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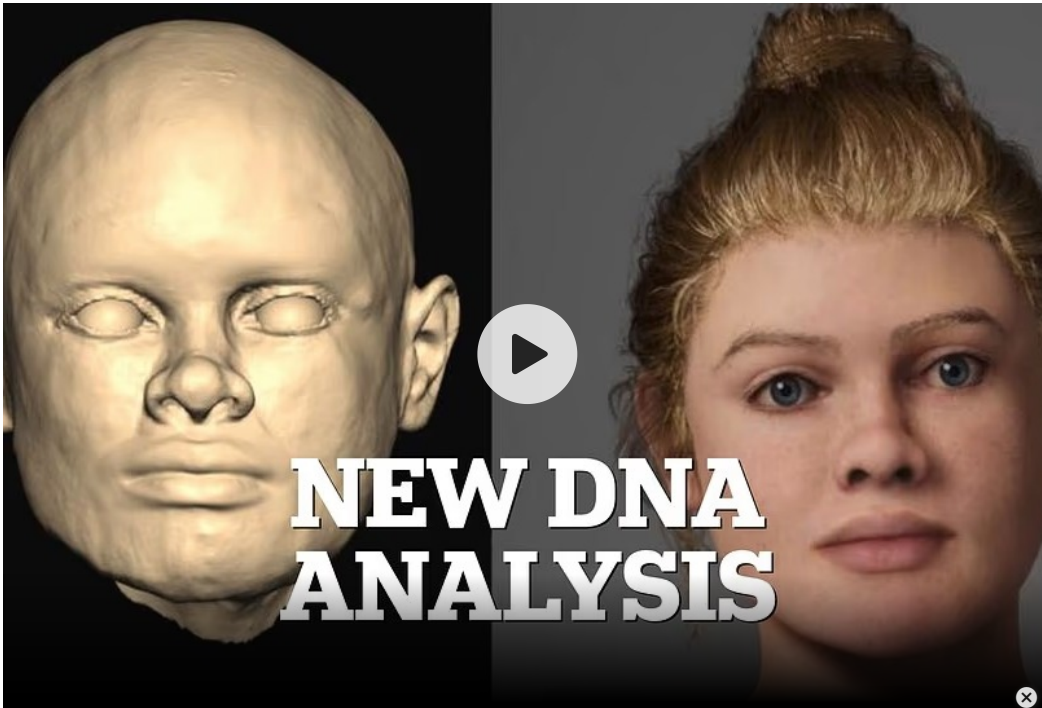


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The 'first black Briton'...was white







'Head Woman' confirms she was and NOT sub-Saharan Africa

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By XANTHA LEATHAM, EXECUTIVE SCIENCE EDITOR

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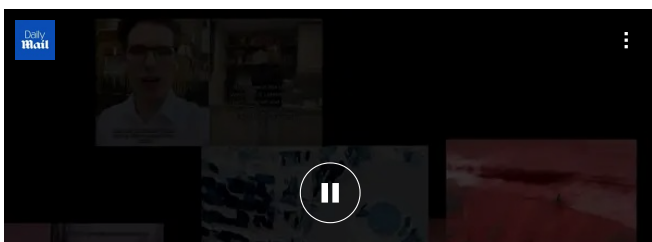
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A woman billed as the 'first black Briton' was in fact white and from southern England, according to new DNA analysis.

For years it has been believed that 'Beachy Head Woman' – an ancient skeleton who was buried in the East Sussex beauty spot – was from sub-Saharan Africa.

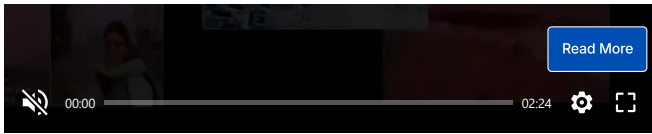
Experts were so sure of her ancestry that a plaque celebrating her African origin was placed in a nearby cricket club.



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Later theories indicated the 2,000-year-old individual may have actually been from southern Europe – 'most likely Cyprus'.

Now, archaeologists from the Natural History Museum have finally laid the matter to rest, declaring her origins were in fact much closer to home.

They, along with a team from University College London, have announced that Beachy Head Woman descended from the local British population of Roman-era southern England.

