

NEVER MIND ME, MATE, THERE'S A CROC BEHIND YOU



The photographer David Yarrow was standing chest-deep in a crocodile-infested swamp when he took this picture of a male orang-utan leaping from a tree at Camp Leakey, in south Borneo's Tanjung Puting national park. The orang-utan conservation centre was set up in 1971 and is the oldest of its kind in the world.

DAVID YARROW

Son of Putin ally has £35m London house

Josh Boswell, Mark Hollingsworth and The Sunday Times Data Team

A SON of a one-time close ally of Vladimir Putin is revealed today as the owner of a £35m mansion in London, after the government published a list of offshore-owned property in Britain worth more than £200bn.

Andrey Yakunin, who owns the eight-bedroom property in St John's Wood, north London, is the son of Vladimir Yakunin, a former member of the Russian president's inner circle who was blacklisted by the US in 2014.

The owner's identity was confirmed to The Sunday



Oleg Deripaska owns Hamstone House in Weybridge, Surrey

Times after the Land Registry last week released a complete list of 40,000 offshore companies that own nearly 100,000 properties in England.

Many of them are in the most affluent areas of London. The new list yields clues to other oligarchs and their families who have acquired property in London.

Vladimir Yakunin was once renowned as one of Putin's closest allies and one of the most powerful men in Russia.

When Russia invaded Ukraine in 2014, he was blacklisted by the US Treasury department as part of Putin's inner circle. This banned him from the US and froze any assets Yakunin held there. The British government declined to join the US in applying a ban.

The London property owned by Andrey Yakunin has eight bedrooms, a pool, cinema room and wine store. Two live-in servants are registered there on the electoral roll. The mansion is held through an offshore company, Terphos Financial Corporation, based in the British Virgin Islands.

It is understood Andrey Yakunin owns the house as an investment property. The company bought the house for £23m in 2013.

Andrey, an investor in a Russian hotel chain, also has a registered address in Hampstead. This property is worth about £10m and is owned through another offshore company, Diamondrock, but The Sunday Times has been unable to establish the ultimate owner.

In August last year Vladimir Yakunin stepped down from his role as head of Russian Railways. Russian media reported he had fallen out with Putin over his son's decision to apply for a British passport, although a Russian Railways spokesman said he had left to pursue a parliamentary career. Andrey now has a British passport.

The Land Registry database reveals that in Weybridge, Surrey, one of the wealthiest areas of Britain, there are 141 mansions owned offshore, worth a total £425m.

Among them is Hamstone House, a sprawling 10-bedroom mansion owned by Edenfield Investments in Cyprus. However, two names appearing on Land Registry documents for the house — Graham Bonham-Carter and Pavel Ezubov — hint at its true owner: they are associates of the Russian aluminium tycoon and Tory donor Oleg Deripaska.

Bonham-Carter, a second cousin of the actress, Helena Bonham-Carter, has worked as a consultant for Deripaska. Ezubov is Deripaska's cousin.

Edenfield Investments, which bought the property in 2001, has a forwarding address to a £50m property in Belgravia. This mansion is owned by another of Deripaska's offshore companies.

A High Court case in 2006 refers to both properties, which are part of Deripaska's portfolio of more than 20 luxury houses around the world. In a judgment, Mr Justice Eady said the Russian billionaire held his houses through offshore companies.

This was "largely for reasons concerned with inheritance tax", said the judge.

Chido Dunn, a senior campaigner at Global Witness, believes greater transparency is needed over the offshore ownership of properties in Britain. "The government is taking concrete steps to tackle this by setting up registers of the real owners of companies registered in the UK, which is very welcome," she said.

"But for these measures to have teeth, the government must force the UK's tax havens to set up the same registers, or we simply move the secrecy offshore."

@joshtboswell

MP's home loan from union fund

James Lyons
DEPUTY POLITICAL EDITOR

JEREMY CORBYN'S trade unions spokesman, Ian Lavery, received a home loan believed to be around £250,000 from a miners' benevolent fund set up by the union that he ran before becoming an MP.

The National Union of Mineworkers (Northumberland Area) provident and benevolent fund was listed as the lender on Lavery's house by the Land Registry last month but the loan is no longer charged against the property.

This weekend Lavery, who became an MP in 2010, said the arrangement had ended more than eight years ago but would not say whether he had repaid the loan or whether it had been written off. The shadow minister also refused to disclose the terms of the loan, which was made in 1994, two years after he became general secretary of NUM Northumberland Area.

Lavery, who denies any wrongdoing, now faces calls to come clean and there have been demands for the parliamentary commissioner for standards, Kathryn Hudson, to investigate.

Paul Scully, a Tory MP who has written to Hudson, said: "As Labour's shadow minister for trade unions, it's essential that Ian Lavery is totally open and transparent about his

financial dealings with the NUM, making it clear to the public that he hasn't been using his old trade union as a private piggy bank."

The commissioner is already considering a complaint that Lavery did not declare in the Commons register of members' interests more than £60,000 in redundancy pay from the union.

He and NUM Northumberland Area have not explained another £85,426 listed as "past general secretary redundancy costs"



Ian Lavery said the £250,000 loan arrangement ended eight years ago

in the union accounts.

Lavery has been criticised for accepting almost £1.6m in donations from sick and injured miners to fund the declining NUM branch between 1996 and 2010. During that time he received around £750,000 in pay, pension contributions and other benefits.

Lavery said this weekend: "The arrangement with the NUM ended over eight years ago. Any suggestion of impropriety is inaccurate and I reject it completely."

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