

THE DISPATCH

News, views & miscellany

COST OF LIVING

AI-generated recipes will help you make the most of reduced items

● Say you're wandering through the supermarket and bright yellow stickers of reduced items catch your eye. What are you supposed to cook with this random batch of nearly-out-of-date ingredients?

A new AI-generated cookbook with thousands of recipes has the secrets. The Yellow Sticker Cookbook is a web-based app and online tool where you scan in the reduced items you've picked up from the supermarket, along with those you already have in your cupboard, and it will generate recipe after recipe to inspire your next feast. Entering ingredients or taking a photo in the shop will turn up dozens of possible recipes from across the web.

The cost-of-living crisis is forcing people to make dangerous sacrifices. One in seven people are skipping meals, and over two-fifths are cutting back on their food shop. When the app's creators



learnt this, the Yellow Sticker Cookbook was set into motion.

"We realised there was a discount lottery," says Nils Leonard, co-founder at Uncommon Creative Studio which has launched the cookbook. "You end up with peanut butter and a cucumber. What do you do with that? We wanted to make something useful. We recognise this won't save the world, but it can be useful. It will also highlight the state we're in."

Leonard points out that AI can't read minds and tailor its suggestions to our tastes or budget. And you'll have to pick wisely if you're using the tool as a money-saving hack. When The Big Issue typed in milk, eggs, butter and flour, it suggested crab rarebit with fries and a little gem salad. You'd be sure to impress the dinner party but it's far from the cheapest meal you can make with those cupboard essentials.

A search through the bright yellow database will spark inspiration, however, and there are cheap recipes too.

yellowstickercookbook.co.uk

THE TOP 5 STORIES ON BIGISSUE.COM LAST WEEK

1. Here's when people will get the next cost-of-living payment
2. Morten Harket: 'Fame is a massive onslaught on any human being'
3. As Ken Bruce signs off from Radio 2, what will fill the PopMaster-shaped hole in our lives?
4. How much should my pay rise to beat inflation?
5. Meet the man trying to improve Britain's social housing

CLIMATE CRISIS

The supermarket staples at risk from climate change

● Right now, we are seeing shortages of fruit and vegetables in many supermarkets across the UK due to poor weather conditions where those items are grown, prompting retailers to set limits on how many tomatoes or cucumbers people can buy.

We had become used to walking into a supermarket and seeing products from all over the world, albeit imported at huge cost to the planet, but available year-round.

But these shortages are likely to become more common in the near future. And not enough is being done to stop it.

That is why the Fairtrade Foundation have organised a pop-up shop in Shoreditch, called the Endangered Aisle. The charity's goal is to highlight what a supermarket might look like in 2050.

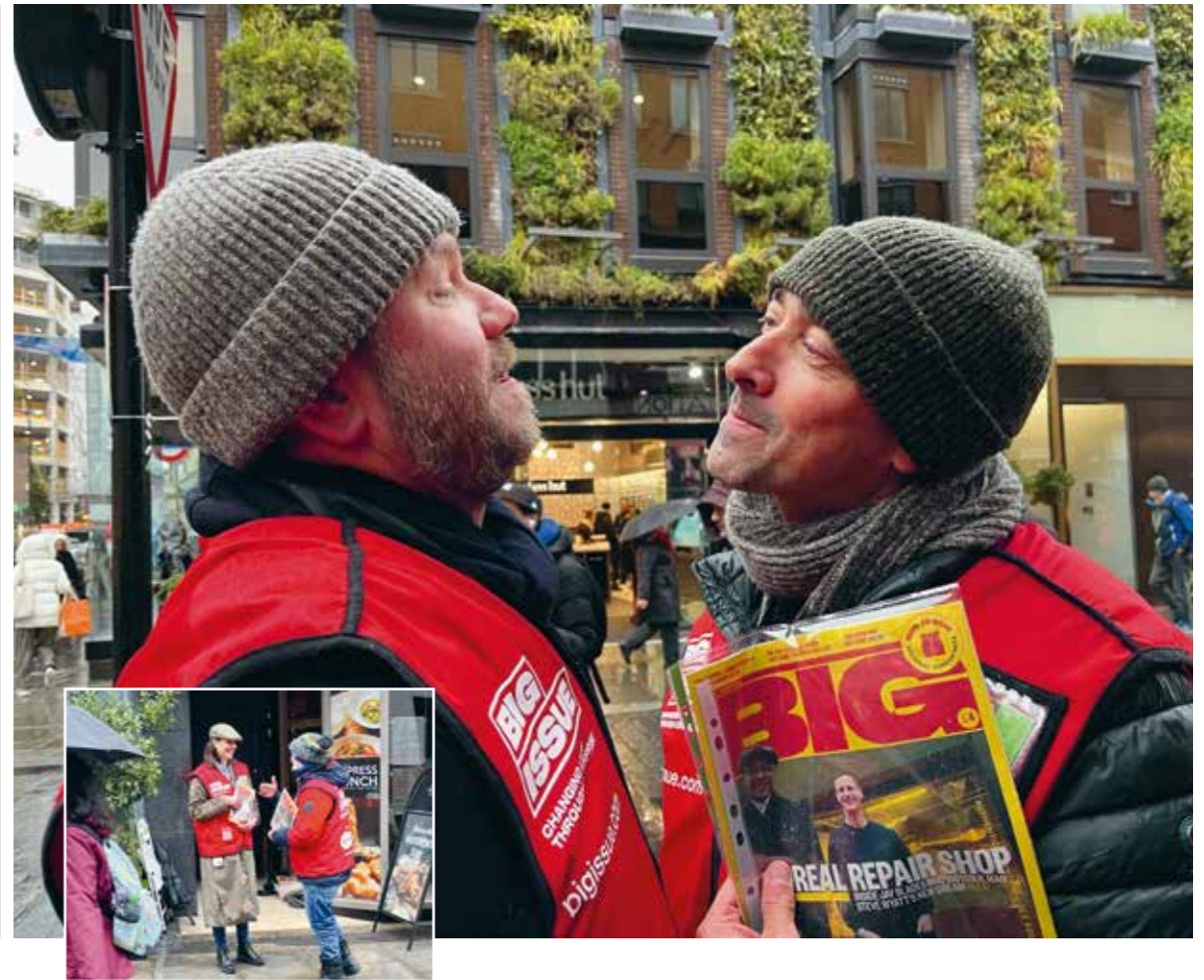
The picture painted is undeniably bleak. The charity warns that many products including bananas, cocoa, coffee, tea and nuts are going to disappear within our lifetimes if people do not take further steps to combat adverse weather induced by climate change.