'By using state-of-the-art DNA techniques we were able to resolve the origins of this individual,' Dr William Marsh said.

'We show she carries genetic ancestry that is most similar to other individuals from the local population of Roman-era Britain.'



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A previous facial reconstruction of Beachy Head Woman, when it was believed she was from sub-Saharan Africa (left) compared to the latest description, in which she has blue eyes, light hair and 'intermediate' skin pigmentation (right)



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The plaque of Beachy Head Woman, previously thought to be the 'first black Briton', was taken down from the East Dean cricket club several years ago after it emerged she was likely from Cyprus. Now, experts have concluded she hailed from southern England



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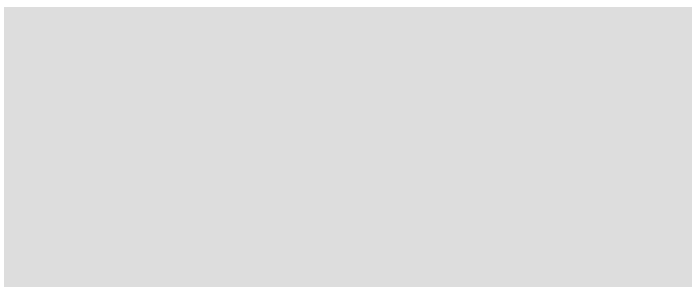
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The skeletal remains of the young female adult were uncovered in the collections of Eastbourne Town Hall in 2012



The skeletal remains of the young female adult were uncovered in the collections of Eastbourne Town Hall in 2012.

Details on the box she was found in suggested that her skeleton had been unearthed at the nearby headland, Beachy Head, in the 1950s.

She was so well-preserved that her skull was sent off for facial reconstruction, carried out by Professor Caroline Wilkinson at Dundee University – one of the country's top specialists.

She, along with two other experts, agreed that the individual showed many traits of being from sub-Saharan Africa – a claim that formed a display at the Eastbourne Museum.

Then, in 2017, unpublished DNA work suggested she was more likely to have come from the Mediterranean rather than Africa, possibly Cyprus.

But the new study – the most comprehensive to date – reveals she was of 'local British ancestry'.

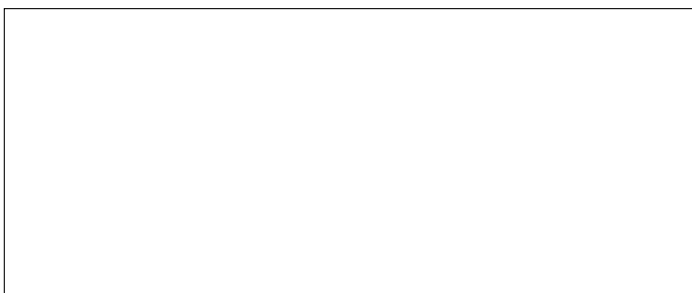
'Initial analyses indicated possible sub-Saharan origin, with Beachy Head Woman thus presented as one of the earliest Africans in Britain,' the team wrote in the [Journal of Archaeological Science](#).

'We find no signals of admixture that would suggest recent sub-Saharan ancestry. We present high quality ancient DNA data indicating that Beachy Head Woman has a strong genetic affinity to individuals from rural Britain during the Roman occupation and modern-day Britons.'

