

# Richard Kay

diary@dailymail.co.uk

www.dailymail.co.uk/richardkay

## Coe tipped for highest honour...

**W**ITH the London Olympics a runaway success — even the empty seat scandal has been obliterated by Team GB's medal haul — Whitehall chiefs are puzzling over how to reward the man who steered the operation towards this triumph, Lord (Sebastian) Coe.

His vast public popularity was made plain in the Olympic Stadium on Saturday night when he presented the heptathlon gold to Jessica Ennis and received almost as loud an ovation from the 80,000-strong crowd as she did.

At present, the idea is to make Coe a Companion of Honour. If this were the case, he would be the first person from sport ever to be accorded that tribute.

But I understand officials are holding fire on rubber-stamping the gong because it is believed he may receive the ultimate honour of joining the Order of Merit, the personal gift of the Queen. Conveniently, there is currently a vacancy following the death of scientist Sir Andrew Huxley.

'It's an interesting conundrum,' says one involved with the Main Honours Advisory Committee which oversees such matters.

'Obviously he can't be elevated to the peerage because that happened 12 years ago. We can't make him a knight because he was made a KBE in 2006 in recognition of London winning the

**□** BBC cricket commentator Jonathan Agnew will have been glad to resume his role behind the mic for Test Match Special after his 'attachment' to Olympic archery events. First his broly was confiscated because it did not have an approved logo, and worse was to come. Noting the Lord's pavilion had to be turned into a media centre, Aggers reveals that even cricket's most sacrosanct room was not spared: 'Most incongruous of all is the Coca-Cola machine in the Long Room directly beneath a portrait of Sir Donald Bradman, the greatest cricketer of all time. MCC members would be appalled.'

2012 Olympics bid. At the same time there can't possibly be no acknowledgment at all of the gigantic success of these Olympics — that would be perverse. So he will be a Companion of Honour, unless Her Majesty steps in.'

The CH is conferred upon a maximum of 65 people at any one time, and current holders include Sir Ian McKellen, Dame Judi Dench, former Conservative Party leader Lord (Michael) Howard and the Queen herself.

The Order of Merit is limited to 24 living recipients at any one time. It is so exclusive that some regard it as the most prestigious honour on Earth.

Current holders include Baroness Thatcher, Sir Tom Stoppard, Sir David Attenborough and Sir Tim Berners-Lee, creator of the worldwide web, whose genius was acclaimed at length in the Olympic opening ceremony.



## Solo Sophie ditches new man

**EVEN** by her own quixotic standards, Sophie Anderton's latest emotional entanglement was fleeting, to say the least.

Just weeks after Sophie was telling friends about the fabulous new man in her life — it is sadly all over.

Sophie's previous love was internet entrepreneur James Simpson, who she went out with for two and a half years. They split up earlier this year.

She then began

dating another internet genius, Microsoft executive Andy Hart.

Sophie, currently on holiday in Greece, was so excited about her escort she immediately put photos of them together on Facebook showing herself 'wrapped around him' at a cocktail party.

But the model, who has successfully battled against drink and drugs and is now working as a DJ, has ended their burgeoning love affair. 'The fact that she has

gone on holiday not with him but with a girlfriend tells you everything,' says her spokesman.

Sophie, of course, is no stranger to relationships going awry — past loves include Old Etonian entrepreneur Robert Hanson, ex-Man Utd footballer Mark Bosnich and businessman Simon Jordan.

Adds her aide: 'Yes, it is over. But she is happily single and focusing very hard on new ventures.'

**□** THE Duke of York has recently surrounded himself with glamorous members of female staff — inevitably dubbed 'Andy's Angels'.

But there is an exception — the Prince's latest male appointment, 7ft 2in Matthew Magee, who has become his assistant private secretary.

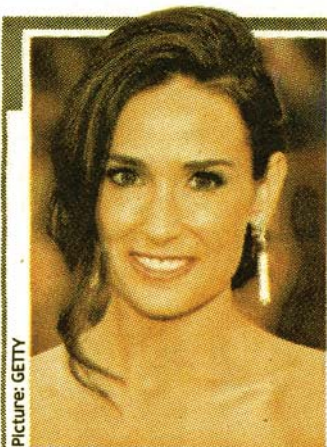
Magee, 31, formerly with accountants PricewaterhouseCoopers before joining Britain's ex-Trade Ambassador a month ago, is often mistaken for

Andrew's bodyguard because of his size. Disc jockey Chris Evans told his listeners the other day he had seen Andrew at a sporting event 'and he was with the most enormous policeman I've ever seen'.

Magee even dwarfs Prince Charles's lofty communications director Paddy Harveson, who is 6ft 7in.

'We might have difficulty getting them in the same room,' says a royal insider.

Sophie: Happily single again



## Demi and a Devonshire drama

**THE** life of cosmetics queen Helena Rubinstein has intrigued for years. Now it is being turned into a musical — with two contrasting productions planned.

One is expected to star Demi Moore and open on Broadway. The other is being staged by Devon's Crediton Dramatic Society.

The latter production is by impresario James Bulmer who owns 2,000 letters from the beauty guru. Powder & Paint tells how she was banished to Australia in 1893 by her father and set up

her beauty business before heading to America for fame and fortune. Says Bulmer: 'Powder & Paint may not have the likes of Demi Moore, but we do have a cast with a very unique human story.'

He also has a formidable production team — the set designer who is a retired headmaster, the musical director who's a cashier at Tesco, and the chairman who's a local librarian. Adds James: 'This is a David and Goliath story, a tiny little Devon market town taking on the might of Broadway.'

**□** THE row between Rupert Webb, the former Sussex cricketer who as an actor played the father of Anna 'Duckface' Chancellor in Four Weddings and A Funeral, and his former teammate Robin Marlar, 81, has descended into all-out warfare. Last month, I told how Webb had excluded 'Snarler' from his 90th birthday celebrations, due to an article he wrote in Wisden in 2004, alleging a dropped catch by

Webb had cost Sussex the county championship in 1953. Sussex cricket archivists found no trace of the alleged fielding error.

Marlar will again be conspicuous by his absence when Sussex holds a tribute luncheon in honour of Webb's 90th at the County Ground, Hove, next Sunday. All Webb's surviving colleagues will be there.

Says a club source: 'Robin was told about the tribute but he has declined to be present.'

**PS** FORMER Wimbledon star John McEnroe cut an unlikely figure at the equestrian events in Greenwich Park, but he had a good reason to be there. Enjoying his first ever Olympics, he told a friend: 'My daughter has got a horse so maybe she will ride in the Olympics one day. Mind you, I never realised how f\*\*\*\*\* expensive they [horses] are!'

Picture: BARCROFT MEDIA

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