

TMS

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Aitken to catwalk free

The Old Bailey will welcome a familiar face today as Jonathan Aitken, above, strolls back into the Central Criminal Court.

This time, at least, the former cabinet minister, convicted of perjury in 1999, is sure to leave a free man. He returns as patron of the Blue Sky ex-offenders charity for the first-ever fashion show at the historic courthouse, part of the "stitch in time" project at HMP Bronzefield, Surrey.

"Any former prisoner like myself will have a chuckle at the thought of the Old Bailey holding a fashion show," Aitken said, adding: "It will be my third appearance at the Old Bailey, the first two being in the dock."

We wonder if the designers borrowed Aitken's "simple sword of truth" to trim their creations?

PARDON UKIP'S FRENCH

Always double-check the "recipient" box when sending a foul-mouthed text message, especially if you're the spin doctor for a political party. Patrick O'Flynn, Ukip's press chief, is not a big fan of *The Times* after this paper's coverage of Nigel Farage's finances. When our reporter, Billy Kenber, tried to call O'Flynn, he received a text meant for someone else, which read: "I have a missed call from little c**ty kember [sic] now!" Crude, poorly spelt and careless, we look forward to Ukip's general election manifesto.

Three Al Jazeera journalists, in custody in Cairo for

months on charges of "defaming Egypt", have seen their show trial descend further into farce due to a lack of stationery. Court officials had to beg for sheets of paper from reporters covering the proceedings while a police officer then asked the press gallery to borrow batteries for a court microphone. A BBC cameraman duly obliged.

DEALS ON THE BUS

Desperate MPs are now channelling Reg Varney to get in touch with the common man.

Some 20 parliamentarians, including Labour's Keith Vaz and the Tory Iain Stewart, are supporting Catch the Bus Week, starting today, by holding constituency surgeries on the buses, as a "key way to connect" with local residents. Coming shortly after Grant Shapps's condescending poster about helping "hardworking people" enjoy more beer and bingo, it proves patronising politicians are like buses. You wait ages for one, then 20 come along at once.

Not so long ago, mentioning the name of Ryan Giggs, the Welsh footballer temporarily in charge of Manchester United, on Twitter could have landed you in court, due to an injunction he took out to quash rumours of an alleged affair. Now it is out in the open, spare a thought for Giggs, the hip hop star and namesake, who snapped at the weekend and tweeted:

"ATTENTION!!! THIS IS NOT RYAN GIGGS' TWITTER ACCOUNT!!!! I AM NOT RYAN GIGGS!!!!"

NO TOUR DE FRANCE

Al Murray, left, the comic behind the Pub Landlord, has made a pie-chart to explain to crestfallen fans why he has left their town off his tour schedule. His first, and least common, excuse is: "It is not on sale yet." The next two are objections to yuppies and foodies — down to a "high concentration of wine bars" in the town or the fact "the theatre serves hummus". And the most common reason? "It is in France."



KAYA BURGESS