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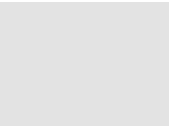
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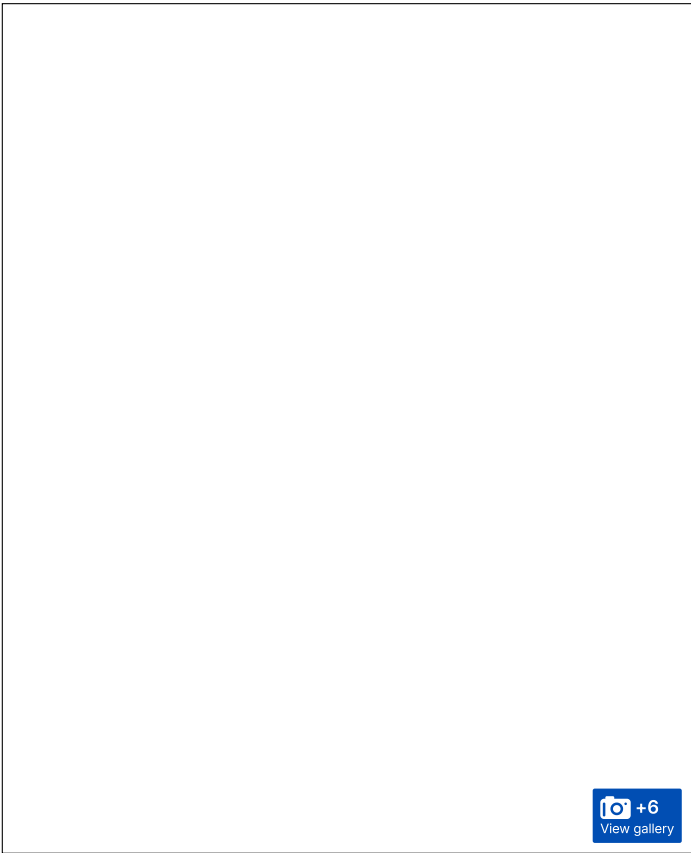
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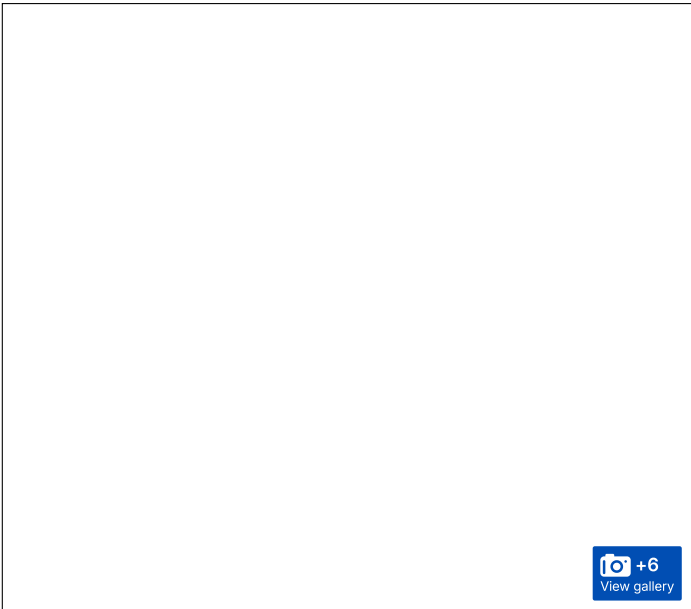
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Details on the box she was found in suggested that she skeleton had been unearthed at the nearby headland, Beachy Head, in the 1950s



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Experts used state-of-the-art technology that analysed her facial bone structure and created a 3D reconstruction



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DNA analysis reveals the woman descended from the local British population, the experts say. Lighter colours denotes a greater genetic affinity between Beachy Head Woman and the population in question

The researchers said that radiocarbon dating shows the woman died between 129 and 311AD, corresponding with the Roman occupation of Britain.

What do we know about Beachy Head Woman?

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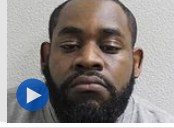
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Analysis of her skeletal remains suggest that she was around 18–25 years old when she died and stood at just over 4.9 feet (1.5 metres) tall.

Her DNA indicates she would have had blue eyes, 'intermediate' skin pigmentation and light hair, the researchers said.

This is a far cry from original facial reconstructions which showed her with dark hair, eyes and skin tone.

