

THE

Issue #17, March 2017.

WORD

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UNITY MARCH NEWS

PAGE 6

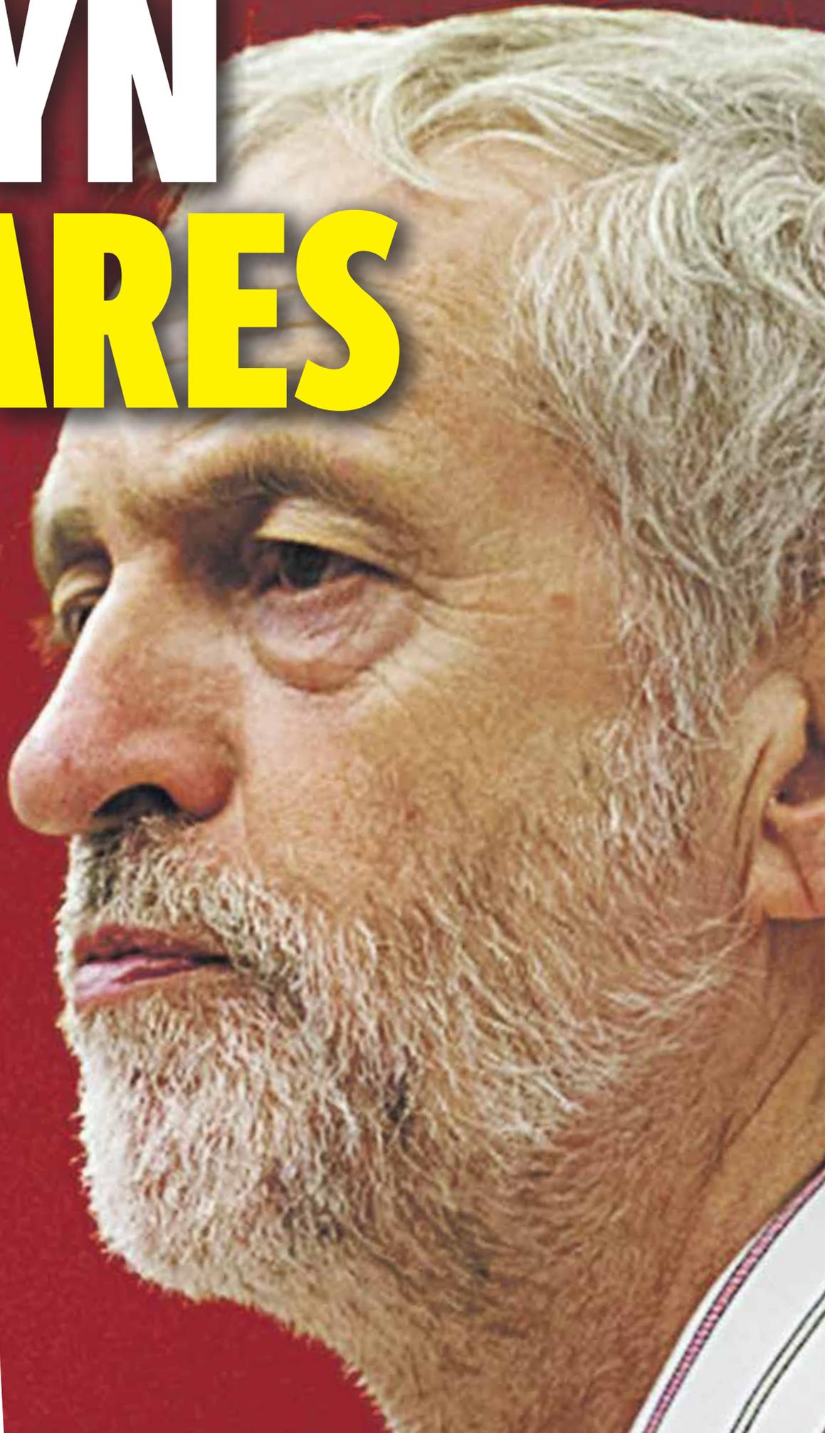
MCDONNELL TO REGENERATE MIDLANDS & NORTH

PAGE 15

STREETS OF LONDON LYRICS

PAGE 24

CORBYN DECLARES WAR OVER NHS



THE PETERLOO PROJECT

Starting in September of 2015 the project was put together on the Peter Loo Facebook page and then in the "Together against the Tories" Facebook group. The idea is to create a popular and entertaining socialist hub with the involvement of as many people as possible from the left of the socialist movement in Britain.

As the project has proceeded it has become increasingly clear that the media in the UK is run for and by big business and as such will always need to oppose socialist values to keep such a position. The project was then crowdfunded to raise the money to be able to print and distribute this newspaper as a prelude to a whole cross-platform media fight-back.

THE
WORD

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CORBYN DECL ON MAY OVER



What would drive a quarter of a million people onto the streets of London in a protest to save the NHS? As the Tories promised in 2010 and 2015 that the NHS is safe in their hands, why are so many people frightened for the NHS.

With real wages in the NHS falling 14% we have seen health workers leaving the NHS and new recruits avoiding NHS employment. This has resulted in 25,000 nursing vacancies and 3,500 midwife vacancies. In 2011 71% of junior doctors went to work as senior doctors after their 2 years training that figure has fallen to 50% in 2016. The main reason these junior doctors gave was the Jeremy Hunt contract imposed on them.

An NHS that has a smaller wage bill would be more profitable if privatised. All austerity measures within the NHS such as those included in STP plans look like ways to reduce costs.

STPs have been created to cut £22bn over five years (a 20% cut in real terms). The

The Nightmare Candidate

Following the very sad passing of Sir Gerald Kaufman multiple sources have told me that Councillor Mike Amesbury, Afzal Khan MEP, Councillor Julie Reid and Momentum activist Sam Wheeler are making moves to stand already. It's likely that Councillor Rabnawaz Akbar and Councillor Luthfur Rahman will also stand. The selection is likely to be bitter and acrimonious, judging by the text messages already received about rival candidates. Campaigning started earlier this

morning and all sides are engaging in aggressive manoeuvring.

The Huffington Post has reported that Sam Wheeler is being supported by people close to Jeremy Corbyn. We can reveal that this story was planted by the Wheeler camp and is completely untrue. Along with most of us who know him, Wheeler is considered a self-seeking arrogant careerist by the people at the top of the Labour party. Wheeler is seen by many as Jon Lansman's creature and shares a lot of the same "I am better than

you values that his mentor espouses. Wheeler was also one of those responsible for trying to fix a vote in Manchester Momentum a year or so back. He mysteriously appeared as a "chosen man" on the steering committee of Momentum without being voted there.

Already it has been reported that a punch up has taken place as Wheeler and his cronies try to secure union votes for his nomination. A Huffington post story in favour of Wheeler (the Huffington post are no friends of the left)



came out before Kaufman's body was even cold. Several Labour activists in Manchester have already told "THE WORD" that they would rather see the seat lost than a manipulative careerist such as Wheeler.

ARES WAR THE NHS!

UK now has only 2.8 doctors per 1,000 people. GP services have been cut 20% in the last five years. The UK also has 2.76 beds per 1,000 people, compared with Japan's 13.2, Germany's 8.2 and Greece's 4.8. One can only conclude that Hunt's cuts to staff and resources to support the beds is deliberate policy to run down the NHS ready for privatisation.

The winter crisis in A&E with over 40 hospitals declaring "black alert" which put people's lives at risk resulting in several unnecessary deaths was caused by the lack of beds. The extra patients caused by cuts in social care just happened to expose this fact.

The media, including the BBC, again and again are downplaying the significant danger to the NHS

and the Conservative's role in running down the NHS. The BBC has quoted the figure attending the march in the 10s of thousands rather than over 200,000. Again the allegation of fake news is being laid at the door of the BBC.

Jeremy Corbyn's passionate attendance at the March and his call that enough is enough signifies a toughening up in his stance and fight against austerity cuts and privatisation in the NHS. The message about saving the NHS is not going to be won in the mainstream media. It has to be won on the streets. The march for the NHS on March 4th rivalled and may have topped even the poll tax protest that brought down Margaret Thatcher.



The March That Fought Back

On Saturday 4th of March 2017 a quarter of a million people came out to demonstrate against the creeping privatisation of the NHS. Think about that for a moment...? A quarter of a million people. These figures are not the estimates of the people organising the protest but official Police calculations. Astounding on two fronts. One that the Police can count -when we demonstrated to support the miner's strike they told us only Arthur Scargill and his dog had turned up - and secondly that in this age of imposed poverty people went out of their way to support the cause.

This amazing turnout also coincided with regional protests in cities all around the country." And on the BBC tonight, "strictly come gardening with the voice, minor celebrity falls over drunk." The sad thing is a huge number of people in this country still feel that the MSM news is unbiased. Meanwhile smarmy sliming celebrity millionaires such as Rich-

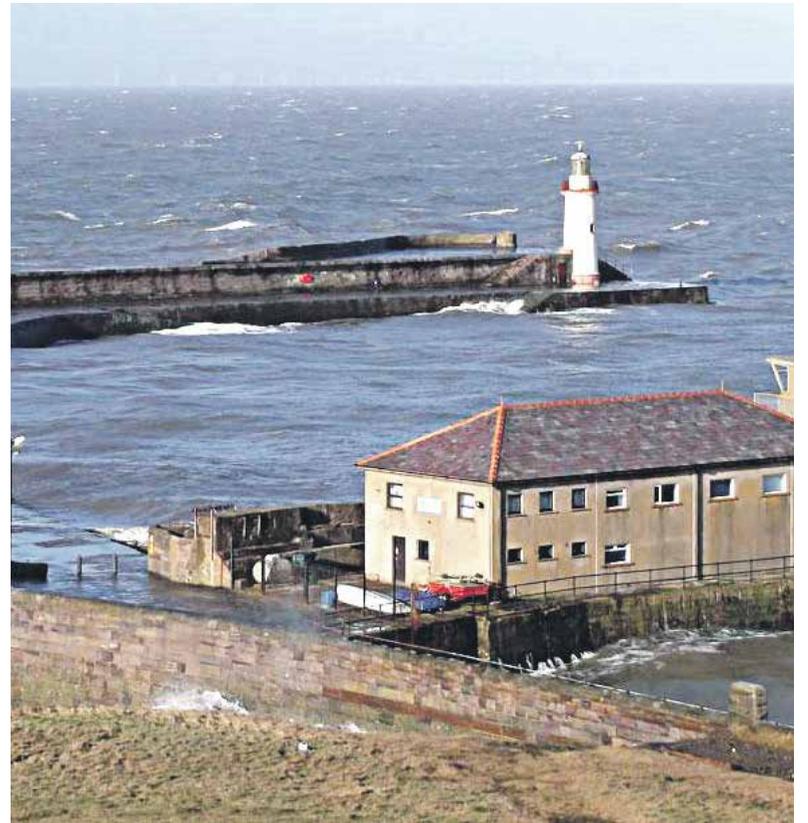


ard Branson help themselves to the NHS. Even in the Labour party we have Pseudo Blair supporter, Andy Burnham, who is standing to be Mayor of Manchester, telling us that a devolved health service is a good thing!

The Main Stream Media keep telling us we cannot afford the NHS. We did in 1945. Has science not improved? Has training not improved? Do we know less about medicine than we did then? The MSM tell us that people are living longer and therefore it is too much of a strain.

They tell us that the old are a burden and we all have to work longer. They lie. What is the point of society if it is not to raise standards of health care and make sure the older generation enjoy their last years? Is the point of society to make money? Is the point of society to grab power? On Saturday 4th of March 2017 250,000 people marched through the Capital of this country to give their answer.

"And here is the news on the BBC. No one is watching, they are all marching."



Stoke and Copeland

By Ben Sellers

Just a few weeks ago there was a real expectation that Labour would lose both Stoke and Copeland. It's taken a lot of hard work by those on the ground, but in one of those by-elections, we've walked away with a decisive victory. People will say that Nuttall was a gift, and in many ways he was - but that open goal may not have been scored by a smaller, less grassroots oriented Labour Party (both online and offline). It seems that we are capable of seeing off UKIP, if we work collectively.

Copeland is an altogether different constituency with very specific issues. Nuclear jobs are a factor, but so is a political culture which has become insular, not recently but over many years. So discussions about alternatives have been discouraged to the point that they are taboo. That culture has been fostered by the New Labour hierarchy and the previous MP, Jamie Reed. Perhaps more understandably, it's been promoted by the major trade unions, who see their sole role as protecting jobs. To shift any of that debate in a few weeks was going to be an almost impossible task, but again, Labour members on the ground did at least manage to get people talking about the NHS, transport and the Tories' decimation of our public services. I doubt if many cast their votes for the Tory Party with much enthusiasm.