NATIONAL VENDOR WEEK CELEBRITY SELL-OFF



► It was LBC vs BBC as radio stars James O'Brien and Colin Murray hit the streets of London for a special sell-off to mark National Vendor Week. O'Brien encouraged listeners to come along while Murray drew on his experience presenting Countdown to multiply sales. Presenter Melanie Sykes also took part. She said: "It's not as easy as you might think. It's interesting, people's reactions to you even saying hello." We'll have more on how vendors were celebrated in next week's Big Issue on sale from March 20.



EMPLOYMENT

Big job interview but low on cash? You can still make a great first impression

● If you're a jobseeker already on a tight budget, the prospect of finding something smart, suitable and well-fitting can be not only daunting but logistically tricky. These organisations can help:

SMART WORKS, ACROSS ENGLAND AND SCOTLAND

Smart Works exists for women from all walks of life to help them find a confidence-boosting outfit to wear in a

job interview. The charity regularly receives referrals from JobCentres, mental health charities, women's refuges, homeless shelters, the prison service, care service and youth organisations. All the outfits are completely free of charge.

TIMPSON

If you've already got a good interview outfit, or maybe picked one up from

a charity shop, but it's looking a little worse for wear, a professional dry cleaning service could make all the difference. Timpson offers free dry cleaning if you're unemployed and need an outfit cleaned for an interview. The service is available at all of their 500 stores.

BIG ISSUE RECRUIT

Big Issue Recruit is a person-centred service that provides those facing barriers into work with the training and support they need to enter the workplace. All candidates that receive support from a job coach with Big Issue Recruit also get allocated a support worker in the Big Issue Foundation. This support worker can help with a hand-up fund, which can be used to pay for interview-ready clothes or travel to that all important opportunity.

jobs.bigissue.com



▲ Shak Dean, job coach with Big Issue Recruit

Unpaid wages Britons are owed

£26,000,000,000

The estimated amount of unpaid wages owed to British workers who, on average, work an extra 7.4 hours of unpaid overtime

each week. That equates to **£7,200 a year of unpaid wages**, collectively totalling billions.

IMAGE: MATTHEW HORWOOD

HEALTH / OPINION

To heal the health system, we must care for caregivers

Kim Samuel
 Founder and Chief Belonging Officer of the Samuel Centre for Social Connectedness

Media coverage of the months-long UK nurses' strike has focused squarely on issues of pay. Still, if you talk to striking nurses, you're likely to hear that the issue is bigger than compensation. A recent survey from the Royal College of Nurses found that only 18 per cent of nurses had enough time to provide quality care for patients.

While health workers deserve adequate compensation – including raises to account for inflation – they also deserve something fundamental: the ability to do the work of healing.

As the UK health system faces mounting waiting lists for care – now expected to reach up to 13 million patients – it also faces a glaring shortage of doctors and nurses and increasing reliance on contract workers who have to manage unpredictable schedules and often-dilapidated facilities.

Caregivers aren't getting the basic care that they themselves need.

While government leaders and NHS administrators need to think clearly about how to deal with the current backlogs, they also need to think systemically about the conditions facing caregivers. There are tangible steps policymakers can take now to move in the right direction.

First, ensure basic dignity for caregivers. Vishal Sharma, a former NHS physician, recently told *The Economist* how he found it "virtually impossible" to arrange time off for his own wedding or even to request that he not be put on any on-call shifts or night shifts when his wife was due to give birth. If these are the conditions for highly trained physicians, imagine what nurses, ambulance drivers and support staff have to face every day. Rectifying these conditions is a matter of decency – and it's also essential for achieving decent standards of care.