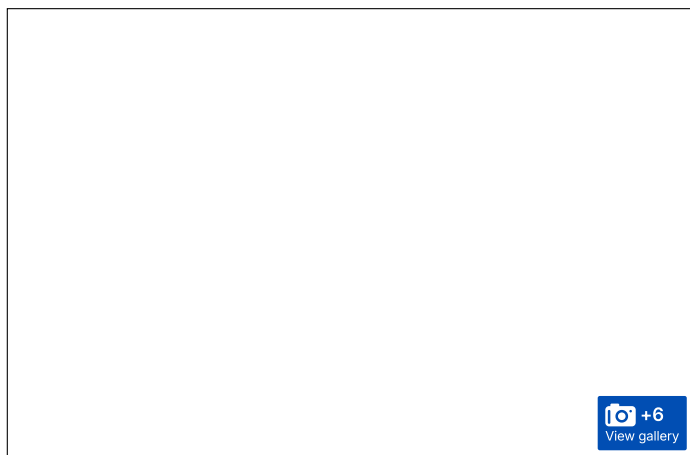
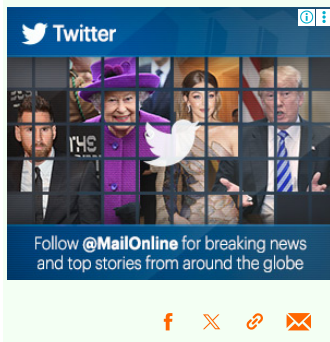
A healed wound on her leg suggests a serious but non-fatal injury at some point in her life, they added.

Dietary analysis looking at the carbon and nitrogen values in her bones also revealed that her diet likely included a lot of seafood.

Dr Selina Brace, senior author of the new paper, said: 'Our scientific knowledge and understanding is constantly evolving, and as scientists, it's our job to keep pushing for answers.'

'Thanks to the advancement of technology that has occurred in the past decade since Beachy Head Woman first came to light, we are excited to report these new comprehensive data and share more about this individual and her life.'

- Her skeleton dates back 2,000 years
- She was 18–25 years old when she died and stood at just over 4.9 feet (1.5 metres) tall
- She would have had blue eyes, 'intermediate' skin pigmentation and light hair
- A wound on her leg suggests a serious injury at some point in her life
- Her diet included a lot of seafood
- Her genetic ancestry is most similar to other local individuals in southern England – not sub-Saharan Africans



Beachy Head is Britain's highest chalk sea cliff, a dramatic landmark near Eastbourne in the South Downs National Park

Experts have **previously** said that without the context of a burial site or grave goods, it's hard to determine the individual's social status.

The skeleton is in good condition, with no signs of hard labour, and isotope analysis suggests she was raised in or around Eastbourne from a young age.

Based on what is known of the Roman era and a similar discovery in York, it's possible she was the wife of a local official or mistress of a nearby Roman villa, specialists have speculated.

Or, she may have been a merchant, making use of the trade routes that led to the local area.

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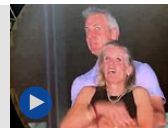
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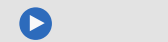
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I wonder who'll be given the task of taking down the first plaque and replacing it with the inconvenient truth.

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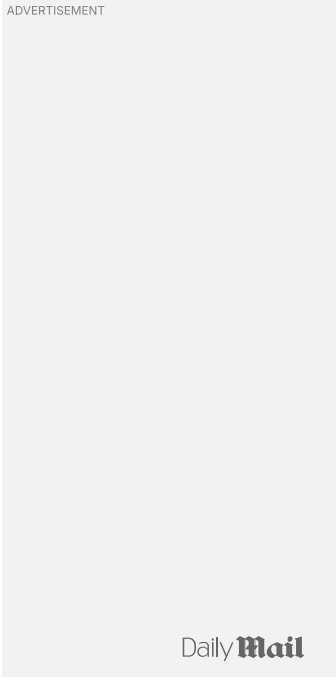
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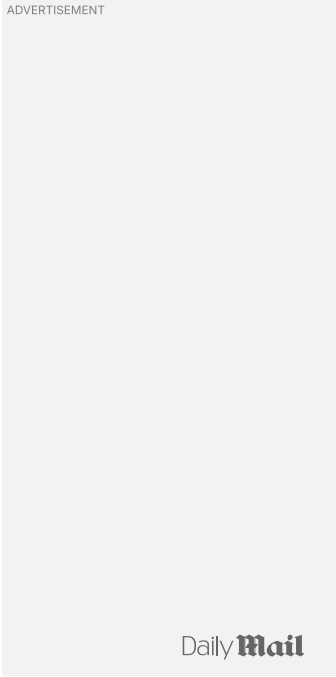
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Maura Higgins and Danny Jones' infamous kiss after hitting back at claims she's obsessed with the Love Island star

