

The end of Britain's festival boom



At the end of July, the well-established Secret Garden Party festival in Cambridgeshire “symbolically burned down its main stage”, says Alex Lawson in *The Observer*. It was a potent sign of what a difficult year it has been for the festival sector, which Freddie Fellowes, who launched that festival in 2002, claims is “being strangled by corporate greed”. Certainly, indie festivals have been suffering. While the giants are still pulling in crowds, 60 smaller ones have been postponed or cancelled this year, with organisers blaming everything from the cost-of-living crisis and the wet weather, to an unruly supply chain that makes staging anything a huge risk. Meanwhile, “long-running tensions over corporate sponsorship” have exploded, culminating in Barclays suspending its sponsorship of all Live Nation festivals (including Download and Latitude) in response to boycotts. It’s possible, though, that after a massive proliferation of small festivals, this is just “natural selection” thinning out a crowded market. **4** Tickets for the Green Man in South Wales sold out in two hours.

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