

National

Film

Star Wars prequels were bad, says Vader

With their wooden acting, clunky scripts and Jar Jar Binks, the Star Wars prequels were widely seen as a let down. Now even the British actor who played Darth Vader in the originals has dismissed the prequels as "really bad movies".

Dave Prowse, who portrayed the deadly Sith Lord in Star Wars (1977), The Empire Strikes Back (1980) and Return of the Jedi (1983), said he was unimpressed by George Lucas's attempts to explain how Jedi Anakin Skywalker turned to the dark side.

Prowse, whose voice was dubbed over with that of James Earl Jones in post-production, told the Hull Daily Mail: "I didn't like Star Wars I, II and III at all. I think the common opinion now is they were really bad movies."

Prowse did say he would be open to returning in Disney's forthcoming Episode VII, which is being directed by Star Trek's JJ Abrams. "Unfortunately, Darth Vader was killed off," he said. "But it would be nice to come back and do another character, because no one's ever seen my face. I was never unmasked." **Ben Child**

Courts

New law will extend jury service to age 75

People up to the age of 75 will be able to sit on juries in England and Wales, according to plans announced by the criminal justice minister today.

The proposal to raise the upper age limit of jurors from 70 to 75 is part of a drive to make the system more inclusive

and to reflect modern society, the Ministry of Justice said.

Damian Green, the criminal justice minister, said: "The law as it currently stands does not take into account the increases to life expectancy that have taken place over the past 25 years. This is about harnessing the knowledge and life experiences of a group of people who can offer significant benefits to the court process."

Currently only those aged between 18 and 70 can sit as jurors. The age range was last amended by the Criminal Justice Act 1988, which raised the upper age limit from 65 to 70, and the latest proposed changes would require a new law, to be brought forward early next year.

The Juries Act 1974 allows people to be excused jury service if they can show a good reason why they should be. **PA**

Weather

Britain set to bask again as warm front returns

Britain is poised for a summery week ahead as large parts of the country will bask in sunshine. After several days of rain and falling temperatures, forecasters said much of the country could expect highs of up to 27C (80.6F) and dry weather. Those in London, the south-east, East Anglia and the Midlands are most likely to enjoy the last of the summer sunshine.

Prospects for the bank holiday weekend are looking bleaker, with temperatures dropping and showers possibly threatening street celebrations such as the Notting Hill carnival.

Chris Burton, a forecaster for Meteo-Group, said: "Wednesday and Thursday are looking like the warmest days as the weather gets warmer, sunnier and drier than it has been." **PA**

Artistic field Crop circle mystery



This crop circle in Chute Causeway resembling six clothes pegs is the latest large design to appear in Wiltshire fields this month Photograph: Lucy Pringle/Barcroft

Politics

Labour voters unsure if Miliband is best leader

Fewer than half of Labour voters are sure that Ed Miliband is the best person to lead the party into the next election, a new poll has found.

The ICM survey for The Daily Mirror shows that 46% of Labour supporters back him to lead the party in 2015, while 34% think he should go - and the rest are undecided.

Colleagues have called on him to shout louder about his policies.

Labour backbenchers may be cheered by other aspects of the poll, which shows Miliband beating David Cameron on some key issues.

Cameron wins on the leader most likely to take "tough decisions" by 37% to 15%. But Miliband leads on helping the poor by 35% to 11% and being in touch by 26% to 11%. **Rowena Mason**

Archaeology

Beads are oldest iron objects yet found

Blackened and corroded beads have turned out to be the oldest objects made in iron ever discovered, beaten out from pieces of meteorite in ancient Egypt more than 5,000 years ago.

The nine beads were excavated in 1911 in a pre-dynastic cemetery near el-Gerzeh in Egypt, and are now among objects at the Petrie Museum, part of University College London, which has a world-renowned Egyptian collection, including quantities of exquisite jewellery. The find is revealed in the Journal of Archaeological Science.

Maev Kennedy

Spot the Difference

Left Twix. Right Twix. Pick a side.

- 1) Different hat.
- 2) Pattern on flag.
- 3) No pilot.
- 4) Missing dial on belt.
- 5) Fewer jacket buttons.
- 6) The Twix in the right hand picture is a right Twix and the Twix in the left hand picture is a left Twix of course.