So now, our opponents will focus on Copeland and try to nail Jeremy Corbyn for it. The media aren't interested in context. Not when they scent blood. The right of the party aren't interested in understanding the longer term causes of our decline, because for them, this has become a tabloid-like game to bury Jeremy Corbyn, and with him the project of the left in the party.

So we'll have to remind them where this started. Not with Corbyn, but with a New Labour project that was uninterested in working class communities outside of a south east corner: look at Scotland, look at decreasing majorities across the north; look at the South West even. The fragility of Labour's base began years ago, when a party lost touch with its own grassroots and the trade unions. New Labour caused a crisis, which we were never going to recover from quickly, because we've had a decade of abandoning our people, our heartlands and people don't forget easily.

On top of that, there has been a targeted and systematic campaign by those Blairite MPs who still hold huge sway in Parliament, and whose only purpose has been to create chaos for the leadership. That has undoubtedly dented our support, because people see a divided party and a leadership unable to control and pacify the PLP. Not everyone understands the machinations or the underlying causes of the chaos, so often they will blame Corbyn. But the reality is, a large chunk of the blame lies with those who still won't accept that the party has changed.

None of this is to say that we can't improve, as a project: in terms of communication, organisation and leadership we're on a massive learning curve. It's frustrating that we're not learning quick enough, because that is leaving us vulnerable. We need to be bolder, less frightened and more open to the enormous grassroots that brought us here. That's difficult when everyone around you is telling you that it's failing, declining, in crisis. But they - the majority of the media, the right of the party and the political establishment - were always going to say that.

<http://www.kentonline.co.uk/thanet/news/election-expenses-inquiry-will-be-121649/>

Police investigation into Conservative spending on South Thanet campaign will be completed within next two months



By Paul Francis

An inquiry into claims concerning Conservative election expenses in South Thanet will be completed within two months, according to the Kent chief constable.

Alan Pughsley said he was confident the ongoing investigation into the claims would be completed in time for any decision about possible charges.

It has emerged nine police officers in the constabulary are investigating the claims first made by Channel 4 News, which focus on allegations that the party's expenditure in South Thanet was not properly reported to the Electoral Commission.

The fight for South Thanet was high-profile because it was where Ukip leader Nigel Farage was standing but was defeated by Craig Mackinlay.

The inquiry is examining whether the law was broken over what parties are entitled to spend on local campaigning and national expenditure.

It has been claimed that in South Thanet money spent by the Conservatives was attributed wrongly to national spend rather than the local campaign. Had it done so, spending limits would have been breached.

Asked by Kent crime commissioner Matthew Scott about the progress of the inquiry at a governance meeting this week, Mr Pughsley said he expected it would be completed "in a month or two"

and would be within the time frame for any action.

He added that he could not go any further with details about the investigation.

Under electoral law, the police have until June to decide whether to act.

The Conservatives have consistently denied any wrong-doing saying all election expenditure was properly reported in accordance with the law.

If it is established rules were broken, there could be a re-run of the contest. Nigel Farage has said he could contest the seat for a second time.

<https://www.commonspace.scot/articles/10447/ifs-report-almost-1-3-children-be-poverty-2022-due-uk-austerity-push>

IFS report: Almost 1 in 3 children to be in poverty by 2022 due to UK austerity push

Living standards growth lowest in 60 years

CAMPAIGNERS have spoken out on against UK Government austerity after an Institute of Fiscal Studies (IFS) report revealed that almost one in three children in the UK would live in poverty by 2022 due to welfare and other cuts.

The IFS report predicted that child poverty rates would approach 30 per cent by 2022, and that growth in living standards has fallen to a 60 year low. The report pointed to UK Government austerity policies as the reason for the collapsing prospects for living standards.

The analysis comes after Chancellor Philip Hammond demanded government departments find another 6 per cent

John Dickie of the Child Poverty Action group Scotland said: "It's children that are being harder hit by austerity policies.

"Welfare is being cut for people both in and out of work, while at the same time there is tax relief for the wealthiest.

"There is nothing inevitable about this situation, government policy is creating it. We urge the UK Government to reverse these cuts, and also call on the Scottish Government to do what it can to alleviate child poverty.

"If the Scottish Government were to top up child benefit by £5 a week for instance, around 30,000 children could be lifted out of poverty."

<http://www.stokesentinel.co.uk/was-the-stoke-on-trent-central-by-election-a-success-for-labour/story-30178360-detail/story.html>

Was the Stoke-on-Trent Central by-election a success for Labour?



While it's undoubtedly true that Mr Corbyn gets rough treatment from certain sections of the media, can that really be the reason for Labour's electoral slump? In this digital era, why not simply bypass the press and speak to voters directly through social media? That approach seems to work for politicians such as Donald Trump.

So what can Labour do to turn things around? It might be worth looking at what the party did right in Stoke-on-Trent Central to snatch an only slightly underwhelming victory from the jaws of defeat.

Mr Snell's victory was the result of a well-executed ground-level campaign, involving thousands of activists from across the Midlands and beyond knocking on virtually every door in the constituency.

If Labour wants to become relevant again, it needs to replicate this sort of grassroots engagement on a regular basis, and not just when a parliamentary seat is up for grabs. It needs to talk with voters about what they really want, and make them feel they are being listened to.

Labour can't just rely on focus groups, opinion polls and social media - it needs to speak directly with the people it hopes to win over - and in doing so, rediscover its own purpose.

http://www.suttonguardian.co.uk/news/15125306.Tube_strike_Indefinite_industrial_action_to_begin_next_week/

Tube strike: Indefinite industrial action by London Underground maintenance workers to begin next week

The RMT Union have confirmed that fleet members will be 'working to rule' from Tuesday, March 7 until further notice.

This will include not working any overtime or attending training courses outside of normal working hours, not carrying out any work of a higher grade than they are employed for, not changing any shifts or locations to help with maintenance and refusal to work without a first aider on site.

In a recent ballot, 67 per cent of fleet members voted for strike action and 88 per cent voted in favour for action short of a strike.

RMT general secretary, Mick Cash, said: "The current level of flagrant abuse and ignorance of long-standing policies and procedures by London Underground is appalling and the anger among RMT Fleet grades members was clearly demonstrated in the ballot results.

"RMT's position could not be clearer and it is down to London Underground to start taking this list of grievances seriously, to stop trying to impose fundamental changes to agreed policies and working conditions and to halt the bullying and harassment of our reps.

The RMT's list of grievances includes reduced staffing levels without consultation, failing to hire enough additional staff to cover the Night Tube and 'actively attacking' union representatives.

<http://www.getwestlondon.co.uk/news/west-london-news/demand-nhs-services-increases-charing-12687912>

Demand on NHS services increases as Charing Cross Hospital witnesses rise in A and E admissions

New health figures show a 25% leap in people being treated at the Hammersmith hospital's emergency department

The number of patients receiving

Local

A&E treatment at Charing Cross Hospital has risen by nearly 2,500 over a two-year period.

Figures show 11,408 people were treated at the emergency unit between November 2016 and January 2017, an increase of 2,416 over the same period two years earlier - a jump of around 25%.

Hammersmith and Fulham Council and local health campaigners blame the increase on the closure of nearby A&E units under the contentious Shaping a Healthier Future (SaHF).

They also claim there are plans to downgrade Charing Cross and Ealing Hospitals under the Sustainability and Transformation Plan (STP) - a claim strenuously denied by the NHS.

<http://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/news/northern-ireland/perpetual-unionist-majority-at-stormont-demolished-says-gerry-adams-35501158.html>

'Perpetual unionist majority' at Stormont 'demolished' says Gerry Adams

Sinn Fein leader Gerry Adams has said the "perpetual unionist majority" at Stormont has been "demolished" following the result of the Northern Ireland Assembly election.

A jubilant Mr Adams said it was a "watershed" moment after his party closed to within a solitary seat of the Democratic Unionist Party.

He also said Sinn Fein's new leader in the north, Michelle O'Neill, will be holding talks with Prime Minister Theresa May and Irish Taoiseach Enda Kenny about the impact of Brexit on Ireland north and south over the next few weeks.

Speaking outside the party's West Belfast office, Mr Adams said Sinn Fein wants to quickly engage in a process with other party leaders to ensure powersharing in the region is restored.

But he again insisted that the party will not support DUP leader Arlene Foster as Northern Ireland's first minister until she has been cleared of any wrongdoing related to the Renewable Heat Incentive (RHI) scandal.

<http://www.chroniclive.co.uk/news/north-east-news/labour-must-not-just-listen-12685309>

Labour must not just listen to London if it wants to win, says Stoke Central campaign chief



Labour MP who ran successful Stoke Central campaign says party must speak out on issues such as Brexit and immigration

Patriotism, Brexit and a firm stance on immigration led Labour to a crucial by-election victory - an MP masterminding the campaign has claimed.

But Labour must recognise that views in London are not shared by the rest of the country, said Jack Dromey.

He co-ordinated Labour's successful campaign in the Stoke Central by-election, where the party saw off a threat from UKIP. Labour's Gareth Snell was elected, beating rival candidate Paul Nuttall, the UKIP leader.

At the same time, Labour suffered a devastating loss in a by-election in Copeland, where it lost to the Conservatives.

Mr Dromey said voters in both Stoke and Copeland expressed "discontent" with the political establishment, and to some extent with Labour.

He warned: "Our task is not to allow those legitimate discontents to be hijacked by UKIP and the like. Our task is to become the champion of those who are discontented, disconnected and alienated.

"That means recognising that the politics of London are very different from the politics of Britain. Never allowing Labour somehow to sound like we're sneering at these discontents. Our task is to hear them, understand them and act upon them."

Labour would lose if it simply campaigned on the NHS and avoided issues such as Brexit and immigration, he said.

Mr Dromey said losing Stoke would have been a disaster for Labour, as it would have shown UKIP was "breaking through into Labour's heartlands."

Instead, UKIP is now "in crisis" and Paul Nuttall is "broken", he said.

And Mr Dromey said the result was "the first significant victory" against a "populism that has been sweeping through much of the western world".

<https://www.pressandjournal.co.uk/pipe/1183424/westminster-showing-contempt-for-holyrood-with-brexit-minister-no-show-snp/>

The UK Government has been accused of disrespecting Scotland

Brexit Minister David Jones has turned down an invitation to give evidence to the Scottish Parliament's Europe Committee later this month, the Courier has reported.

He was due to do so on March 16 in place of Brexit Secretary David Davis, who was last year sent formal invitations to appear before the committee.

Convener Joan McAlpine, of the SNP, has previously said it is "essential" the panel hears from a senior member of the UK Government before EU withdrawal negotiations begin.

The UK Government insists it has been "fully engaging" with Scottish ministers, and it is understood the committee appearance is being rescheduled.

The SNP accused the Conservative Government at Westminster of showing "contempt" for Scotland's views on Brexit.

Richard Lochhead MSP, who sits on the Europe Committee, said: "It is astonishing that with weeks to go before the triggering of Article 50, neither the Brexit Secretary nor even his junior sidekick have deemed it a priority to appear before the Scottish Par-

liament despite their promises to do so.

"This is not only disrespectful to Parliament, it is disrespectful to Scotland, especially when Brexit is being described as the biggest post-war challenge we have faced.

"Its failure to appear before the Holyrood committee illustrates the Tory Government's contempt for Scotland and the will of our Parliament."

Committee member Ross Greer MSP, the Scottish Greens' external affairs spokesman, said: "There is no end to the Tories' disrespect for Scotland.

<https://www.pressandjournal.co.uk/pipe/news/uk/1183867/labour-says-plan-for-child-benefit-would-help-more-than-90000-families-in-north/>

Labour Says Plan For Child Benefit Would Help More Than 90,000 Families In North

Plans to top up child benefit by £240 a year would help more than 90,000 families across the north and north-east of Scotland, according to new analysis by Scottish Labour.

The party hopes to secure support for its proposal, but will otherwise seek to amend the SNP's Child Poverty Bill.

It suggested Holyrood's new social security powers could be used to boost child benefit.

This would lift around 30,000 children in Scotland out of poverty by 2020, with a total of 19,900 families in Aberdeen better off.

Across the Highlands and north-east as a whole, some 93,895 households would benefit, according to the analysis.

North East MSP Lewis Macdonald said the planned £240 increase would be reached gradually by the turn of the decade.

Under the proposal, it would rise by £13 a month in 2018, increasing to £20 a month more in 2020.

Mr Macdonald said: "The SNP's Child Poverty Bill - now in the Scottish Parliament - should include Labour's plan to top up child benefit for more than 93,000 families in the north and north-east of Scotland.

"If the nationalists won't do it, we will seek to amend the law ourselves.

NEWS

Mandelson it has that we in the Lab start looking at wh conference needs t

By Mervyn Hyde

It has occurred to me that we in the Labour Party must all start looking at whether a special conference needs to be initiated?

This campaign of chicken coups is never going to end, we need to reconstitute the party machine, it should be obvious to anyone that has seen the Aljazeera video that there are people being funded by outside organisations to undermine our own politicians in order to serve the interests of a foreign government.

