hubble repair mission **News, page 38**

Tebbit attack on 'benefit cheat' MPs

Philip Webster Political Editor

MPs were confronted by an angry backlash on their return to constituencies yesterday as police said that they were considering a full investigation over alleged misuse of expenses.

One Tory MP had the windows at her constituency office smashed and with public resentment boiling over, Lord Tebbit accused MPs of "spivery" and behaving like benefit cheats.

In an interview with *The Times* the former Tory party chairman said: "It reminds me of the guy on disability benefit who goes out window cleaning. I call them welfare junkies and I am afraid that is too close to the truth for some MPs."

It emerged last night that a second Labour MP had claimed thousands of pounds for interest on a non-existent mortgage. David Chaytor, MP for Bury North, is to pay back £13,000 after admitting submitting £1,175 bills for months after the loan was paid off.

Earlier, Gordon Brown asked Shahid Malik, the Justice Minister, to step aside over a possible breach of rules.

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Lord Tebbit interview, **pages 34, 35**

Catastrophe in Sri Lanka

**The last weekend of the long war:
50,000 trapped, 200,000 displaced,
7,000 civilians dead in final offensive**

Jeremy Page
South Asia Correspondent

Thousands of civilians were trapped last night as Asia's longest-running civil war neared its endgame amid scenes of "unimaginable humanitarian catastrophe".

Trapped in trenches, with little food and water, up to 50,000 ethnic Tamils

are pinned in a tiny pocket of land between the final advance of the Sri Lankan Army and the Tamil Tiger rebels facing imminent defeat.

A government doctor in the area said hundreds of wounded civilians, many of them dying from their injuries, had crowded into a makeshift hospital that he was forced to abandon two days ago because of shelling.

"They are dying without proper treatment," said Thurairajah Varatharajah. "Dead bodies are all lying on the floor. We are unable to bury or clear them. It is a very pathetic situation."

He said: "We are in fear not just for my life, but for all the civilians and patients and staff. Here there is no food, no water, nothing."

Thileepan Parthipan, a spokesman for the Tigers, said: "People are dying every minute. The situation is critical."

The final push to end the Indian Ocean island's 26-year civil war comes in defiance of repeated appeals for a ceasefire from most Western governments. About 7,000 civilians have

Hand-to-hand combat on the deadly strands

News, pages 6, 7



been killed since late January, according to the United Nations, which has called for an independent war crimes inquiry to examine the behaviour of both sides.

The International Committee of the Red Cross, the only neutral organisation working in the conflict area, said its staff were "witnessing an unimaginable humanitarian catastrophe".

The army said 10,000 desperate civilians fled the area yesterday. They risked being shot by both sides, but in the past few days have paddled across a lagoon on rubber tyres, or waded through its chest high waters to the relative safety of army lines.

Fix your eye on me, Nelson: one day my plinth will come

11,000 people want to be a living work of art. A statuesque **Will Pavia** joins the hopeful queue

We lined up beneath Nelson's Column in Trafalgar Square, men and women of all ages and descriptions, standing on our plinths, all hoping to be works of art.

Nearly 11,000 people have applied to be a statue in Trafalgar Square as part of Antony Gormley's sculpture *One and Other*, which will occupy the fourth plinth from July until October.

As members of that hopeful multitude, we were at the first dress rehearsal, in advance of the lottery that will pick out 2,400 people to be elevated on the plinth for an hour each, over 100 days.

You may be wondering what works of art talk about between themselves. It is mainly quite prosaic stuff.

"Why the outfit?" I asked the sculpture two places down from me, who was dressed as Wally from the children's books *Where's Wally?* He was Antony Pace, 46, a software engineer



Flanked by other applicants for the Trafalgar Square project, Will Pavia, centre, interviews Antony Gormley

from Hertfordshire. "I happened to have it from my skiing holiday," he replied.

"Where did you go?" asked another sculpture. "Val Thorens," he said. "In France. Quite nice." He decided to dress up again because "there's not much a software engineer can do on a plinth".

This was a question all of us faced: to come as ourselves or not. Who were

we, anyway? And was it good enough? Among us there was an editor, a housewife, a human rights barrister, a woman dressed as a nun and two morris dancers.

The morris dancers, presumably used to occupying public spaces for hours at a time, looked quite comfortable. So did Cleveland Watkiss, 49, a jazz vocalist. Was he really a work of art, I asked him. "Of course," he

replied. "I'm the best Cleveland Watkiss there is."

Ian East, 69, an actor who appears alongside John Hurt in the film *The Oxford Murders* — "I had to kill my wife in three different ways, it was great fun" — wished to be naked. "I want to stand there," he said. "I just want to be a person."

Mr Gormley said it was a question of identity. "What's the difference

between what you do and what you are?" he said. "Between doing and being?" He had tried it himself. "After a while you begin to feel the strangeness of your own self," he said.

Everyone liked my plinth, although some people seemed to think it was better without the work on top. I stood for a few minutes among the other works of art, in front of a bank of photographers. This is how it feels to be Mona Lisa, I thought. To live one's life in front of clicking cameras.

Then came a shout from *The Sun* photographer: "Oi! Times! Get out of it!" He seemed to be recognising the essential tension between who I was and what I did, between doing and being. Could he not accept me for my being?

No, he said. Apparently I was "ruining the picture". I climbed down and moved to a more isolated location, feeling what Mr Gormley called "the strangeness of self".

Thankfully, the artist himself thought that I was a fabulous piece of work. "I would just like you to be a bit higher," he said. "More like an idealised object. You ought to go and stand on the roof of your house. That will be better practice."