

# Royals abandon 'Danish Eton' over ex-pupils' claims of abuse

Denmark

Oliver Moody

The heir to the Danish throne has withdrawn his son from the country's equivalent of Eton after a documentary reported dozens of claims of physical abuse and sexual harassment by former pupils.

Herlufsholm, an elite private school 50 miles southwest of Copenhagen, has educated Denmark's upper classes since the 16th century but the bullying scandal has badly tarnished its reputation and drawn comparisons to *Lord of the Flies*. About 50 of its alumni, known



Prince Frederik and Princess Mary with Prince Christian at Herlufsholm

as Old Herlovians, described a culture of violent hazing rituals and vicious beatings in a television exposé that prompted national outrage.

Younger pupils were allegedly woken in the middle of the night and subjected to assaults as a matter of routine, with one hurt so badly he could not even crawl back to his bed. One former pupil claimed to have seen a bully sexually abusing his victim in front of a dozen other boys.

The documentary, *Herlufsholms Hemmeligheder* (*Herlufsholm's Secrets*), has led to consternation since it was broadcast on the state-owned TV2 channel last month. Mette Frederiksen, the prime minister, said that the

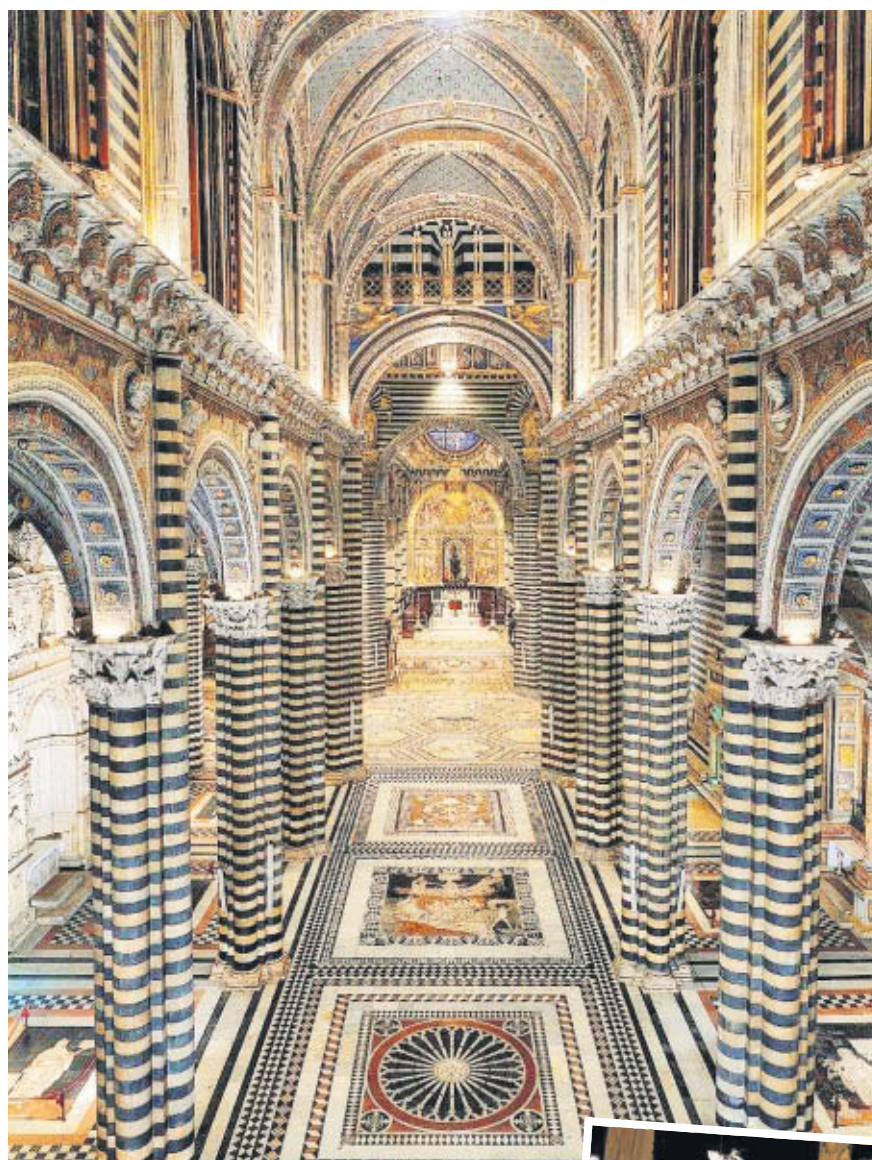
incidents were unforgivable and that she had been deeply moved. The school's headmaster, Mikkel Kjellberg, was sacked two days after the broadcast and his temporary successor issued an "unreserved" apology.

The loss of the Danish royal family's favour may be the most serious blow yet. On Sunday Crown Prince Frederik, 54, said he was withdrawing his son Prince Christian, 16, from the school after it was condemned by the national education regulator, leading its entire board of governors to resign. His daughter Princess Isabella, 15, had been due to start in the autumn but will now be sent elsewhere. The children are respectively second and third in line to the Danish crown.

Frederik and his Australian-born wife, Crown Princess Mary, 50, had said that their children were looking forward to the new school year but came under public pressure to pull Christian out of Herlufsholm. In the end they had little choice after a highly critical preliminary report from the schools watchdog found that Herlufsholm's rules and traditions had resulted in entrenched hierarchies that privileged some students and ostracised others.

Frederik and his wife said that the special position conferred by their royal status meant they felt a responsibility to lead by example. "It is our hope that the school now gets more peace to ensure the necessary changes [are made] and succeeds in creating a culture in which all thrive and feel safe," they said.