Ian McNicol has been swift to disenfranchise ordinary members on the most spurious of grounds whilst appearing totally impotent when addressing the flagrant abuses by politicians and activists on the right. Not to mention those associated with ILF.

The special conference would address the need for change of those involved in the deliberate attacks on Jeremy Corbyn, I see no other way out of confronting this head on, I heartily agree that we need to appeal to our fellow members on the right of the party that are anti Corbyn to recognise that in Jeremy we have seen the party grow, that previously the party was in decline, that Neo-Liberal-

By Melissa Darcey (NHS Editor)

Saturday 25th February saw local campaign groups across the country unite together on their streets to fight against their local hospital closures, cuts and privatisation.

Among the campaign groups were:

"Fighting 4 Grantham Hospital" - who held a march and rally against the partial closure of Grantham A&E and future downgrade of the department to an Urgent Care Centre. This was attended by around 3000 people including other local campaigns "Fighting 4 Life Lincolnshire", "SOS Grantham Hospital" and "Keep Our NHS Public Nottingham".

Relatively new campaign "Parents against cuts to Bassetlaw Children's Ward" - who held their first community march and rally in



ism, has been the root cause of that decline.

It should also be noted that the Tories are suffering the same decline for the same reasons, if we look at the results of the last three elections in Copeland the Tory vote has declined there, the winning Tory candidate received less votes than the Tory candidate in the previous election. By-elections always have a momentum of their

own, they have their own individual characteristics, I do feel a lot of Labour Voters stayed at home, probably uncertain as to which way to jump, with the right candidate I believe we can not only win it back, but strengthen our grip on that constituency.

Although I agree wholeheartedly that we need to appeal to our fellow members in the party, I also recognise that reasoned argument

ITS OUR NHS C



Workshop which was attended by around 500 people uniting against the partial closure of their local Chil-

dren's Ward. "Protect Chorley Hospital from cuts and privatisation" - who held a



We are Unity March News, an online news publication guesting with our own segment courtesy of our friends at The WORD

Here at Unity March, our political position is clear, we support progressive politics of any kind, be it Labour's left or the Greens. Our politics is based on ideas not ideology. On policies not personality. And whilst there may be an emphasis (as the biggest progressive party) on Labour politics we are eager to publish ideas, policies and news from

other centre-left parties and organisations.

We believe in positive action and are keen to promote any and all progressive community activity. So, bring us your causes, your ideas, and your stories.

Visit daily at www.unitymarch.org.uk And search Unity March News on Facebook and all the usual social sites.. for the latest news and views that matter to you!

In Unity we Find strength.

COPELAND the insufferable coverage of last week



By Dr Richard House

The insufferable coverage of last week's by-elections pantomime sadly reflects the barrel-scraping media state we're in, with only this newspaper offering commentary on the current conjuncture that refuses to join the sadistic hate-fest against Jeremy Corbyn.

The media's unprecedented assault began in earnest in autumn 2015, the Goebbels cat leaping out of the bag when "a Number 10 source" was reported in the Daily Express (August 17, 2015) as saying, "We've just got to set the Looney-left narrative and kill this new leader in the first month". Unfortunately for them, Jeremy's popularity has been such that this scurrilous month-long campaign has become a permanent feature of Britain's media landscape, with Corbyn subjected to the most unforgivingly vicious demonisation campaign in generations. It's actually a great compliment to Jeremy that the terrified Establishment has felt the need to subject him to such shameful demhumanising bile.

Last week's orchestrated establishment froth was boringly pre-

dictable. Anyone with a modicum of unbiased intelligence knows that it's always a great error to generalise from local unique mid-term by-elections to the national situation; yet that's almost invariably what the brain-dead political commentariat do.

Copeland is highly untypical, with 10,000 workers in, or allied to, the nuclear industry; with a history of rather unpleasant right-wing pro-nuke Labour MPs; and with the Tories' local campaign playing on fear - i.e. "Corbyn has a history of being anti-nuclear power, so if you vote Labour, you'll put your own job at risk." UKIP's share of the vote also fell from 15 to just 6 per cent - signifying a big tactical shift to the Tories.

Copeland was therefore very far from being a seat from which reliable generalisations are legitimate. Yet why let fair, dispassionate journalism get in the way of another baseless pretext with which to beat Jeremy and urge his imminent demise.

Thankfully, Jeremy, John and co. are holding their nerve - as all sensible progressive opinion must do in the face of this latest tsunami of rightist hysteria that leaves Basil Fawlty looking like the Dalai Lama.

Occurred to me our Party must all whether a special to be initiated



falls on deaf ears that just won't listen. There are those who seek advantage for themselves without regard to either the interests of the party or the people they represent, and to ignore that fact leaves us vulnerable.

In most constituency Labour Party's there is a great deal of common purpose, that isn't to say there aren't pockets of resistance but generally speaking most under-

stand that change is essential if we are to reverse the economic and political decline in this country.

The so called Brexit issue has been a total distraction from the real issues facing ordinary people, I read only yesterday from somewhere, that Lenin was quoted as saying, "that if you want to control a country, you first have to lead the debate". So in short the establishment have been driving us round

and round in circles constantly changing the ground we stand on, disorienting people and putting unbearable pressure on to us individually, in order that the few can asset strip our country and maintain power to themselves.

They of course need people to carry out their programme, we have seen this through the corporate capture of politicians and civil servants, we call it the "revolving door" in essence it is just corruption.

In order that people can get on board with the knowledge of the direction of travel we have been travelling in since 1970, we must start by leading the debate. Whilst there are those like Mandelson in the Party that clearly are serving a different master to the needs of those we are supposed to represent, we can no longer sit back and allow them to smear and lie about the only hope we have of challenging a corrupt establishment that is making all our lives a misery. Mandelson the man that said he was totally relaxed about people getting filthy rich, this extract also shows where his real interests lie:

Peter Benjamin Mandelson, Baron Mandelson PC is a British Labour politician, president of international think tank Policy Network and Chairman of strategic advisory firm Global Counsel

One Fight We All Unite

vigil outside Chorley Hospital, many people attended in the rain to unite against the partial closure of their local A&E.

#FightingLocalThinkingNational Many campaign groups from across England are now preparing for what is set to be the BIGGEST NHS PROTEST this country has EVER seen - Saturday 4th March @ 12pm in Tavistock Square London will see Doctors, nurses, staff, patients, public and NHS campaigners join together to say NO! to Cuts, Closures, Pay Restraints and Privatisation,

We want OUR NHS - Publicly Funded, Publicly Owned and Publicly Managed!

#ItsOurNHS - There really is no other place to be this Saturday...

It's time to #FightNationalThinkLocal

Fight to save #YourNHS

F4GH - <https://www.facebook.com/groups/158598821210992/>

F4LL - <https://www.facebook.com/groups/169669356397788/>

SOSGH - <https://www.facebook.com/SOSGranthamHospital/?fref=ts>

KONP (Notts) - <https://www.facebook.com/profile.php...>

Bassetlaw - <https://www.facebook.com/groups/1796507393943397/>

Chorley - <https://www.facebook.com/groups/143882905819852/>

Our NHS Demo Event Link - <https://www.facebook.com/events/1771664639725061/>

#UnityMarchUk #UnityMarchNews

Video via OurNHS

Over the last six years, many frontline NHS staff have suffered a 14% real terms pay cut. Join the #ourNHS National Demonstration, 4th March:

Event info on Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/events/17716...>

Follow us on Twitter: @nhs_demo

Find more information at ournhs.info

Directed by Edmund Bolger for #OurNHS



Myth Submitted

By Wain Evans

on Mon, 02/27/2017 - 4:54pm

People often talk of the General Election of 1983 in comparing Corbyn to Foot. They claim that Labour is heading for a similar outcome in 2020, and that the failure of a left leaning party then means that the failure of a left leaning party now is inevitable.

So let us look at that claim.

The picture below shows votes cast in every election since 1918.

As can be seen, Labour's vote from 1979-1983 fell by 3.05m. A massive fall by any stretch of the imagination. But then let us see where those votes went...did they flood as is commonly believed to the Conservatives (with a Tory landslide and increased majority from 43 to 144)? No. They went almost exclusively to the new Liberal/SDP alliance, who increased their vote by 3.47m.

Where did this new alliance come from? Well, mainly from the Labour right. The SDP being formed of disgruntled Labour MP's at a real socialist agenda put forward. They then managed to spin this out within Labour ranks as showing the desire within the country at large for a less socialist agenda.

But does this hold true? Surely if people wanted a more right wing view they would have flocked to the Tories, but they didn't. The Tory vote actually decreased by 0.69m.



And how did Labour do in 1987 with a more centrist Labour Party under Kinnock? We managed to add 2.57m votes....But where did this increase come from? Did we pull voters from the Tories? No, their vote increased by 0.73m. Or from the Alliance, well some of it as their vote fell by 0.44m. So it can be seen that the majority of the increased vote came from an increase in voter numbers.

So did taking a more right wing approach pull back in millions of Labour voters from the Tories and the Alliance. No. In fact the scary thing is that more people voted Tory. As tends to happen and happened again in 2010/2015, if you offer people the option of Tory vs ToryLite they tend to say well we may as well take the full fat version.

In my final analysis, I would say that the thing that lost Labour so many votes in 1983, and meant that people of my generation were lost to a childhood of Thatcher and her ideology was not as alleged the "longest suicide note in history", but the Limehouse declaration of 1981 (wherein 4 former ministers and Labour MP's signaled their intention to resign from Labour and form a Council for social democracy which became the basis of the SDP). The failure of the hard-right of Labour to see and understand that in a time of ideologies not consensus, that you need to unite on the left, and offer a real alternative that gives the electorate a choice between distributing this countries wealth up and up to the strong and the privileged or down to the weak and downtrodden. Then as now we HAVE to unite. This time we NEED the hard-right to listen, to heed the warnings of history, or consign another generation to the dark days of Tory rule. The running down of our services, our NHS and our hopes for the future. Because for sure if we don't unite we will be destroyed and history will not look at Corbyn's failure but at Labour's failure.

WHAT DOES THIS VERY AMERICAN HEALTHCARE SCANDAL HAVE TO DO WITH THE FUTURE OF THE NHS?

<http://stematthewmurray.blogspot.co.uk/2017/03/what-does-this-very-american-healthcare.html>

By STE MATTHEW MURRAY

As scandals go, this one erupted with more of a whimper than a bang. Documents unsealed in February in the US revealed details of a five-year-old lawsuit against Minneapolis-based Healthcare behemoth United Health after the US Department of Justice joined the case against the company.

The lawsuit alleges United Health overcharged Federal Health Insurance provider Medicare by billions of dollars by overstating its member's illnesses. The suit was brought by a whistleblower, named in the documents as former United Health executive Benjamin Poehling. In the US, it is normal for the specifics of such lawsuits to be sealed against public disclosure while the allegations are investigated by the Justice Department.

So far, so standard for a system in

which corporate profits appear to hold sway over the actual care of patients, or so you might think. But here's the rub: As an increasingly desperate Theresa May begs for post-Brexit trade deals, this lawsuit lays bare what may be in store for the already beleaguered NHS.

Here's why; From 2006 to 2009 (which includes the period under investigation), the Chief Executive of Ovations, United Health's Medicare arm, was Simon Stevens. Stevens later served as Executive Vice President of United Health, responsible for, among other things, global healthcare interests, where he lobbied for the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP). TTIP would have seen the NHS potentially opened up to US Healthcare companies.

Simon Stevens is now Chief Executive of NHS England.

British workers are suffering the worst deal in the developed world

<http://anotherangryvoice.blogspot.co.uk/2017/03/british-workers-are-suffering-worst.html>

In July 2016 it was revealed that British workers have suffered the joint biggest post-crisis collapse in the real value of the wages anywhere in the developed world. The only other country in the OECD to have experienced a such a severe decline in workers' wages is crisis-stricken Greece.

New data from the OECD puts this astonishing collapse in the value of UK workers' wages into an ever harsher perspective. Aside from suffering the joint worst wage collapse in the developed world, the UK is the only developed economy in which wages fell while the economy was actually growing.

UK workers have been given a uniquely bad deal. There's no other developed nation where workers' wages were systematically eroded while the economy was actually expanding.

One of the most significant causes of the unprecedented decline in UK work-

ers' wages is the replacement of "real" full-time jobs with part-time, zero hours and gig economy contracts. Since 2010 only around a third of new jobs have been full-time paid positions, with the rest being part-time or self-employment.

The UK economy has been shifting from being a high-skill high-pay economy, to a low-skill low-pay one. Between 2007 and 2015 the number of managerial positions in the UK economy fell by 24%, while the number of low-skilled jobs increased by a similar amount.

One of main causes in the UK's unprecedented wage collapse has been the socially and economically ruinous Tory austerity agenda.

