

room following the Algeria match hailed him a "national hero". May they hang their heads in shame. Vincent Webb, Worcester Park.

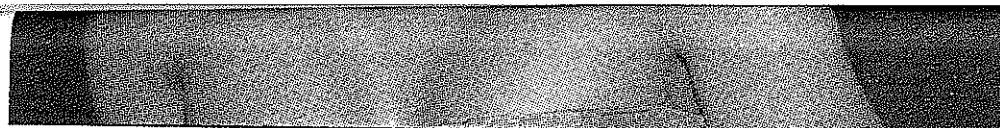
## Pedestrians need more time to cross

ANYONE reading your story on the trial of countdown indicators at pedestrian crossings might think that crossings routinely allow more time than necessary for pedestrians to cross. The reality is often very different. At present more than 300 crossings in London breach long-standing government safety standards by not providing sufficient time. Whatever the countdown indicator trial reveals, we must ensure these standards are adhered to. Caroline Pidgeon, leader, Liberal Democrat London Assembly Group.

WHY the fuss about pedestrian crossings? Most people in London cross wherever they please regardless of traffic conditions. S Port.

## GAMES SOLUTIONS

- Chess: 9170: 1 Bg8! Resigns. The threats are 2 Qg5 mate and 2 Rh7 mate.  
 Trivia quiz: 1. McLaren 2. Ice skating  
 3. The Netherlands 4. Grace Kelly  
 5. Plagiarism 6. Saigon 7. Missouri  
 8. Robert De Niro 9. Quintet.



Colourful: former Lib-Dem MP Lembit Opik and his former girlfriend, Cheeky Girl Gabriela Irimia

# Osborne's cuts make no sense

THE underlying logic of George Osborne's "deep cutting" position needs to be questioned (Jim O'Neill, June 22). Why all this pain when our net public debt as a percentage of GDP is one of the lowest in the OECD? The Tory argument that annual public borrowing at nearly 12 per cent of GDP will cause the rating agencies to treat us like another Greece is nonsense.

Britain has just cancelled two bond auctions because our borrowing requirement is falling. Our debt maturity profile is long-term, and quite unlike Greece, most of our government debt is bought by our own private sector.

Osborne also bases his approach on the fact that after Geoffrey Howe slashed the Budget in 1981, the economy soon recovered. That's true, but Howe's cuts took place when inflation and interest rates were high, and a falling pound gave rise to a strong recovery in our trade balance. In 1981, Britain was trying to emerge from recession; today, all major OECD countries are trying to balance their

Why all this pain when our level of net public debt is one of the lowest in the OECD?

Prof George Irvin

budgets. The result of these pro-cyclical policies will be international transmission of national contraction. Yes, there is far more pain to come. Prof George Irvin, SOAS.

WHEN the Chancellor talks of benefit cuts for middle-income families, it should be realised that a wage that puts you in the middle in much of the North is comparatively low in London.

A poor London mother expecting her second child has lost more than £1,000 in the Budget when you take into account all the changes in benefits, and that's ignoring the increase in VAT.

Meanwhile the City has escaped. The Chancellor has introduced a far more modest bank levy than predicted, raising less than Alistair Darling's bonus tax. The increase in Capital Gains Tax is less than expected and it is still left riddled with the loopholes that make it the tax dodger's tax of choice. B Barber, general secretary, TUC.

I'VE worked all my life since I was 15, but with a husband who is too ill

many of us to support them. Pam Hardyment, Richmond.

HOW sexy will Lembit Opik be now that he's stripped of his MP's salary and perks? Curious observer.

to work, suffering among other conditions from ME, diabetes and agoraphobia, we get housing benefit. We rent privately because the council housing list is nine years long and it seems that asylum seekers, drug addicts and girls that got pregnant at 15 all get higher priority than we do. The Government should not be cutting housing benefit but reforming the system to make sure it is only the seriously ill, disabled, pensioners and others in genuine need who benefit. A Donoghue, Barking.

I WELCOME Osborne's budget for tackling the hard issues. If anything, he did not go far enough: it is vital we do not have our debt downgraded causing us to pay more interest on it.

The cut in tax credits is a smart move. Why should the lower paid subsidise those earning £50,000+? The VAT increase is small and retailers may absorb it for a while to help the January 2011 sales; the good thing is we have time to plan for it. Laurence Della-Porta, Chas E Foote.

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■ Diane Abbott claims her son was at great risk of falling in with a gang if she had sent him to a comp in Hackney. That's strange because in 2003, when her apparent hypocrisy over sending her son to public school was exposed, she made no mention of gangs or anything of the kind. It all sounds like an attempt to sound wise after the event and all based on broad racial generalisations – and yet she seeks to lead and unite? Robin Tudge.

■ I was saddened to see the Unite Against Fascism protest in Whitechapel

racism", they whipped the crowd of young men into a frenzy of hatred and anger resulting in ugly scenes and violence. They are surely no different from the extremist preachers we are working hard to drive out. Abdul Khan.

■ In your Budget coverage you quote business owner Yuliya Zakharenko as earning around £100,000 per annum with outgoings of £16,000 per month. Either someone's sums are out, or she's got a fantastic accountant. RC.

all bus stops showing when the next bus will arrive? The lack of this information is a major deterrent to bus travel. Mo, E17.

■ Why the hell does my train have the heating blasting out in the middle of the summer? As if my journey isn't awful enough already ... Paul B.

■ Re the "Guy Ritchie effect" on pyjama sales – do grown men in this country actually make decisions about their nightwear as a result of seeing a picture

## DAILY VOTE

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66%