▶ Love Island's Tom Clare pays tribute to his late teammate and 'brother' Ethan McLeod as Macclesfield footballer tragically dies aged 21 in a car crash

▶ John Travolta fathered Elvis's great-grandson with Riley Keough, wild lawsuit claims

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▶ 'Poshfluencer' Lydia Millen's surprising old look and the ex council house she 'proudly' lived in a decade before upgrading to £2m mansion

▶ Bebe Rexha stuns fans as she asks for help in 'finding a baby daddy' and lists outrageous demands including 'being richer than her, smart and over 5'8" tall'

▶ Michelle Keegan and Mark Wright are doting parents to baby daughter Palma as they make a rare family appearance together in Cheshire

▶ **EXCLUSIVE** Peter Andre enjoys a day out with wife Emily and daughter Princess at a skincare event after revealing his strict parenting rule

▶ Alison Hammond's future on This Morning revealed after BBC put her on 'golden ten list' to replace Claudia Winkleman and Tess Daley on Strictly

▶ Jonathan Ross' daughter Honey battles to avoid wardrobe malfunction testing out a Space Hopper for Channel 4's Hamleys documentary 

▶ Elvis' wife Priscilla Presley hits out at

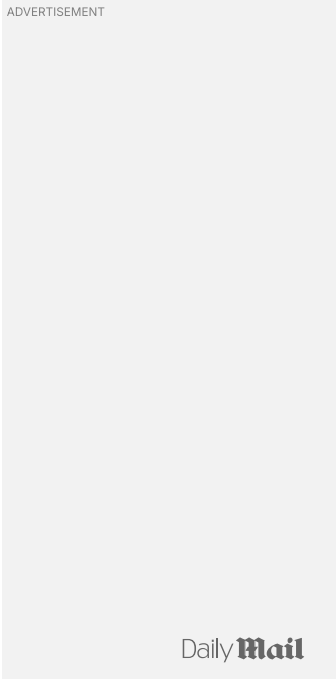
'outrageous allegation' that her granddaughter Riley Keough, 36, is the biological mother of John Travolta's youngest son, 15

▶ Loose Women stars 'so sad' as 'cherished' ITV legend leaves after 11 years - and her final show has already aired 

▶ Mariah Carey shows off her curves in a form-fitting minidress as she enjoys a shopping spree at Prada in Aspen

▶ Rob Reiner and his wife's cause of death revealed

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▶ Fresh-faced 90s popstar looks incredible at 55 - but can YOU guess who it is?

▶ Meghan makes saucy 'hello there' post as she gets hot under the collar seeing her man Prince Harry wow fans at polo match 

▶ Kendall Jenner, 30, enjoys another outing with luxury perfume mogul Ben Gorham, 48, in LA

▶ The real reason Kym Marsh QUIT £100K a year Coronation Street role and now earns double her soap salary

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- ▶ Rob Reiner and wife Michele 'did everything right,' their friend Rita Wilson insists after grisly murder
- ▶ James Van Der Beek looks healthy in new photos amid cancer battle... months after sparking concern with 'frail' appearance
- ▶ The real reason Helen Flanagan is 'livid' with ex Scott Sinclair and publicly lashed out - as she shares family snaps amid furious feud
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- ▶ Elon Musk is blasted on social media over 'pathetic' comments about Sydney Sweeney's breasts
- ▶ Zendaya looks unrecognizable in neon balaclava while clutching a pillow as she makes low-key arrival at JFK
- ▶ Should King Charles allow Andrew and Fergie to join in the fun at Sandringham for Christmas? Have your say in the Palace Confidential poll
- ▶ Kardashians finally reveal who pays for their annual Christmas party that has hosted Jennifer Lopez and Elon Musk 
- ▶ David Harbour 'snatches bar patron's hat in bizarre incident'... as 'Madeline' defends herself against Lily Allen
- ▶ Shaun Ryder admits he has no intention of coming off weight-loss jab Ozempic after shedding two stone
- ▶ Shackled Nick Reiner addresses Judge as he appears in court wearing anti-suicide vest: Live updates
- ▶ **EXCLUSIVE** Why Nick Reiner will lose his multi-million-dollar inheritance if he is convicted of murdering his parents
- ▶ Kate Beckinsale flashes her black underwear in a sheer white dress as she enjoys a shopping spree in LA