Ideologically driven cuts in government spending have resulted in the abolition of hundreds of thousands of decent well-paid jobs, while the public sector pay freeze has inflicted below inflation pay increases on millions of workers.

Tory election fraud: Prosecutions could be started 'within weeks'

<http://voxpolygonline.com/2017/03/05/tory-election-fraud-prosecutions-could-be-started-within-weeks/>

According to The Times, Conservative MPs and campaigners involved in the Tory election fraud allegations may face prosecution within weeks.

The bad news is that the newspaper seems to think the number of investigations has been whittled down to fewer than 12.

Has anybody seen any announcements of investigations being halted in individual cases?

Nor have I.

This is the problem with the right-wing press - we get this constant drip... drip of misinformation and speculation with a pro-Tory slant.

Why can't they just report the news?

Bubbling along, often little reported in the media*, has been a police investigation into whether Conservative MPs broke the law on election expenses at the general election.

Not only does the investigation go to the very top of the party, involving one of Theresa May's closest aides, it

also involves more than enough MPs to wipe out the Conservative majority in the House of Commons. The Electoral Commission has already had to go to court to force the Conservatives to hand over evidence.

Now the The Times reports:

Senior [Conservative] figures fear that the results of up to half a dozen constituency votes could be declared void – causing hurried by-elections – if prosecutors decide to make an example of the party. Criminal charges against key individuals are also possible...

At one stage 24 investigations were taking place into seats where the Tories were suspected of spending more on their campaign than the legal limit. It is believed that this has been reduced to fewer than a dozen investigations in which the police believe the evidence warrants further examination.

Yesterday a police source said that files were expected to be sent to the Crown Prosecution Service within weeks.

A man with no legs had his disability benefits slashed 'because he could climb stairs with his arms'

<http://evolvepolitics.com/a-man-with-no-legs-had-his-disability-benefits-slashed-because-he-could-climb-stairs-with-his-arms/>

A few months ago, EvolvePolitics ran a story suggesting that DWP boss Damien Green might find himself as unpopular as Iain Duncan Smith. After the last week it isn't hard to see why.

Documented cases of bungled assessments overturned on appeal are legion. Claimants have been refused benefits even when terminal-ly-ill, hospitalised or otherwise incapacitated. Numerous assessment centres for disabled claimants have been found to be inaccessible to disabled claimants. An increasing number of suicides and deaths have been blamed on Tory welfare policy in general and the hated health assessment system in particular.

The department's latest embarrassment concerns double-amputee Julius Holgate. Mr. Holgate uses a wheelchair after losing both legs and, you might think, this might cause anyone per-

forming his Work Capability Assessment and deciding his entitlement to take this into account.

They didn't.

Instead, Mr. Holgate had to appeal against a decision to refuse him Employment and Support Allowance because, according to his original assessment, he scored zero points and was fit for work. According to the DWP, Mr. Holgate is able to climb stairs using only his arms so has sufficient mobility to work.

He then had to apply to the DWP for a Mandatory Reconsideration (no change) and then lodge an appeal. In the meantime he was reduced to selling personal belongings to survive. This didn't cut any ice with the DWP, either.

It very seldom does.

BEST of

GOOD THING FOR OUR KIDS THAT LABOUR IS #EFFECTIVEOPPOSITION

<https://skwawkbox.org/2017/03/04/good-thing-for-our-kids-that-labour-is-effectiveopposition/>

In spite of huge evidence to the contrary in the form of a string of u-turns forced on the Tory government since Jeremy Corbyn became leader, you will still hear - with nauseating regularity - Tory MPs, TV pundits and, shamefully, right-wing Labour MPs and activists pretending to bemoan the supposed lack of 'an effective opposition'.

Tories and 'journalists' claim it's because a 'strong opposition is important to democracy'. Labour right-whingers claim it's because the vulnerable need one. Only last week, this was the headline in the Independent:

As the SKWAWKBOX pointed out in January, Labour under Corbyn have forced a string of u-turns from Theresa May - and from Cameron before her. Even arch-Tory Guido Fawkes lamented it:

May-u-turns

Tories, pundits and red Tories are talking nonsense - and they know it.

And for the sake of our nation's children, it's just as well.

Last year, the Tories announced plans - in their Children and Social Work Bill - to allow local authorities to opt out of their legal obligation to protect the children in their area.

You didn't just misread that - they intended to allow councils to apply for an exemption from their legal duty to look after vulnerable children. This blog does not need to elaborate on the potential horrors for which that would create space. Suffice to say that a cash-strapped council - and they are all cash-strapped - that finds it no longer has to provide a protection is going to be seriously tempted not to. Services would be farmed out to private providers, putting children at seriously increased risk.

The excellent Shadow Education Secretary, Angela Rayner and Labour MP Emma Lewell-Buck have taken point on Labour's opposition to this

malignant Tory move. Ms Lewell-Buck pointed out during a Commons debate in December:

The Government have denied time and again that the opt-out clauses were about privatisation, yet late last week, two years after it was written and after an inexplicable delay in responding to freedom of information requests, the Department for Education released a report, referred to by my hon. Friend the Member for Ashton-under-Lyne (Angela Rayner), which sets out how children's social care can be moved out of local authority control—a report which states that independent contractors have said that they are willing to play the long game and wait for councils to hand over the majority, if not all, of their children's social care services.

The Tories have been extremely reluctant to give ground, but an intense resistance, co-ordinated by Ms Rayner and Ms Buck, took its toll and this week Angela Rayner was able to announce:

Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn was quick to recognise a fantastic and most definitely effective effort:

Too right. All of Labour's many successes under Corbyn in thwarting the Tories have been vital, but the protection of our children will be a cause that affects every decent human being viscerally.

On a huge range of issues, Labour has successfully blocked the Tory government's attempts to rob the British people and take away their protections in order to fund tax cuts to billionaires and large corporations.

That's what the Tories do - or would, if Labour wasn't stopping them.

For the sake of our children, we should be delighted that they continue to do so - and completely unsurprised that you will not hear the media, Tories or faux-Labour figures ever admit that Labour under Jeremy Corbyn is an unusually effective opposition.

Should Corbyn really take the blame for Copeland? An open letter to Owen Jones

<http://novaramedia.com/2017/03/03/should-corbyn-really-take-the-blame-for-copeland-an-open-letter-to-owen-jones/>

Owen Jones's recent video and column looked to Labour's rout in the Copeland by-election to question Jeremy Corbyn's future. Wider questions remain, but this open letter asks whether it's fair to blame Corbyn for Copeland.

Owen,

My name is Tom Raeside, I am 19 years old, and I joined the Labour party when I was 14 on the principles of fairness, equality, peace and socialism. I became interested in politics after reading your book *Chavs: The Demonization of the Working Class*, my experience of the NHS, through my mother's work as a social worker in the north east, and through the Corbyn campaign. I joined the People's Bookshop in Durham and have been volunteering there for the last 18 months. I am member of Penrith and the Borders constituency Labour party next door to the Copeland constituency.

I campaigned passionately in Copeland over the last month and was heartbroken when the result came in. As someone who has been on the doorstep I would like to share with you the reasons why I thought Labour lost the by-election.

1. Labour is the establishment party in Copeland.

The area has had a Labour MP since 1935. Copeland also has had a Labour council since year dot. Jack Cunningham became Copeland's MP in 1970 (when the constituency was named Whitehaven); a figure who made a significant contribution to the perception that the local Labour party was the establishment. Cunningham was followed by Jamie Reed in 2005, and it must be said neither was a Labour MP for Copeland but rather the Sellafield nuclear reprocessing site. Copeland council is run by a socially conservative Labour administration that has done nothing for the constituency, and it didn't help that the by-election candidate, Gillian Troughton, was a former Labour councillor in the area. The local

party has been tacky; if you were living there why would you jump to Labour?

Not once in this campaign were radical policies suggested by the candidate, e.g. the reopening of a railway to Keswick or taking Sellafield into public ownership. In an area that has had its local secondary school in Whitehaven severely damaged by academisation, I can't recall it ever being mentioned by the candidate's office that academisation is detrimental to the values of education. As you mentioned in your video, the health service is a massive issue in the constituency. Unsurprisingly, the fact that Jamie Reed left his role as MP during a process that will destroy the local health service has really damaged the Labour brand locally. Sadly the healthcare campaign has been led by a coalition rather than the local Labour party. This is not down to Corbyn, but really poor Labour organising around the health service locally at a time when Labour needed to show real leadership on the health service. Instead the Liberal Democrat parliamentary candidate was a part of the county's health coalition and the Tories weren't attacked over the health service as they should have been.

2. Labour North's organising was shambolic.

3. The coordination of Tristram Hunt and Jamie Reed's resignations was meant to be at the same time to cause maximum disruption as possible.

Having witnessed the defeat first-hand, I am baffled and so upset that Corbyn is getting the blame for it. Owen, I really do take notice of what you say and it is a big influence in my political thinking, but this comes from someone who has been campaigning passionately in Copeland.

Yours fraternally,
Tom Raeside (Youth Officer Penrith and the Border CLP)

STORY BY ALAN DAVIES

ART BY ANDREW KEIR

CHRIS THE CAREERIST #17



Meetings with my Oncologist 4

This one really is about the Patient's Eye, writes Ian Charles, The Word's Health Correspondent.

It's now four years since I attended the urology clinic with my wife to discover what the biopsy had uncovered about my condition. I was wearing a catheter, which is a long tube from the bladder, dangling out of your dangly bits, Velcro fastened to your leg, and terminating in a bag with a tap.

It had been my dearest wish, I'd said to my wife the previous autumn, to become a water butt; from time to time you decide, ah, it needs emptying, so you find a surreptitious place to open the tap and discharge a torrent of hot steaming tosh down the drain, or if you're lucky, down a lavatory. Prior to that I'd been running for dear life to the nearest public convenience, thick bush or back of a disused shed, to relieve myself yet pass what seemed to be mere drops of liquid.

Yes, yes, I had advanced prostate cancer, and for two years, once they'd sorted out the blockage and I could pass water properly, I took the tablets, had the injections, and was looked at by all manner of robotic creatures purchased at great expense by private financiers



who have stumped up money for the NHS to pay back at great expense for ever to people who pay no tax themselves, but by virtue of a revenue stream from the NHS, actually themselves tax you and me! It's a cunning little plan; I don't know who thought of it but a UK Prime Minister 1997 - 2007 liked it.

Then there was the cough.

About two years ago I had a cold, leaving me with a cough. I went to see my GP who asked me if I'd like a chest X-ray. Lung nodules were discovered, which had evidently 'moved' from where they'd been two years previously, when the robots had been scanning

and searching and seeking and destroying. Everybody larked: ha-ha-ha, they've moved; they used to be here and now they're there!

It doesn't take a degree in medical science to work out that treatment had destroyed them initially and now they'd come back in different places, but I had fifteen

months of investigations before somebody actually admitted it, and I was sent to an Oncologist. One of the crunch indicators was "The Patient's Eye" which had erupted internally sending a brilliant display in patterns of red across my vision for five minutes one evening.

I waited at the eye clinic the next day and it was easy. They took a photo and told me to go to my optician in six weeks' time to see if the funny spot had gone. Only a neighbour, a consultant eye surgeon, spotted that the spot was a Roth's Spot, formed of coagulated fibrin/platelets, bits of inflammation, infection, or neoplastic cells. They can be caused by diabetes, HIV (rarely,) lupus, hepatitis, rheumatoid factor and, *guessed it yet?* by blood-borne cancers, like leukaemia. My cancer had gone via the blood to the lungs where it had been filtered out by tiny tubes there and started to grow. Luckily (luckily?) I had been tested for lupus, HIV, rheumatoid factor and the rest by the Lungs Man (ha-ha-ha) and so that was why my new Oncologist said to me, "Tell me about the eye!"

I got a drug which costs the NHS about £40K per year and feel marvellous as a result. When Jeremy Hunt has sold the NHS to Donald Trump, I wonder if this will continue?



CITY SPRINT COURIER MAGGIE DEWHURST

By Derek Pattison,
President Tameside TUC
(in a personal capacity)

The Government has come under pressure to clarify the law on 'self-employment' following a huge increase in the number of so-called 'independent contractors' being employed in the gig economy. As 'independent contractors', workers do not get a regular wage but are paid for the 'gigs' they do, such as delivering food or making a car journey. Typically, contractors are on short-term contracts or freelance work and do not, as independent contractors, qualify for the living wage, sick-pay, pensions, holiday-pay or basic employment rights. They also have to pay their own NI and tax contributions.

Last year, an Employment Tribunal ruled in a case brought by two Uber drivers, James Farrar and Yaseen Aslam, members of the GMB Union who were represented by the firm 'Leigh Day', that workers who accept these 'gigs' were not independent contractors but "workers to whom certain employment rights are due." In what is seen as a landmark ruling, the tribunal found that they were

entitled to the same rights as full-time employees. Uber is currently appealing against the decision on the grounds that it is a technology company and not a taxi firm.

