

And in other news...



PAGE 3 PROFILE

ARETHA FRANKLIN MUSICIAN

Respect. Is Aretha making another album?

Sadly, no. Other than performances at President Obama's inauguration and a Martin Luther King memorial, Franklin has put a lid on her considerable pipes for the time being. Moreover, in recent years her public appearances have been restricted to American award ceremonies, where she laps up "legend" and "lifetime achievement" awards while Christina Aguilera, Martina McBride and myriad others make a fine job of murdering her songs in what organisers deem touching "tributes".

Break it to me gently. Why's she in the news?

There's a happy occasion on the horizon for the 69-year-old singer,

however, as she's just become engaged to her long-time friend William "Willie" Wilkerson.

He makes her feel like a natural woman, I presume

Quite possibly. The Queen of Soul announced her nuptials by joking, "No, I'm not pregnant, LOL." A representative for the singer told AP: "Ms Franklin is considering Donna Karan, Valentino and the queen of wedding dresses, Vera Wang, to design her gown." So we can safely presume it won't be a cheap affair.

So where's the ceremony? Spanish Harlem?

She wants to arrange the ceremony for June or July, with a wedding aboard a private yacht at Miami

Beach. It'll be her third marriage. Her eight-year union with Ted White ended in 1969 when her fame was at its peak. She then married actor Glynn Turman, but the ceremony, in 1978, was followed by divorce six years later.

How is her health? Should we say a little prayer?

She's a lot better now, apparently. In 2010, it was thought she was suffering from pancreatic cancer, but she said an operation to solve the problem had added "15 to 20 years" to her life. Perhaps take that with a pinch of salt, but her extreme weight loss over the past couple of years should mean she remains with us for a long time to come.

Liam O'Brien

RELIGION

Church of England researches market

The Church of England is soliciting feedback from worshippers on what they expect from funerals and christenings to try to draw people back from secular services. The research has been commissioned due to a decline in people using churches to celebrate rites of passage. **PAGE 22**

Lost in transit

The most readily discarded books at 35,000ft, according to a survey Virgin Atlantic's cabin crew.

- 1) *The Way I See It: Rants, Revelations and Rules For Life* by Alan Sugar, below
- 2) *Glorious* by Paul Gascoigne
- 3) *Santa Baby* by Katie Price
- 4) *The World of Downton Abbey*
- 5) *I Heart Vegas* by Lindsey Kelk
- 6) *Twisting my Melon* by Shaun Ryder
- 7) *May I have your attention please?* by James Corden
- 8) *Screw Business as Usual* by Sir Richard Branson
- 9) *An Idiot Abroad: The Travel Diaries of Karl Pilkington*
- 10) *The Help* by Kathryn Stockett



FRANCE

Gold ingots found on train are fakes

A stash of gold-coloured ingots found on a train last week and thought to be worth close to €800,000 has turned out to be fake. Bomb experts called in to defuse a package on a train on the edge of Paris on Friday found the object to be a metal box containing what appeared to be 20kg of gold bars.

FRANCE

Diet doctor sees fat chance for students

A leading French dietician has proposed high school students be graded in relation to their Body Mass Index (BMI), a measure of body fat based on height and weight. "Obesity is a real public health problem that is rarely - if at all - taken into account by politicians," Pierre Dukan said.



FRANCE

Beckham turns down Paris offer

David Beckham has decided against uprooting his family to play for Paris St Germain in France, the football club's director says. It had been reported that Beckham would leave Los Angeles in a £1.3m deal. **PAGE 20**

ITALY

Illegal fireworks kill two revellers

Two men were killed and 561 other people were wounded as Italians celebrated the new year with massive displays of illegal and home-made fireworks, the Interior Ministry said on Sunday. Of those wounded, 76 were children under the age of 12.

LEGAL

Judge avoids penalty for cursing in court

A Crown Court judge who swore and stormed out of court won't be disciplined after retiring "on medical grounds". Beatrice Bolton, of Rothbury, Northumberland, was found guilty of failing to control her dangerous dog in December 2010, calling the verdict "a f***** travesty". **PAGE 11**

Letter from the executive editor

Victoria Summerley



The murder of Stephen Lawrence is an important case in the history of British justice. It's not just the fact that 18 years has elapsed between crime and conviction - which alone would make it noteworthy.

It has also changed the way our police work, the way we treat victims of crime, and it has engendered a much tougher attitude to racism, both in public and in private, since that fateful night in 1993 when Stephen - a much-loved son and promising student - was stabbed to death at a bus stop in south London.

Not entirely, of course. In the same way that the convictions of David Norris and Gary Dobson for murder do not - unfortunately - draw a nice neat line under the case, the ramifications of the Lawrence case will continue to echo through British society.

The 1999 Macpherson report, commissioned following allegations of racism and incompetence against the team leading the Lawrence investigation, made a total of 70 recommendations.

In 2009, the Select Committee for Home Affairs revisited these and found that, while there had been some progress in tackling racism and discrimination, there was still evidence that the police service continues to fail ethnic minorities.

Speaking after the verdict yesterday, Stephen's mother, Doreen Lawrence, thanked jurors for finding Gary Dobson and David Norris guilty but said it was not a cause for celebration.

"Had the police done their job properly," she said, "I would have spent the last 18 years grieving for my son, rather than fighting to get his killers to court."

Yesterday's verdict will not bring her son back. But it may remind us all to be on our guard against prejudice and complacency.

CHINA

Bentley sales take a great leap forward

Sales of luxury Bentley cars have been boosted by rich Chinese consumers. The Cheshire-based company sold 7,003 cars last year, and sales in China nearly doubled to 1,839. The US remained the biggest market, but the UK had proven "extremely challenging". **PAGE 19**

LANGUAGE

'Occupy' storms on to the cliché list

Occupy this. At least, so say students at Michigan's Lake Superior State University who released an annual list of words they deem so misused, overused and clichéd they should be banished. "Occupy", associated with city protests, made the list after just a few months of overexposure.