▶ **Skins star Megan Prescott hits out at being sexualised as a teen on controversial drama and claims she's now treated better on OnlyFans**

▶ **Taylor Swift's gal pal Ice Spice wows in white see-through look... as Swifties wonder who the bridesmaids will be**

▶ **Love Island USA star Amaya Espinal rushed to hospital for emergency surgery following 'severe abdominal pain'**

▶ **Gwyneth Paltrow makes rare move of bringing her stepkids on the carpet... after complaining they 'tested' her**

▶ **George Clooney jokes his twins, 8, are 'rotten to the core' as they savagely mock him in Italian so he can't understand**

▶ **Kylie Jenner reveals her \$12m mansion is HAUNTED as sister Khloe Kardashian makes fun of her**

▶ **Kim Kardashian sobs as she has a 'mental breakdown' just days before taking and failing the bar exam**

▶ **Kym Marsh strips down to underwear for steamy sex scene as she takes on raunchiest role yet in family thriller The Imposter**

▶ **Bling Empire's Christine Chiu flaunts her abs in daring gown at star-studded Christmas party**

▶ **Olivia Attwood explains heartbreak at leaving her marital home on Loose Women - revealing 'difficult' moment that 'caught her off guard'**

▶ **Cruz Beckham offers ANOTHER olive branch to estranged brother Brooklyn as he shares more sweet throwback snaps as the family prepare to spend Christmas apart**

▶ **Rebel Wilson and pregnant wife Ramona Agruma, 41, step out at Aspen polo match in first public outing since baby announcement**

▶ **Dwayne Johnson TOWERS over pal Kevin Hart at Golden Globes nominee luncheon in Beverly Hills**

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Wordle has a hidden 'hard mode' - but players claim it might actually make the game EASIER

WORDLE While an estimated 300,000 people play Wordle daily, many are unaware of a secret 'hard mode', which can be found within the game's settings.

353 comments 1 Video

Apple could start selling iPhones and iPads as part of a SUBSCRIPTION service from 2023, report claims

A new report from Bloomberg claims that Apple is working on selling iPhones and iPads as part of a hardware subscription service.

93 comments

YouTube adds thousands of FREE TV shows and movies to its service including The Sandlot, Legally blonde and There Will Be Blood as company moves to compete with streaming giants

This is the latest move from the Google-owned social video giant, as it tries to compete in an increasingly crowded, and competitive market.

68 comments

Project Skyway: World's largest network of 'drone superhighways' could be built in ENGLAND - connecting the Midlands with the Southeast over 165 miles

If approved, Project Skyway will connect the airspace above cities including Reading, Oxford, Milton Keynes, Cambridge, Coventry, and Rugby.

58 comments 2 videos

About time! Instagram FINALLY brings back the chronological feed - six years after it was ditched in favour of a curated feed

Instagram is launching two new ways for users to catch up with their feed - Following and Favourites - which will show posts in chronological order.

6 comments 1 video

Smart BRA with built-in ultrasound technology can detect early signs of breast cancer

The smart bra features small ultrasound sensors in the lining, and was developed by Nextwear Technology, a wearables firm based in Abuja, Nigeria.

8 comments 2 videos

Smartwatches are less effective at tracking the health of people with dark skin, study finds

The research by University of Alberta is the first to pool figures from multiple studies to specifically examine how skin tone may affect the accuracy of heart data in wearables

40 comments

World's THINNEST mechanical watch is unveiled: Bulgari's Octo Finissimo Ultra is thinner than a 10p coin - and has an eye-watering £332,700 price tag

Rome-based Bulgari spent three years developing the watch, which is crafted from sandblasted titanium as measures just 0.07 inches (1.8mm) thick.

308 comments 1 video

Smart ring that constantly measures your temperature could provide an early warning of Covid-19 infection - even if your symptoms are subtle

Experts from the University of California and MIT Lincoln Lab studied data on 50 people who owned sensor rings and had had Covid-19 before the study.

196 comments

Suzuki could launch a FLYING CAR by 2025 after joining forces with Japanese startup SkyDrive