In February, an Uber driver speaking to MPs on the House of Commons work and pensions select committee, told them that although he worked 90 hours per week, he still needed to claim state benefits. Minicab drivers working for Uber, have also stated that after Uber's 20% cut and car expenses have been deducted from their pay, their earnings fall below the minimum wage. It was also revealed at the select committee that the courier 'Deliveroo', had included a clause in its contracts that forbade riders from challenging their employed status in the courts.

An investigation by the Guardian newspaper, found that some 10,000 so-called "life-style couriers" working for the company Hermes, who deliver parcels for retailers such as 'Next' and 'John Lewis', were earning less than £6 an hour. In January, the delivery firm 'Jinn', based in East London, told its couriers that it was scrapping its hourly rate of £8 an hour for its self-employed

contractors and introducing a piecework system based on payment per delivery. A Jinn courier based in Leeds told the Guardian that he'd been paid £125 for a 72-hour week.

Two other legal challenges are also likely to impact on the gig economy. In January, a London Employment Tribunal, found that Maggie Dewhurst, a 29-year-old bicycle courier from South London who worked for City Sprint, who have 3,500 couriers, should be classed as an employee rather than self-employed and was entitled to basic employment rights such as the minimum wage, holiday pay and sick pay. The tribunal ruled that the company had acted unlawfully when they failed to pay Ms. Dewhurst two day's holiday pay. Tribunal Chair, Joanna Wade, said that City Sprint's contractual arrangements were: "contorted", "indecipherable" and "window dressing".

Another case that has been widely reported is that of Gary Smith vs Pimlico Plumbers. Having worked as a plumber for six-years until 2011, Mr. Smith was dismissed by the firm when he suffered a heart attack and he sued Pimlico

for sick pay. The Court of Appeal recently ruled that Mr. Smith was entitled to basic employment rights such as sick pay in spite of being technically self-employed.

Other legal challenges are already in the pipeline and are being taken against companies such as Addison Lee, Excel and eCourier. What all these cases have in common, is that they consider the real relationship that exists between independent contractors and the companies that they work for. Although the meaning of "worker/employee" is defined in section 230 of the Employment Rights Act 1996, in employment law, what it seems to boil down to is this: who is really in control? Clearly, there are certain distinct advantages for many employers to maintain the fiction that the people who do the work are not workers but self-employed. But as Maggie Dewhurst pointed out at her tribunal hearing, she was not a genuinely self-employed person because she could not "pick and choose" which jobs to accept:

"We spend all day being told what to do, when to do it and how to do it. We're under their control. We're not a mosaic of small busi-

nesses and that is why we deserve basic employment rights like the national minimum wage."

Maggie Dewhurst, who was represented by the law firm Bates Wells Braithwaite and backed by the Independent Workers of Great Britain (IWGB), believes that workers need to wake up and take action to stop this "on-demand model" of employment spreading. She said:

"Unless we take drastic action, we will all wake up in five years time on bogus contracts, with no employment rights, paid per task, and managed by a smartphone."

The Government have announced that a review led by Matthew Taylor, CEO of the Royal Society for the encouragement of Arts, Manufactures and Commerce (RSA), is to investigate the gig economy and the rise in self-employment and zero-hour contracts. It is expected that the review will lead to recommendations for the law to be changed. It has also been disclosed that the exchequer is facing a £6bn shortfall in NI revenue by the beginning of the next decade as a result of the rapid growth of self-employment in the UK - up by around 1 million since 2009.

TORIES ATTA THE DISABL

By Kitty Jones

Personal Independence Payment is a non means tested benefit for people with a long-term health condition or impairment, whether physical, sensory, mental, cognitive, intellectual, or any combination of these. It is an essential financial support towards the extra costs that ill and disabled people face, to help them lead as full, active and independent lives as possible.

Before 2010, policies that entailed cutting lifeline support for disabled people and those with serious illnesses were unthinkable. Now, systematically dismantling social security for those citizens who need support the most has become the political norm.

Any social security policy that is implemented with the expressed aim of "targeting those most in need" and is implemented to replace a policy that is deemed "unsustainable" is invariably about cost cutting by reducing the eligibility criteria for entitlement. The government were explicit in their statement about the original policy intent behind Personal Independence Payment. However, those being targeted as "most in need" is an ever-shrinking, constantly re-defined category - an ever-shifting and ever-shrinking shrinking goal-post.

Disability benefits were originally designed to help sick and disabled people meet their needs, additional living costs and support people sufficiently to allow a degree of dignity and independent living. You would be mistaken in thinking, however, that Personal Independent Payment was designed for that. It seems to have been designed to be the Treasury's

ever-increasing pocket money. Or as the source of profit for private providers who constantly assess, monitor, coerce and attempt to "incentivise" those people being systematically impoverished by the state to make "behaviour changes," which entail not being disabled or ill and taking any available employment, regardless of its suitability.

The government have already considered ways of reducing the eligibility criteria for the daily living component of Personal Independence Payment (PIP) by narrowing definitions of aids and appliances, and were kite-flying further limits to eligibility for PIP last year.

Two independent tribunals have ruled that the Department for

Work and Pensions (DWP) should expand the scope and eligibility of Personal Independence Payment (PIP), which helps both in-work and out-of work disabled people fund their additional living costs.

Following a court ruling in favour of disabled people last month, the government is rushing in an urgent change to the law to prevent many people with mental health conditions being awarded the mobility component of PIP. The court held that people with conditions such as severe anxiety can qualify for the enhanced rate of the mobility component, on the basis of problems with "planning and following a journey", or "going out".

The government's new regulations will reverse the recent ruling

and means that people with mental health conditions such as severe anxiety who can go outdoors, even if they need to have someone with them, are much less likely to get an award of even the standard rate of the PIP mobility component. The new regulations also make changes to the way that the descriptors relating to taking medication are interpreted, again in response to a ruling by a tribunal in favour of disabled people.

The first tribunal said more points should be available in the "mobility" element for people who suffer "overwhelming psychological distress" when travelling alone. The second tribunal recommended more points in the "daily living" element for people who need help to take medication and monitor a

health condition.

The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) warned that it would cost £3.7bn extra by 2022 implement the court ruling. The government have responded by formulating "emergency legislation" to stop the legal changes that the upper tribunals had ruled on from happening. From 16 March the law will be changed, without any democratic conversation with disabled people and related organisations, or debate in parliament, so that the phrase "For reasons other than psychological distress" will be added to the start of descriptors c, d and f in relation to "Planning and following journeys" on the PIP form.

It's worth noting that the Coalition Government enshrined in law



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a commitment to parity of esteem for mental and physical health in the Health and Social Care Act 2012. In January 2014 it published the policy paper Closing the Gap: priorities for essential change in mental health (Department of Health, 2014), which sets out 25 priorities for change in how children and adults with mental health problems are supported and cared for. The changes to PIP does not reflect that commitment.

The new regulations are being rushed in without any dialogue with the Social Security Advisory Committee, too.

The government have legislated regulations which would, according to Penny Mordaunt, be about "restoring the policy originally intended when the Government developed the PIP assessment".

The original policy intent was to create an opportunity to limit eligibility for those previously claiming Disability Living Allowance (DLA) whilst they were being reassessed for PIP, which replaced DLA. And to limit successful new claims.

Mordaunt also said in a written statement to MPs: "If not urgently addressed, the operational complexities could undermine the consistency of assessments, leading to confusion for all those using the legislation, including claimants, assessors, and the courts.

"It is because of the urgency caused by these challenges, and the implications on public expenditure, that proposals for these amendments have not been referred to the Social Security Advisory Committee before making the regulations."

An ever-shifting, ever-shrink-

ing goalpost

Any social security policy that is implemented with the expressed aim of "targeting those most in need" is invariably about cost cutting and reducing eligibility criteria for entitlement. The government were explicit in their statement about the original policy intent of Personal Independence Payment.

The government has already considered ways of reducing eligibility criteria for the daily living component of Personal Independence Payment by narrowing definitions of aids and appliances, last year.

Prior to the introduction of PIP, Esther McVey stated that of the initial 560,000 claimants to be reassessed by October 2015, 330,000 of these are targeted to either lose their benefit altogether or see their payments reduced.

We ought to question and challenge a government that displays such contempt for the judicial system, and ask where the ever-reductive quest for the ever-shrinking category of "those with the greatest need" will end.

Labour's Shadow Work and Pensions Secretary, Debbie Abrahams MP, criticised the decision, saying: "Instead of listening to the court's criticisms of PIP assessments and correcting these injustices, this government have instead decided to undermine the legal basis of the rulings".

Abrahams added: "This is an unprecedented attempt to subvert an independent tribunal judgment by a right-wing government with contempt for judicial process.

By shifting the goal posts, the Tory Government will strip entitlements from over 160,000 disabled

people, money which the courts believe is rightfully theirs. This is a step too far, even for this Tory government."

The government seem to think that PIP is a policy that ought to benefit only the needs of a government on an ideological crusade to reduce social security away to nothing - "to target those in greatest need" - an ever-shrinking, constantly redefined category of disability.

It is not a democratic government: they are unwilling to engage in a dialogue with the public or to recognise and reflect public needs: that's an authoritarian elite taking public money and handing it out to a very wealthy minority group in the form of "incentivising" tax cuts, who then say to the public that providing lifeline support for disabled people and those with mental health/medical conditions is "unsustainable".

Implications for the UN convention of the human rights of disabled persons and the Equality Act
The new PIP changes, pushed through without any public conversation or democratic exchange with disabled people, are in breach of both the UN convention on the rights of disabled persons, and the UK Equality Act.

In the Equality Analysis PIP assessment criteria document, the government concede that: "Since PIP is a benefit for people with a disability, impairment or long-term health condition, any changes will have a direct effect on disabled people. The vast majority of people receiving PIP are likely to be covered by the definition of "disability" in the Equality Act 2010.

By definition, therefore, the UT [upper tribunal] judgment results

in higher payments to disabled people, and reversing its effect will prevent that and keep payments at the level originally intended. The difference in income will clearly make a real practical difference to most affected claimants, and (depending on factors such as their other resources) is capable of affecting their ability to be independently mobile, access services etc - all matters covered by the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities as set out at the start of this Analysis."

It goes on to say in the document: "However, this does not necessarily mean that the increased payments that would result from the judgment are a fair reflection of the costs faced by those affected, or represent a fair approach as between different groups of PIP claimants."

People with the following conditions are likely to be affected by the reversal of the independent tribunal's ruling on those needing support to manage medication, monitor a health condition, or both:

Diabetes mellitus (category unknown), Diabetes mellitus Type 1 (insulin dependent), Diabetes mellitus Type 2 (non-insulin dependent), Diabetic neuropathy, Diabetic retinopathy, Disturbances of consciousness - Nonepileptic - Other / type not known, Drop attacks, Generalised seizures (with status epilepticus in last 12 months), Generalised seizures, (without status epilepticus in last 12 months), Narcolepsy, Non epileptic Attack disorder (pseudoseizures), Partial seizures (with status epilepticus in last 12 months), Partial seizures (without status epilepticus in last 12 months), Seizures - unclassified
Dizziness - cause not specified,

Stokes Adams attacks (cardiovascular syncope), Syncope - Other / type not known.

People with the following conditions are likely to be affected by the reversal of the independent tribunal's ruling on the effect of the Upper Tribunal judgment, regarding mobility, with conditions in the general category of "psychological distress":

Mood disorders - Other / type not known
Psychotic disorders - Other / type not known, Schizophrenia, Schizoaffective disorder, Phobia - Social Panic disorder, Learning disability - Other / type not known, Generalized anxiety disorder, Agoraphobia, Alcohol misuse, Anxiety and depressive disorders - mixed Anxiety disorders, - Other / type not known, Autism, Bipolar affective disorder (Hypomania / Mania), Cognitive disorder due to stroke
Cognitive disorders - Other / type not known, Dementia, Depressive disorder, Drug misuse, Stress reaction disorders - Other / type not known
Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), Phobia - Specific Personality disorder
Obsessive compulsive disorder (OCD).

The government's so-called commitment to a "parity of esteem for mental health and physical health" was clearly nothing more than an empty promise - an opportunistic platitude. This is a government that says one thing and then does exactly the opposite.

It's all part of a gaslighting, and linguistic techniques of neutralisation strategy that passes as Conservative "justification" for their draconian deeds and bullying, discriminatory and uncivilised austerity regime, aimed disproportionately at disabled people.



One Man's View On Socialism In America

by t.a.mayes

I think in America today people do not really comprehend what Socialism is and what it is not. If so, they would understand that Socialism is a theory in which all that is produced is shared with everyone of the community. As people work together with a common goal of caring for one another the community becomes stronger and everyone prospers with success and share in the defeats.