Second, invest in caregiving capacity. Sir Simon Stevens, who was until recently the head of NHS England, warned last year that Health Education England – the agency responsible

for recruitment and training of the healthcare workforce – didn't have funding to plan even ten weeks ahead. This is emblematic of a broader problem of short-termism. At a time of workforce shortages in healthcare, policymakers should be investing in long-term talent pipelines and ensuring that caregivers have not just the staff but also the "space, stuff, social support and systems" to do their work.

Third, expand the circle of caregiving. One driver behind the current NHS backlog is a lack of investment in social care. An estimated 5,000 hospital beds are occupied by patients who are medically ready to go home but need access to social services in order to be discharged. One way to fill the gap is to invest in recruiting and training community health workers – people who come from diverse backgrounds, who don't have formal education in nursing or medicine, but are committed to the health of the community.

At a time when too many frontline health workers are demoralised, we need to ensure that they have respect, recognition and support that they deserve. A healthy society cares for its caregivers.

On Belonging: Finding Connection in an Age of Isolation by Kim Samuel is available now (Abrams, £18.99).



► Ikea's Real Life Roomsets have been set up in four stores across England: Bristol, Birmingham, Hammersmith and Warrington

HOUSING

Ikea teams up with Shelter to show the reality of temporary accommodation



Shopping at Ikea is a journey. The snaking route around showrooms offers a glimpse at what your home could look like if everything was shiny, new and people who knew what they were doing assembled the flatpicks.

But new displays have been set up in several stores. In conjunction with Shelter, 'Real Life Roomsets' have been constructed based on the cramped, damp and dangerous living conditions of someone living locally in temporary accommodation.

The campaign is pushing for 90,000 social homes to be built each year by 2030 to help address the

HUMAN RIGHTS

'Everyone has the right to seek and to enjoy in other countries asylum from persecution.'

This is Article 14 of the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which the UK signed in 1948 but the current government seems to have forgotten, as they take a harder line on migrants arriving in small boats without providing any meaningful alternative for people in desperate circumstances

IMAGE: RICHARD DAVENPORT/COMIC RELIEF

FOODBANK

This foodbank with a DJ is helping London's homeless and vulnerable

North London's Finsbury Park has hosted some of the biggest names in music over the decades: Bob Dylan, Arctic Monkeys, A\$AP Rocky. But, over winter, there is a different reason for the blaring music and long line of people at the gates. They are queuing up for a foodbank.

This is a quietly extraordinary street kitchen that – somehow, incredibly – has an atmosphere of joy. Husband and wife duo Victoria and Vincent Barnett lead a team of smiling volunteers, with stacks of food laid out on the foldable tables in front of them. A DJ blasts music and they hand out raffle ticket numbers to people waiting to collect their meals.

"We have the DJ because it creates a nice atmosphere," Vincent says. "We don't ask people for personal details. We don't ask you to sign up, or for any identification. A lot of it is word of mouth."

A stack of clothes is draped over the park fence, warm winter coats which people take for themselves or their families. More recently, they have started connecting people to counselling services if they need support for their mental health.

There's a real sense of community, but there's an underlying frustration that their efforts shouldn't be necessary. In Victoria's words, the government "needs to do a hell of a lot more because people are struggling". But where politicians and authorities are failing to find homes for people forced onto the streets or employers aren't paying staff enough for them to eat, grassroots organisations like this are saving lives.

The soup kitchen is held in Finsbury Park every Friday from 2pm to 4pm



◀ The man behind the decks provides a foot-tapping backdrop to the meal at Our Forgotten Neighbours soup kitchen

COMIC RELIEF

The decline of the telethon doesn't mean we're being less charitable



This Friday sees the 2023 edition of the Comic Relief telethon, which returns with a paper nose designed by former Apple curve-smoother Jony Ive (modelled by Lenny Henry, above).

But over the past decade viewing figures and donations have declined, while the charity itself has been embroiled in "white saviour" controversy. So it's worth asking: Is the Great British telethon relevant any more?

Comic Relief has said it won't send white celebrities to Africa any more, and will use local film crews. But beyond that, the way you or I might give money to charity has fundamentally changed. It's easier to use websites like Crowdfunder to immediately support your chosen cause, rather than saving all the goodwill up for a BBC One extravaganza.

Rob Love, the CEO of Crowdfunder, said events like Comic Relief faced a challenge to adapt.

"They're great brands aren't they? They've got to evolve – and I think they are – with what's happening

elsewhere," he said. "The old-fashioned telethons, it's harder to try to get everyone's attention at the same time because there's so many different ways to do it."

In September, Love spent a few days in New York with Comic Relief founder Richard Curtis as part of the Gates Foundation. Now, Crowdfunder and Comic Relief are working together. Some of the solution will come from big corporations promising to match funding. One such partner this year is British Airways.

"Corporates have still got money. There might be a cost-of-living crisis, but there's still a lot of cash around in society, it's just sort of in the wrong places I'd say," Love said.

"The great strength of the Comic Relief or Red Nose brand is to bring corporates, government people together to a central point. But underneath that the mechanisms need to change about how they're doing it."

Comic Relief fundraising totals over the last 10 years