Not all parents and former pupils at Herlufsholm say they recognise the culture of bullying portrayed in the documentary. Kristian von Hornsleth, 59, a contemporary artist who attended the school in the 1980s, claimed the programme's producers had bribed Old Herlovians to besmirch its name. Lasse Bjerre, the documentary's editor, said that von Hornsleth's claims were "completely unfounded" and that her team stood by their reporting.



## Cathedral lets visitors marvel at its marble

**C**arpets were rolled back at Siena cathedral in Italy yesterday to give visitors a glimpse of a vast marble floor once described as the most beautiful ever laid (Tom Kington writes). The 13,000 square metres of intricate designs created between

the 14th and 16th centuries, which portray philosophers and biblical scenes, are normally kept covered for their protection, but they are shown off for a few weeks every year.

"What makes the floor unusual is that we are in a church, yet [in the designs] there are philosophers like Socrates, Aristotle and Seneca, reflecting the Renaissance humanism inspired by popes like Pius II, who was from



The rarely seen marble floor in Siena cathedral includes depictions of biblical scenes such as Herod's slaughter of first-born sons, below

Siena," Marilena Caciorgna, an art historian, said.

The designs were created using interlocking pieces of coloured local marble, while the fine detail was achieved by gouging lines in the stone, which were filled with colouring.

The only comparable stretch of flooring in Italy is in Otranto cathedral in southern Italy, though that is in mosaic form, Caciorgna said.

The floor in Siena was singled out by the 16th-century art historian Giorgio Vasari as "the most beautiful, largest and most magnificent floor that ever was made". However, the techniques involved have made the 56 panels vulnerable to wear and tear as churchgoers walk across them. This year the carpets will be removed only until July 31 and again between August 18 and October 18.

Biblical tales depicted in the tiles include David and Goliath and the victory of Samson over the Philistines. They were

all created by artists from Tuscany, with the exception of Pinturicchio, who hailed from Umbria.

Giovanni Minnucci, the rector, said his favourite is the 1481 portrayal by Matteo di Giovanni of the slaughter of all boys under the age of two in Bethlehem, ordered by Herod. "The scenes of desperate mothers mourning their lost sons resonates today," he said.

# Poison theory over 21 teenage deaths

South Africa

Charlie Mitchell Nairobi

The deaths of 21 teenagers in a township bar are thought to have been caused by either drinking, eating or inhaling poison, a South African official said as police worked for a second day to solve the mystery.

The deaths in the coastal town of East London, with victims aged 13 to 17, have shocked the country. Yesterday grieving relatives lined the streets alongside government ministers and emergency crews in Eastern Cape, South Africa's poorest province.

The authorities initially suggested patrons at the Enyobeni Tavern may have died in a crush but the lack of injuries cast doubt on that theory. Bodies were found slumped over tables and strewn across sofas and the floor, as though they had suddenly collapsed.

"It is either something they ingested which will point to poisoning, whether

its food or drinks, or it is something they inhaled," Unathi Binqose of the province's community safety department said, adding that hookah pipes were visible in CCTV video. "We are ruling out a stampede completely."

Police said 17 had died inside the bar and four in hospital.

Sinovuyo Monyane, 19, who was hired by the bar to promote an alcohol brand, said she felt lucky to be alive. She struggled to escape through a door gridlocked with people.

"We tried moving through the crowd, shouting 'please let us through,' and others were shouting 'we are dying, guys,' and 'we are suffocating,'" she said.

"I passed out at that moment. I was running out of breath and there was a strong smell of some type of spray. We thought it was pepper spray," she said.

She regained consciousness after someone sprayed water on her. I got up and realised that there were bodies lying around. I saw people being poured

water, but those people did not even move," she said. "I could have died."

By yesterday evening post-mortem examinations, including toxicology tests, had not yet identified a cause of death. Bheki Cele, the police minister, said the tests could take "a lot of time".

External investigators are analysing CCTV from the venue, which neighbours in the Scenery Park township said would often host unruly late-night parties. The tavern's alcohol permit has been revoked and the liquor board is to charge the owner after the deaths of underage customers.

Police responded to reports of "lifeless bodies" in the early hours of Sunday. There was speculation that tear gas or pepper spray had been used for crowd control inside the two-storey bar, which has one entry and exit point, according to officials.

President Ramaphosa expressed his condolences, saying he was disturbed by the presence of minors in the tavern.

# Cockroaches fed moon dust must not be sold, says Nasa

United States

Debbie White

Nasa has blocked the sale of samples of moon dust gathered by the Apollo 11 astronauts and the remains of cockroaches that were fed lunar particles during experiments on Earth.

The American space agency sent a legal warning to an auction house in Boston after it advertised items including a vial with about 40mg of moon dust collected by Neil Armstrong and Buzz Aldrin in the first lunar landing in 1969, and the carcasses of three dissected cockroaches, with a guide price of at least \$400,000 to buy both items.

The samples were obtained by a private collector from the family of Dr Marion Brooks-Wallace, an entomologist from the University of Minnesota who was contracted by Nasa to carry

out experiments using lunar rock. She fed the material to the insects and dissected them to determine whether it contained any sort of pathogen that posed a threat to terrestrial life.

RR Auction described the lot as an "extraordinary specimen display". The items have been pulled from the sale, however, after a Nasa lawyer told the auctioneer that the material belonged to the federal government.

The moon rock and cockroaches were displayed at the home of Brooks-Wallace, who died in 2007. Unbeknown to Nasa, the researcher's daughter sold them in 2010, and they were later offered for sale by an unnamed third party. The auction house is keeping the moon dust and cockroaches for now but ultimately it is up to the consignor to negotiate with Nasa, Mark Zaid, a lawyer for RR Auction, said.