No one person is above another. The person that decides what is to be produced is no better spiritually nor economically than the man or woman that toils daily to produce said goods.

This is ideal in a perfect world, thus a theory.

When you have elites that sit at high price dinner fund raising affairs for the downtrodden they are oblivious to what it means to be downtrodden. They would no more live in a hovel, toiling away at two, sometimes three jobs to provide for their family than they would voluntarily cease to breathe.

Human nature muddies the water with any economic or political system. Corruption has run rampant in all societies, no matter the structure it is built upon since the first government was established thousands of years ago. As man is imperfect, so too will be the society that he or she establishes.

The only times I have seen true socialism work so beautifully in a community is times of disaster. Great flooding, terrible tsunamis, earthquakes, and in my personal experience, devastating wildfires.

Last August my small community in Northern California came to know such a disaster. One third of the homes were destroyed as well as many businesses from a raging wildfire.

People were displaced. Property and beloved pets were consumed in the inferno that lasted a week.

During this time and after, I witnessed people of all stations of life shedding their identity and come together to distribute resources and goods to all those in need, no matter their status in the community.

People in need put their own needs aside and helped those who were in greater need.

Food was prepared and cooked and served to anyone that came. No funds were ever requested while great sums of money were raised without fanfare.

Homes were opened up to victims.

Clothing was provided.

Aid was given to anyone who requested help without any qualifications.

People who would normally never come together hugged and embraced each other, sharing tears and laughter with one another.

No one person was more important than another.

In this form of micro-socialism our community came together and has changed us greatly and still remains with us today, though with time I am sure this will fade to its original state.

We Are Strong is a statement of coming together as one and surviving.

If you could eliminate man's nature to accumulate through power and corruption, society could thrive under Socialism.

We would realize Utopia.

Sadly human nature seems to be devolving instead, as you see happening in our country which is becoming more divisive and hostile. You can not beat someone in the name of peace.

No political or economical society can prosper when people cannot remain civil and are at odds with each other.

As I see it, I am for any system that would bring about Utopia.

I am also a realist.



I watched the Marr show a week or so ago when Lord Mandelbrot went on to tell Andrew how he works tirelessly on behalf of Labour. By this I think he meant in order to undermine the leadership and prevent a double win for the Party and Jeremy Corbyn later in the week.

Some you win; some you lose, Jeremy didn't say the day after, but Mandelbrot might have done, as could his representative on Earth, Tony Blair, who instead of attacking the hapless Paul 'Nutty Boy' Nuttall (didn't I tell you he used to be a member of Madness?) chose to launch another ill-timed and unwelcome attack on the Labour Leadership, which all members of the Party will agree is nothing like it used to be Back In the Day.

Labour's majority in Copeland went from very healthy in 1997, through respectable in 2001 and 2005, to a bit dodgy in 2010, to almost marginal in 2015. Some people won't see it like that, but when an anti-Corbyn candidate,

selected by a CLP critical of Corbyn, fights a campaign against a Tory who is portraying Labour's leader as anti-Nuclear fuel and herself as against the projected closure of a local maternity hospital, then I hardly see this as any fault of the Left of the Party.

I asked myself "What is the Marr Show for?" and it took me until last week to understand that it's a show full of jokes!

On his 26th February programme, Andrew cracked a joke about the Cesspit Murderer, something about it being a killing that stinks more than usual. Bad comedy, boy.

UKIP got the first political slot (well it is the BBC) and deputy leader Peter Whittle made a joke that Nuttall had run too early in Stoke, when people didn't know him. Surely they knew all about him, from his appearances on Stage, Screen and TV and when he won X-factor in 1956? When asked about Arron Banks (Tory Party Donor who says he'll abandon UKIP if

they don't make him party chairman) Whittle admitted he was glad of Bank's contribution to UKIP. Marr said, with impeccable timing "His money, you mean."

Menacingly, Whittle got onto Immigration; he doesn't just want a points system and an aptitude test for people wanting to live here, but an attitude test; do they share our values? This was his best joke; a majority in the UK don't share UKIP's values!

Then came (Sir) Patrick McLoughlin, Chairman of the Conservative Party and of the Duchy of Lancaster, who had a succession of one-liners. When Marr asked about the Tories pretending to be the Party of the Working Class, Paddy quipped that the working class "have to do the right thing." When asked if he was embarrassed that the Resolution Foundation show the richest households set to become richer and the poorer ones poorer, he retorted, "Let's see if that becomes true." In the face of more statistics from Marr, cheerful Pat-



rick said "We've got to reduce the deficit, but we're helping the low earners." When informed that the bottom quartile find things really tough, he replied, "We're offering them apprenticeships."

On the £3.7bn cuts to disabled benefits, he got even merrier, "Overall we do very well for disabled people; we're spending a lot on benefits, but we do need to balance the books." When told that Iain Duncan Smith had sat in that very chair a little while ago and had said that this wasn't fair, he came back with, "Iain agreed to it when he was Work and Pensions Secretary."

On the by-elections: "Copeland was a fantastic result; good candidate. We can look every seat, and challenge hard." Now they've won it, let's see how they do with that maternity hospital shall we?

Shami Chakrabarti, for Labour, disagreed that the Copeland result was Jeremy Corbyn's fault. Marr made his best joke of the morning, "If it's not his fault, or Tom Watson's, or yours, then it must be La-

bour's policies!"

The message is not getting through at the moment, partly because Labour haven't had the fairest coverage from the broadcasting media.

Shami said that Labour can't weigh people's votes, they have to cherish them. She thinks that with a united Labour Party, once they see what May's government has in for them, people might see things differently. Labour have suffered from disunity, two leadership elections, Brexit, and need to unite over schools, hospitals, jobs, and benefits.

Activating the membership was good for getting the vote out. It just hadn't been done as well in Copeland as it had in Stoke. Jack Dromey had pointed out that what worked in Stoke was listening to people.

This clearly wasn't funny enough for Marr, who had a little dig at 'Momentum' but Shami wasn't having any of that. The leadership is not in denial. The people

Marr talks to need to take their share of the blame! Shami says it's about communications. We need to get the messages out. *This paper will help them do that.*

To keep up the fun, Marc Almond, turning sixty this year but looking about throty four years old, all in black including hair and sunglasses (sunglasses?) sang an old song Say Hello Wave Goodbye and plugged his 'new' album of old songs (out on 15th March) and his work for Headway, the brain injury association, bless him. A cheesy keyboard, someone playing drum sounds on a flat square of plastic; they do that down the precinct in Leeds, except they have lots of plastic, buckets, cans, tubs and tins, a couple of Polish kids take it in turns, and collect loose change from shoppers. Marc wants more, though.

And lots of vibrato on a lovely red *Fender Stratocaster* from a guitarist with a Donald Trump haircut; hand movements from Marc were pure POTUS45. How I wish *Baba Vanga* had been right about that guy.

KEY POINTS OF THE PROPOSED PLAN TO REGENERATE THE MIDLANDS AND NORTH

Germany as a "compelling" example of how that model works

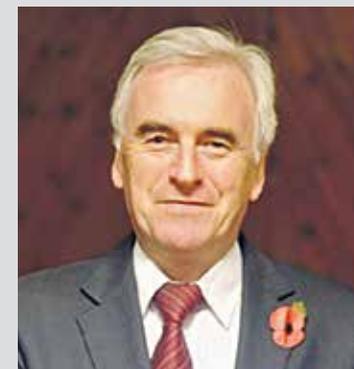
Labour will set up a National Investment Bank, and a network of regional banks whose aim is to help mobilise £500bn into the economy and transform Britain."

A National Investment Bank, managed independently of government, can raise the financing needed to deliver infrastructure on this scale. By mitigating the risks and giving a firm, government-backed commitment to funding

Labour should aim to create another 100,000 jobs in the north-east alone through extra investment spending, with public spending encouraging private firms to invest.

UK's infrastructure requirements over next decade £500bn of additional spending. £250bn of government funding, we could look to massively enhance the UK's current public sector net investment.

lay the foundations for a new economy. And with



£100bn for new public national and regional banks, on the same conservative leverage ratio as the European Investment Bank we could look to deliver an additional £250bn of long-term, patient investment."

McDonnell said Labour would pledge an initial £250bn of government funding over 10 years as well as £100bn for new public national and regional banks. "We wouldn't just reverse the planned cuts to investment," he said. "We would lay the foundations for a new economy."

**Jeremy
Corbyn**

10 PLEDGES TO REBUILD
AND TRANSFORM BRITAIN

An Economy
That Works
For All

Secure Homes
For All

A Free National
Education
Service

Action to
Secure Our
Environment

Security
at Work

10 PLEDGES TO REBUILD
AND TRANSFORM BRITAIN

Cut Income
and Wealth
Inequality

Act to End
Prejudice
and Injustice

Secure Our
NHS and
Social Care

Democracy
in Our
Economy

Peace and
Justice
Abroad

LABOUR GIVING POWER BACK TO THE PEOPLE FOR A DECENT STANDARD OF LIVING

It's the economy, stupid. Perhaps 'it's the economy that lost Labour the last two elections, stupid'

McDonnell wants councils to offer cheap, local-authority backed mortgages so that first-time buyers may actually have a chance of stepping on the housing ladder. Also plans to introduce rent regulations in major cities to ease excessive charges and to offer support to those putting the rent on the overdraft. The plans go much further than the Tory right-to-buy scheme and rather than forcing local authorities to sell off their council housing stock, it will be protected and increased.

Community Care Crisis – A Betrayal of the Vulnerable



By Jonathan Fletcher

David Mowat, junior minister in the Department of Health, suggested that care of the elderly and vulnerable adults should be the responsibility of their families to a select committee. For many families those comments confirmed what they had suspected for a long time about the Conservative Government. That it was seeking to shift the heavy cost of care from the State to those least able to afford it, the families.

In effect such a policy would mean that access to quality dignified care and support would be restricted to those who can afford it. Whilst those families who cannot afford it will be forced to struggle. This will lead to many elderly and disabled people losing the independence that many of them have fought hard to maintain and have no wish to rely on their families for charity and care.

Is it right to remove their choice?

The consequences of this ill thought out policy go beyond cutting the costs of social care.

It has already severely impacted on an already under funded and under resourced NHS as the number of blocked beds has in-

creased. This in turn has led to an unprecedented rise in the number of operations being cancelled this winter and has led to waiting lists growing, the increased costs of cancelled operations, and the human costs of pain and suffering.

The consequences of transferring the cost of community care from the government to local councils and relatives will lead to a postcode lottery of care where wealthier local authorities will be able to offer quality care and the poorer councils will struggle to provide the basics. Thus poorer families are likely to suffer the most.

It is often said that a country can be judged by the way it looks after its elderly and its vulnerable.

Sadly under this government and the coalition we have seen a demise of this nation's sense of responsibility for its elderly members and those with a disability. It is sad that when we look back at this period of history we will judge that our country has treated the most vulnerable in society extremely poorly and this government must be held to account and should hang their heads in shame.

Why should our elderly and our disabled be expected to forfeit their independence or rely on the generosity and charity of families?

The Stoke by-election was quickly disregarded by the media and enemies of Corbyn once Labour held the seat, beating UKIP in the process. That's despite the Stoke constituency voting in favour of Brexit. To even report the merest whiff of a Corbyn triumph goes against the media narrative and subsequently, the agenda.

In reality, there were a number of factors that led to Labour losing the Copeland by-election. Boundary changes in the area had already benefitted the Conservatives and it's clear that UKIP voters in that constituency, switched back to the Tories and enabled them to win the seat. In addition to that, Labour's majority in Copeland had been falling significantly since 1997 and the Labour candidate that stood for the election, wasn't even Jeremy Corbyn's preferred choice. If that wasn't enough, wheeling out Peter Mandelson and Tony Blair to attack the party and it's leader during the week leading up to the elections, whether it was by accident or design, didn't help matters. Each of those factors in isolation might not look like that big a deal, but collectively, they all contributed massively to the defeat and looking at it rationally, it's ridiculous to ask Jeremy Corbyn to take sole responsibility for it.

It's interesting that independent polling shows that the policies being offered by Corbyn's Labour have huge support among large sections of the public. However, when people realise that they are Corbyn's policies, the reaction is often surprise because they tend to refer to the media's narrative in terms of what he stands for. Our Union (the BFAWU) backed Jeremy Corbyn for the leadership of the Labour Party in both elections and continues to support his efforts. This is not because we're a 'hard-left' cult that sees Jeremy Corbyn as a messiah who can do no wrong. It's because we know his intentions towards the people that we represent and that they will have a far better and fairer chance in life with common-sense policies being offered by an hon-



THE STO

est and decent man, with a proven track record of being in their corner and very often, on the right side of history.

