

Scenes that shame Britain



Towering stupidity: Empty bottles of alcohol and takeaway cartons are left on parkland by revellers near Tower Bridge, inset



LEEDS No pride in Hyde: Swarms of youths

having fun at Hyde Park, right, left Leeds looking like the aftermath of the city's famous music festival



By **Amelia Clarke, George Odling** and **Richard Marsden**

THESE are the disgraceful scenes of litter left behind as large crowds of sunseekers celebrated the easing of Covid restrictions by laying a trail of waste across the country.

A 'selfish' minority were blamed for turning some of the country's most popular open spaces and beauty spots into rubbish tips full of empty bottles.

In some areas, parks were forced to close to the public as volunteers spent yesterday morning clearing up mountains of debris left by Britons enjoying record warm weather.

It came as former police chiefs described the new rule of six as 'unenforceable' - and warned they are powerless to prevent large groups from more than two households mixing in open spaces.

As Cabinet minister Robert Jenrick urged people to be 'cautious', a former Scotland Yard chief said it is impossible for officers to break up large gatherings.

Kevin Hurley said: 'Two officers on patrol face having to disperse twenty young men playing football and drinking in a park, who can all shout that they come from just two households - the police don't have a chance.'

Meanwhile, former Greater Manchester Police chief constable Sir Peter Fahy said police will soon have 'all but given up' trying to enforce the rule of six. He said: 'The fact that we are seeing wholesale disregard for the restrictions across the country shows the incredible task they have of trying to enforce them.'

'I personally think they will revert to normal anti-social behaviour policing, focusing on real priority offences.'

Celebrations started early

Huge crowds leave beauty spots covered with litter - as police say they 'can't enforce the rule of six'

on Tuesday as England basked in the hottest March day since 1968.

The Prime Minister had said he hoped people would take advantage of the 'beautiful weather'. But at Tower Hill, Primrose Hill and Greenwich

'Have respect for nature'

Park in London, mounds of rubbish were left around bins. Those who congregated on Woodhouse Moor in Leeds abandoned enormous amounts of litter on the grass. Police were also called to

reports of balaclava-clad men roaming with machetes.

In Nottingham, council leader David Mellen said the Arboretum and Lenton parks were closed due to the actions of 'a thoughtless minority'. Meanwhile, those flocking to the coast left behind bottles and cans on picturesque Longsands beach in Tyne-mouth, North Tyneside.

An onlooker said: 'It is so upsetting to see so much rubbish. People should have more respect for nature and stay away if they can't clean up after themselves.'

Richard McIlwain, of environmental charity Keep Britain Tidy, said the 'disaster'



LONDON Hill hell: Weary worker picks up rubbish strewn around a stuffed bin in Primrose Hill

scenes around the country were 'unacceptable'.

And Clean Up Britain has called for littering fines to be raised from £150 to £1,000.

Founder John Read said: 'Much tougher sentences are needed to deter fly-tipping and littering.'

The Daily Mail is helping to launch Keep Britain Tidy's Great British Spring Clean campaign, asking readers to help restore pride in our country. Already more than 37,000 people have pledged support.

Yesterday's temperatures fell short of breaking records, with a maximum of 23.9C (75F) in Weybourne, Norfolk.

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THREE-DAY FORECAST

TODAY



North: Dry and cloudy

with sunny spells

High: 12C (54F)

Low: 9C (48F)



South: Heavy cloud,

sunny afternoon

High: 20C (68F)

Low: 4C (39F)

GOOD FRIDAY



North: Dry and mostly

cloudy day

High: 15C (59F)

Low: 0C (32F)



South: Dry and sunny,

cloudy in the East

High: 13C (55F)

Low: 1C (34F)

SATURDAY



North: Dry with early

cloud, sunny later

High: 12C (54F)

Low: 2C (36F)



South: Cloudy, a bright

afternoon in West

High: 11C (52F)

Low: -1C (30F)



LEEDS Crackdown: Armed police at Hyde Park after reports of gangs with machetes



NOTTINGHAM Sheriffs of Nottingham: Officers on patrol - but chiefs admitted they can do little



Do we need to nag? Mounted officers chat to sunseekers in the North East - but others covered beach with litter

No links to Covid on packed beaches

NOT a single case of Covid has been linked to crowded beaches during the pandemic.

People flocking to hotspots including Brighton and Dorset drew outrage last summer.

But Mark Woolhouse, professor of infectious disease epidemiology at the University of Edinburgh, told a Science and Technology Committee: 'There's never been a Covid-19 outbreak linked to a beach ever anywhere in the world to the best of my knowledge.'

He said mass gatherings like horse racing are different as there are 'pinch points' like refreshment facilities and no social distancing.

TYNEMOUTH