

Minister defends curbs on pensions

Overseas benefits 'are unfair'

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It is fair to taxpayers that a large number of people can claim UK pensions though they have not even been here, but even here, Pension Minister Steve Webb said yesterday as he defended a proposal.

Pensions Bill, part of the

Pensions Minister Steve Webb is defending pension changes



Government's legislative package unveiled in tomorrow's Queen's Speech, will end the practice of

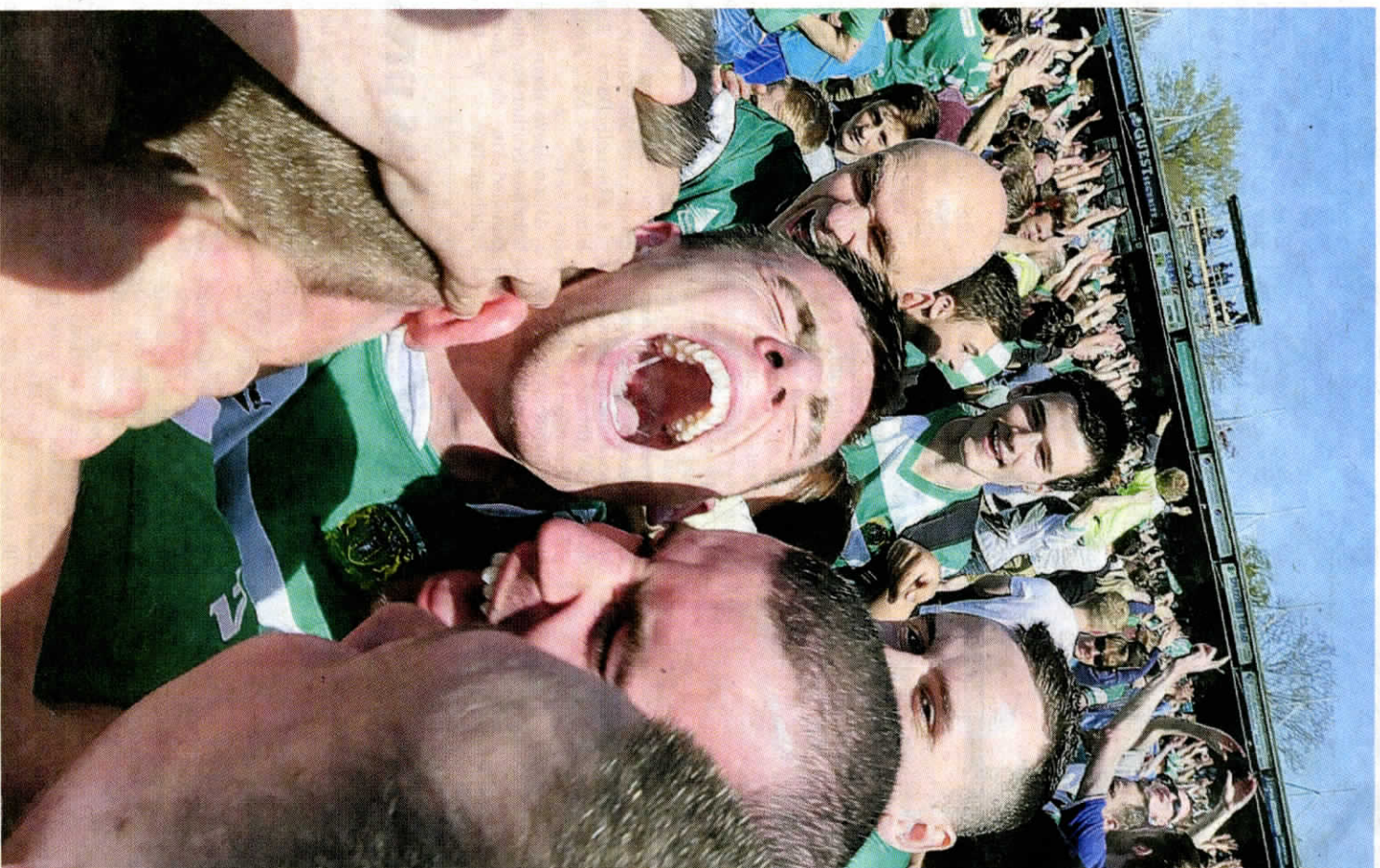
versa. Fewer and fewer UK residents take advantage of the "anachronistic" measure but the numbers overseas have risen in recent years, requiring action, Mr Webb said.

Existing pensioners will be unaffected but new claims at home and abroad will be barred from 2016 as part of a significant overhaul of the system that will see the introduction of a single-tier pension, worth around £144 a week in today's money.

The simplified retirement set-up will be based solely on personal contributions.

Mr Webb rejected suggestions that he highlighted the impact on overseas spouses in an interview with *The Daily Telegraph* newspaper in an effort to counter the appeal of the UK Independence Party, after its strong showing in last week's county council elections. "Not at all," he told BBC

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Tribute paid to boat crash dad

A father of four who was killed in a speedboat accident in Cornwall along with his eight-year-old daughter was an "extremely loving father, husband, son and brother who doted on his family", his brother said yesterday. Nick Milligan, 51, was declared dead at the scene in Padstow, yesterday afternoon along with his daughter, Emily.

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Butcher cuts career short

After a career spanning eight decades and 13 prime ministers, possibly the longest serving butcher in Britain, Cyril Richards, is giving himself the chop. Winston Churchill held office and the country was still at war with Germany when Cyril first addressed a butcher's block in 1944 as an 11-year-old schoolboy seeking pocket money.

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Jock triumphs at Badminton

Under an endless cloudless blue sky yesterday, a hot sun scorched the dusty dry grass, so it was entirely fitting that a former rodeo rider – up and coming New Zealander Jock Paget – should win the Badminton Horse Trials at his first attempt.

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Final word

Yeovil Town players and fans celebrate at Huish Park after they booked a Wembley League One play-off final place yesterday. SEE PAGES 45-48