Today's Labour Party is more in tune with the needs of our communities than ever before, with

a shadow cabinet full of young talent who are connected to the aspirations of ordinary people in a way that we haven't seen for decades. Supporting a living wage of £10 an hour, stopping the privatisation of our NHS, introducing a national investment bank, building





STOKE BY

affordable homes, renationalising railways, ending zero hours contracts, scrapping the bedroom tax, scrapping the work capability assessment and strengthening workers' rights are all policies worth getting behind. Jeremy Corbyn's vision brings young people into the equation for once, and offers them a future, particularly in education, rather than uncertainty, exploitation and subsequently, lost generations. A Corbyn-led Labour Party will challenge the government's failure to ensure that the wealthy pay their fair share and will address the grotesque gulfs between executive pay and the wages of those at the bottom.

All this can be achieved. The Labour government that so many of Corbyn's detractors in the party claim to want so much can be realised if personalities are put to one side and everyone unites behind the twice elected leader in order to give him the fair wind that he de-

serves. An vibrant shadow cabinet, a supportive Parliamentary Labour Party, a huge membership with active branches, along with continued Trade Union support and exciting ideas would be more than enough to crush the Conservatives in a general election.

Our decision to support Corbyn in 2015 was the right one and our continued support for his leadership remains exactly the same in 2017. As one of the Labour Party's longest affiliated organisations, we've seen many changes and stood firm in the face of those who would take away our rights. Today's Labour Party represents us in a way we haven't seen for a very long time and make no mistake; we will fight to get it into government, whenever that election is called.

Yours in solidarity

Ian Hodson
(BFAWU National President)

Thinking about Labour

Thinking about Labour's apparent resurgence in the Stoke by-election, it seemed that they owe it all to Paul Nuttall's performance, which seems to have been intended, not only to lose an election which he had every right to expect to win, but to bring the party that he represents into, even greater, disrepute. No mean task, for a party mired in scandal and investigations in the UK and Europe.

Having got to thinking about Paul Nuttall's behaviour over the past few weeks, his actions over the last few years came into focus. Claims on his web site that he lost a friend at Hillsborough, claims to be joining the board of a charity who now say that he never received such a request. It seems unlikely that anybody can be that stupid.

Following that line of thought, why then has he behaved in such a manner? Well, who has benefitted from his actions? Labour in Stoke! He is a Labour party plant! They can't have believed they could get so lucky as to have him become leader, but that is a big bonus.

Once the realisation dawns, it becomes obvious. He's a lad from Liverpool. What else could he be but Labour? His selfless devotion to the task of bringing UKIP down and in the process making himself



a target for the hate of the left makes him a socialist hero.

Having started this line of reasoning, it makes sense to see if anybody else might be a mole, set in place to assist Labour. And it is immediately obvious that there is at least one.

What could be more toxic to the LibDems, after their disastrous coalition with the previous tory government, than a new leader who refuses to rule out another coalition with the tories?

Well, done, Tim Farron! Not only have you managed to get elected as a LibDem MP. But have even succeeded in becoming their leader, emulating the massive

achievement of Paul Nuttall.

It also occurs that a lot of people have been saying that Mhairi Black should be a Labour MP and not a member of the SNP. We now realise that she is perfectly placed, and will in all probability be leader of the SNP in the not too distant future, thus being in a position to ensure that Labour party policies are carried out in Scotland, despite the Scottish Labour party.

So who has masterminded these stupendously successful political coups, undercover operations worthy of George Smiley himself? Well, we can't know, but it's a damned fine achievement.

By KOSER SAEED

I've had enough!!!

1. I've had enough of the right wing media putting a negative spin on every Labour success

2. I've had enough of Labour politicians attacking their own democratically elected leader

3. I've had enough of the BBC and Sky news telling lies

4. I've had enough of mainstream media playing the saviours of truth and honesty when they deal in fake news and alternative facts on a daily basis

5. I've had enough of mainstream media cherry picking news stories that fit their political agenda

6. I've had enough of Theresa May never giving a straight answer to a straight question

7. I've had enough of Theresa May attacking Corbyn's leadership every time she doesn't have an answer to a question

8. I've had enough of Theresa May then adopting Corbyn policies (even though she'll never walk the walk) and then taking credit for them.

9. I've had enough of Tim Farron lying to Remain voters about a 2nd referendum (just to win votes) while eagerly anticipating another coalition with the Tories who, of course, are solidly for a hard Brexit.

10. I've had enough of political

platforms like 38 degree removing petitions that don't align with their right wing political agenda

11. I've had enough of Israel's control over British democracy

12. I've had enough of big business and banks controlling British democracy

13. I've had enough of big business reaping all the rewards of our hard work, while ordinary people struggle to get by

14. I've had enough of the elderly (who have worked and paid taxes their whole lives) and the most vulnerable people in our society not asking for help because they're worried that they might be a burden on an overstretched health system

15. I've had enough of A&E waiting times going through the roof and people who desperately need help being left on trolleys in hall ways for hours and hours

16. I've had enough of bed blocking because of this government refusal to put money into social care

17. I've had enough of nearly 4 decades of right wing governments refusing to invest in British businesses and industry because they want to make Britain a more attractive prospect to

foreign investors (who see lack of competition as a major incentive)

18. I've had enough of Tory lies over their failed economic policies that have left us worse off than under any previous Labour Government

19. I've had enough of a Tory austerity policy that continues to reward big business while we have millions of people turning to food banks and mortality rates have shot up dramatically since 2013

20. I've had enough of this government thinking its ok to lock people up for 14yrs if they say negative things about them, like exposing tax dodgers and unnecessary NHS deaths.

21. I've had enough of politicians lying (like promising £350 Million a year for the NHS) and getting away with it.

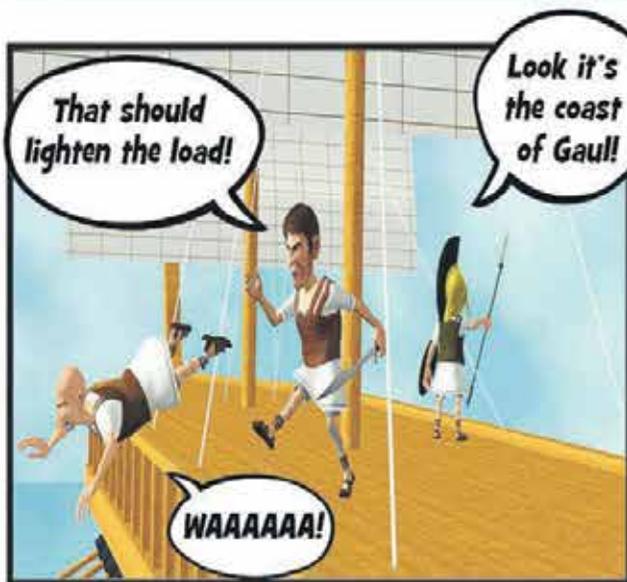
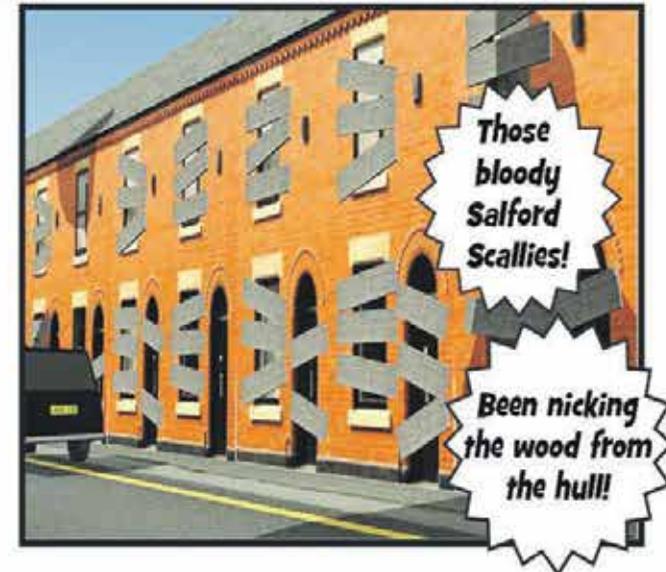
22. I've had enough of politicians lying about their expenses and claiming for second homes and even child care for kids that don't live with them,

I've had enough of a lot of things to be honest folks and this list could be 10 times longer and still not cover everything that I'd like to see changed.

XENOPHONS ADVENTURES IN SALFORD: PART 17



PREVIOUSLY: Disappointed with the current state of affairs in the Green and Pleasant Land, Xenophon holds his own referendum and decides to leave the UK with a shock vote for Xexit. Setting sail once again the course is set for a return ancient Greece, but as per usual, The Fates have been weaving another gloriously convoluted mishap for our heroes...



CREATED BY ALAN DAVIES. ART BY ANDREW KEIR

David Lindsay Column

No Irish Republican organisation has murdered a Member of Parliament in the present century or in the preceding decade. The people responsible are now such pillars of the British Establishment that they stay overnight at Windsor Castle and so forth. No Islamist or Leftist organisation has ever murdered a Member of Parliament. But the Far Right has done so, only last year.

Certain institutional and organisational manifestations of the Far Right are perennial, hitherto even permanent. Thomas Mair's is the Springbok

Club, which is run by the people who also run the London Swinton Circle. As recently as 2014, that was addressed by Liam Fox (born 1961) and by Owen Paterson (born 1956). Ah, those old 1980s Tory Boys, in their Hang Mandela T-shirts and all the rest of it. Wherever did they all end up?

In the Thatcher and, to a lesser extent, Major years, there were Ministers who were members of the Western Goals Institute or the Monday Club. Those crossed over, via such things as the League of Saint George, to overt neo-Nazism on the Con-

tinental, to the Ku Klux Klan, to apartheid South Africa, to Ian Smith's Rhodesia, to the juntas of Latin America, to Marcos and Suharto, to the Duvaliers, and so on. Nick Griffin's father, Edgar, was a Vice-President of Iain Duncan Smith's Leadership Campaign. He answered what was listed as one of its official telephone numbers (in his house) with the words "British National Party".

It was the Monday Clubbing Geoffrey Rippon who negotiated British accession to what was really always the European Union, the defining cause of Mosley's post-War vehicle, the Union Movement. While we wait for the outcome of the Brexit negotiations, there needs to be immediate legislation,

taking effect entirely regardless of those negotiations' outcome, if any.

First, restoring the supremacy of United Kingdom over European Union law, using that provision to repatriate industrial and regional policy as Labour has advocated for some time, to repatriate agricultural policy, and to restore the United Kingdom's historic fishing rights of 200 miles or to the median line. Secondly, requiring that all EU legislation, in order to have any effect in this country, be enacted by both Houses of Parliament as if it had originated in one or the other of them.

Thirdly, requiring that British Ministers adopt the show-stopping Empty Chair

Policy until such time as the Council of Ministers met in public and published an Official Report akin to Hansard. Fourthly, disapplying in the United Kingdom any ruling of the European Court of Justice or of the European Court of Human Rights unless confirmed by a resolution of the House of Commons, the High Court of Parliament.

And fifthly, disapplying in the United Kingdom anything passed by the European Parliament but not by the majority of those MEPs who had been publicly certified as politically acceptable by one or more members of the House of Commons. Thus, we should no longer be subject to the legislative will of neo-Fascists and neo-Nazis.

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Word Search Puzzle

LABOUR AFFILIATIONS

ASLEF
 BAKERSUNION
 BECTU
 CHARTIST
 COMPASS
 CWU
 FABIANS
 GMB
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LEFTBRIEFING
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Jokes

They make love for hours. Afterwards, as they lie in bed, the phone rings. Since it's the woman's house, she picks up the receiver. The best friend listens, only hearing her side of the conversation:

"Hello? Oh, hi... I'm so glad that you called... Really? That's wonderful... Well, I'm happy to hear you're having such a great time... Oh, that sounds terrific... Love you, too. OK. Bye-bye."

She hangs up the telephone and her lover asks, "Who was that?"

"Oh," she replies, "That was my husband telling me about the wonderful time he's having on his fishing trip with you."

As a little boy climbed onto Santa's lap, Santa asked the usual, "And what would you like for Christmas?" The child stared at him open mouthed and horrified for a minute, then gasped, "Didn't you get my E-mail?"

A man and his wife were having an argument about who should brew the coffee each morning.

The wife said, "You should do it, because you get up first, and then we don't have to wait as long to get our coffee."

The husband said, "You are in charge of the cooking around here so you should do it, because that is your job, and I can just wait for my coffee." Wife replies, "No, you should do it, and besides it says in the Bible that the man should do the coffee."

Husband replies, "I can't believe that! Show me."

So she fetched the Bible, and opened the New Testament and showed him at the top of several pages, that it indeed says, "HE-BREWS."

A married couple was in a terrible accident where the man's face was severely burned. The doctor told the husband that they couldn't graft any skin from his body because he was too skinny. So the wife offered to donate some of her own skin.

However, the only skin on her body that the doctor felt was suitable would have to come from her buttocks.

The husband and wife agreed that they would tell no one about where the skin came from, and they requested that the doctor also honor their secret. After all, this was a very delicate matter.

