

# L

**LONDON 2012** Only a month before the torch reached Stratford, a poll found that 49 per cent of us 'had no interest' in the forthcoming Games. Ennui was most concentrated in the host city, where more than half of those surveyed chose to repudiate the mildly upbeat prediction that 'the Olympics will be good for people like me'. The swelling sense that we were secretly looking forward to an exorbitant shambles abruptly burst when Mitt Romney foresaw one: the one thing that unites Britons more staunchly than running ourselves down is putting the boot in when a foreigner does it. Danny Boyle's opening ceremony, written off in advance as a half-baked parochial embarrassment, was duly lauded as a bold, free-spirited antidote to the totalitarian enormousness of its Beijing predecessor. What followed were 16 alien days of ratcheting communal glee: we smiled at each other on the bus, gave accurate directions to lost visitors and chuckled indulgently as Sepp Blatter's limo sped past our traffic jam in the Olympic lane. Crime even fell by six per cent. It was almost a relief when it was all over, and we could start bickering about the legacy.

**LEVESON** 'At the heart of this inquiry may be one simple question: who guards the guardians?' With these portentous words, last November Lord Justice Leveson inaugurated his monumental investigation into press relations with the public and police. The cast was a cracker – four prime ministers, 20 cabinet ministers, high-profile victims of intrusion, Alastair Campbell – but over the eight months of hearings that ensued, portent fatigue set in. The lasting impression is of chief constables, politicians and media executives competing to apologise for their poor powers of recall. The texts between Rebekah Brooks and David Cameron provided most of the highlights. Between the 'country suppers' and Cameron's excruciating misuse of the LOL text sign-off, we also learnt of a bold attempt to encapsulate the inquiry's entire rambling remit in one single, daft incident: the future prime minister riding a horse that had been lent to the then *Sun* editor by the Metropolitan Police. Released in November, Leveson's report proposed statutory regulation of the press, a suggestion Cameron promptly rejected. Leveson II, examining the lawfulness of News International's conduct, will begin when all related legal proceedings are completed. With Brooks alone facing five criminal charges, breath-holding is not advised.