After the surgery was completed, everyone was astounded at the man's new face. He looked more handsome than he ever had before! All his friends and relatives just went on and on about his youthful beauty!

One day, he was alone with his wife, and he was overcome with emotion at her sacrifice. He said, "Dear, I just want to thank you for everything you did for me. How can I possibly repay you?"

"My darling," she replied, "I get all the thanks I need every time I see your mother kiss you on the cheeks."

I'm not the easiest guy in the world to get along with. So when our anniversary rolled around, I wanted my wife to know how much I appreciated her tolerating me for the past 20 years. I ordered flowers and told the florist to enclose a card that read, 'Thanks for putting up with me so long.'

When my wife got the delivery, she called me at work.

'Just where do you think you going?' she asked.

'What do you mean?' I said.

She read the card aloud as the florist had written it: 'Thanks for putting up with me. So long.'

I asked a friend of mine by phone what he was doing.

He told me he couldn't talk because he was working on 'aqua-thermal treatment of ceramics, aluminium, and steel while under a dangerously constrained environment.'

I was impressed. Until the following day when I learned that meant he was 'washing dishes with hot water under his upset wife's supervision.'

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A tramp knocked on the door of the inn known as St. George and the Dragon. The landlady answered the door.

The tramp said, "Could you give a poor man something to eat?"

"No," said the woman, slamming the door in his face.

He knocked again and said, "Could I have a few words with George?"

When I was married, my wife used to call me handsome. As a matter of fact, we are now divorced but she STILL calls me handsome.

Every time I have some money, she says, HANDSOME OVER.

QUIZ!

We've mixed some 'life in the UK test' questions with some general United Kingdom trivia. These are for fun and not official 'life in the UK test' questions.

1. On which date is the feast day of the patron saint of Wales, St. David?
2. During which war was the Victoria Cross first awarded?
3. How many countries are members of the European Union?
4. Who was the longest-serving UK Prime Minister of the 20th century?
5. Which members of French Protestant denomination settled in England before 1720?
6. What is the official report of the Parliament's Proceedings called?
7. How many members does a jury have in Scotland?
8. In which county is the prehistoric landmark of Stonehenge?
9. When did the civil war begin between the King Charles I and Parliament?
10. Who was recognised as the leader of the new republic?
11. Who developed horse-driven spinning mills that used only one machine?
12. Who was Prime Minister from 1721 to 1742?
13. Who was the first poet to be buried in Poets' Corner of Westminster Abbey?
14. At her jubilee in 2012, how many years as queen did Queen Elizabeth II celebrate?
15. From what age can you be asked to serve on a jury?
16. On an election day, what time do polling stations close?
17. Chequers, the country retreat of the Prime Minister, is in which English county?
18. What is the minimum age to be able to drink alcohol with a meal?
19. True or False. In Wales, a newly qualified driver must display an 'R' plate (for restricted driver) for one year after passing the test?
20. What is the most famous battle of the Hundred Years War?
21. How many Assembly Members are there in the National Assembly for Wales?
22. True or false. Members of the House of Lords may stand for election to the House of Commons?
23. As of March 2016, how much does a colour television licence cost?
24. As of April 2016, what is the price of a first class stamp?
25. In which year was the Scottish Parliament formed?
26. In England and Wales, the small claims procedure is used for claims of less than how much?
27. The British one pound coin was introduced in which year?
28. In which Irish county is The Giant's Causeway located?
29. Seatbelt use in cars became mandatory for front seat occupants in which year?
30. The population of England roughly makes up what percentage of the UK: (a) 75%, (b) 79%, or (c) 84%?

- ANSWERS**
1. 1st March
 2. Crimean
 3. 28
 4. Margaret Thatcher
 5. Huguenots
 6. Hansard
 7. 15
 8. Wiltshire
 9. 1642
 10. Oliver Cromwell
 11. Richard Arkwright
 12. Sir Robert Walpole
 13. Geoffrey Chaucer
 14. 60 years
 15. 18
 16. 10pm
 17. Buckinghamshire
 18. 16
 19. False - it's in Northern Ireland
 20. Agincourt
 21. 60
 22. False
 23. £145.50
 24. 64p
 25. 1999
 26. £5000
 27. 1983
 28. County Antrim
 29. 1983
 30. 84%

Twice Cooked Healthy Hasselback Potatoes

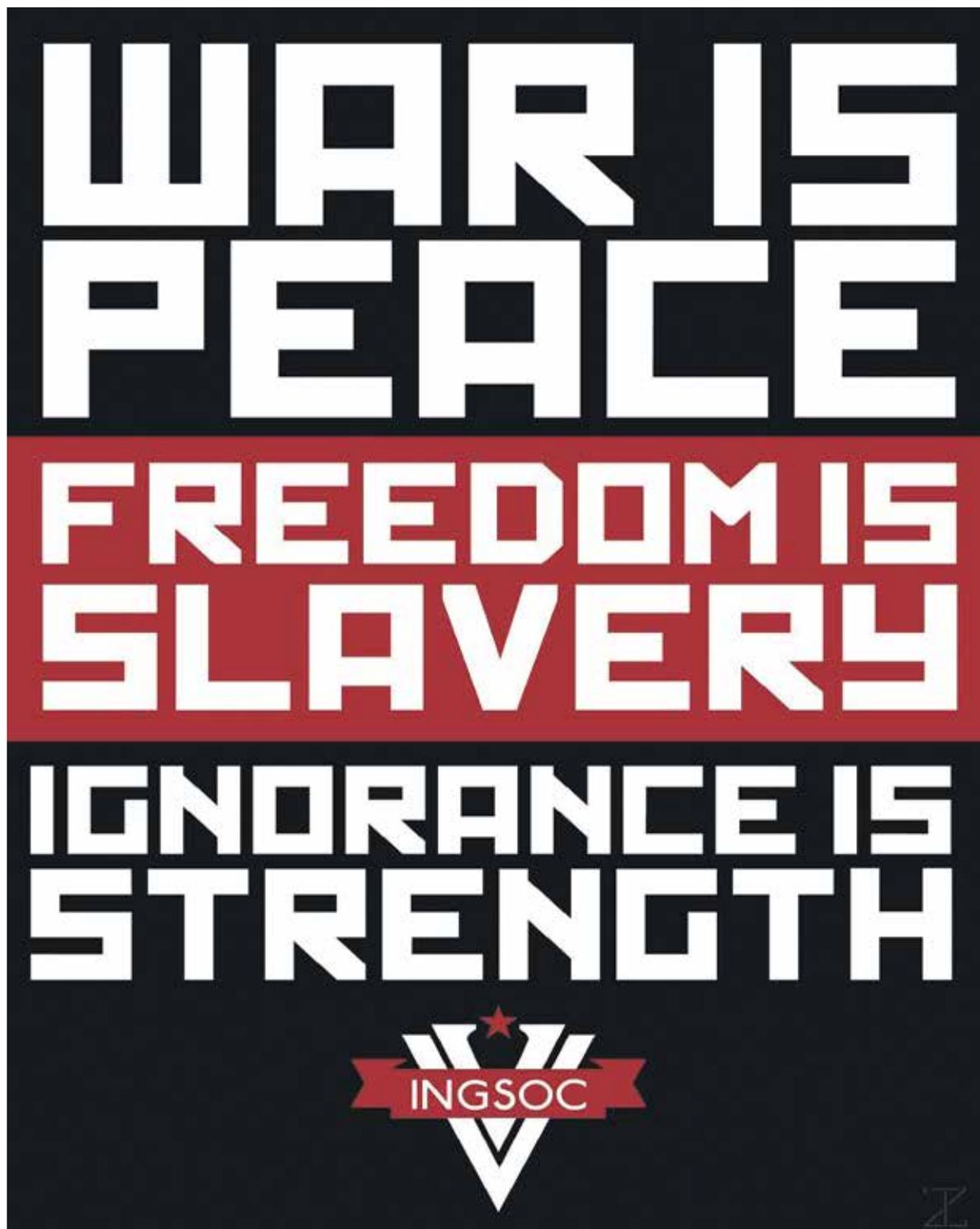


Buttery mash, goose fat roasties, deep fried chips; the combination of the humble spud with some form of fat is always a winner, but there are times when we might want to cut down the calories a bit whilst still getting our potato hit.

This Hasselback potato recipe is useful at those times because of a few tricks - one of which I got from my mum - and a bit of patience. I won't write out a recipe as such, I'll just tell you how I made that lovely big bowl full you see here using only a tablespoon of oil. First slice your potatoes - any kind - using the hedgehog style shown above i.e. almost all the way through in a row. Then steam them carefully, so they hold together, and lift them into a large oven proof dish for which you have a lid (or cover it in foil). My mum's trick is to then pour over hot stock, with one tablespoon of oil in it, to about half way up the potatoes (she does beef but chicken or veg stock will also work, of course). Pop them in the oven and cook on about gas mark 4 for an hour then take the lid off for another 45 minutes. 'Baste' them a few times using the stock, which will all eventually be absorbed into the potatoes giving them a great flavour and leaving the small amount of oil left to brown the tops.



FAKE NEWS! READ ALL ABOUT IT...



If even the Trump says it then perhaps it really is true. From the mouth of the Liar comes a denouncement of the News Industry, CNN is evidently 'Very Fake' and the BBC is 'Another Beaut.'

Well hurrah for Donald; he just said what I've said for the last ten years or so. The press and broadcast media run what they call 'stories' and facts are twisted to fit the story; quotes are clipped and placed out of context to say something they didn't originally.

And most of all, events around the world are carefully selected to advance a particular brief for ideology, and other current affairs ignored because 'the public don't want to read about them' (translation: they don't want the public reading them / their owners and editors don't want them to run these articles.)

It's the reason we've set up The Word, to give you articles and news which other tabloids wouldn't; and we are totally up front about that - we're socialists and you'll always get a socialist view of things.

But POTUS 45 is not quite being as transparent as we are; CSN, for example, who have picked up his Fake News! outburst are surely part of the MSM that we dislike and

mistrust?

Correct! Follow the money and you'll find one of the *Men Who Own America* and select the people who will stand for the position of Leader of the Free World. What a joke.

No, I'm not telling you who, you'll have to work it out for yourselves, get on to Google; you can trust Google, no?

No?

We seem to be in that age of the world where people have been put into place purely to confuse popular opinion. Henry VIII did it first with his advisers, he'd favour one then he'd favour another until none of them knew who he liked or what he thought. His court is well worth studying. Trump is a modern Henry, and five hundred years ago I'd have worried for Melania's pretty head.

Putin has one too, a real Thomas Cromwell who just sows disinformation and suspicion, and sits back laughing. He writes under an alias for the Russian Press. I mean, who'd do such a thing? I'll add both those identities to the Wordsearch puzzle I might create for you to play with at the end of this article, with all various 'News' agencies and Fake News outlets to

spot, but make no mistake, Trump and his silliness are at the heart of at least one of them, perhaps the biggest. This is deliberate; this nonsense from a supposed buffoon I contend is part of a final play to end the game where information is given to the masses and they can know the truth and the truth sets them free. Instead we are subject to a "propaganda machine."

The cabal which finally settled on Trump does so much more than attempt to discredit others. It runs surveillance operations on over two hundred million Americans (and who else?) It runs news agencies dedicated to neutralising any left-wing comment. It has websites which are dedicated to sowing disinformation. "Stories."

Of course, we have Facebook to help us communicate with one another and our representatives and tell each other The Truth. While we do this, bots and fake personae, and algorithms are tracking every post, but more than that, every 'Like', which is something we do and feel meritorious about it.

Wrong.

Why do we click 'Like'? Why are we offered a range of these little emojis by Facebook? Do we

suppose that round about ten years ago a couple of guys in a garage thought it would be nice if people could get in touch with each other to share the Lurve? Do we think they had our needs in mind?

Clearly, and looking at the wealth Facebook has created for its owners, it was a magnificent way of making money! Out of what, a bit of advertising? Those people who appear on our page telling you how nice their block drives are?

Wrong again; it's our data they want most. Years ago I warned that Computers wouldn't control the World at all; the people who controlled the Computers would do that.

Sci-fi movies often have a criminal Mastermind, often an alien, sometimes an odd looking human with a very strange haircut sitting behind the action on a throne, weirdly manipulating the Universe. We have that bit wrong too.

The reality is that the bad haircuts are right there in the camera's gaze; the UK's Foreign Secretary or President of the USA, or candidate for election in the Netherlands. The real manipulators behind the scenes are those who rule the world of computers, creating ways to mould journalism

itself to their own ends, and they have money to do it, because it makes them billions of dollars.

Psychological Operations are the way they work, using your data to understand your deepest emotions and then target you accordingly. You get to believe what they tell you. Or else you get into arguments with Fake identities on Facebook groups, wearing you down and making you believe that nobody thinks like you do.

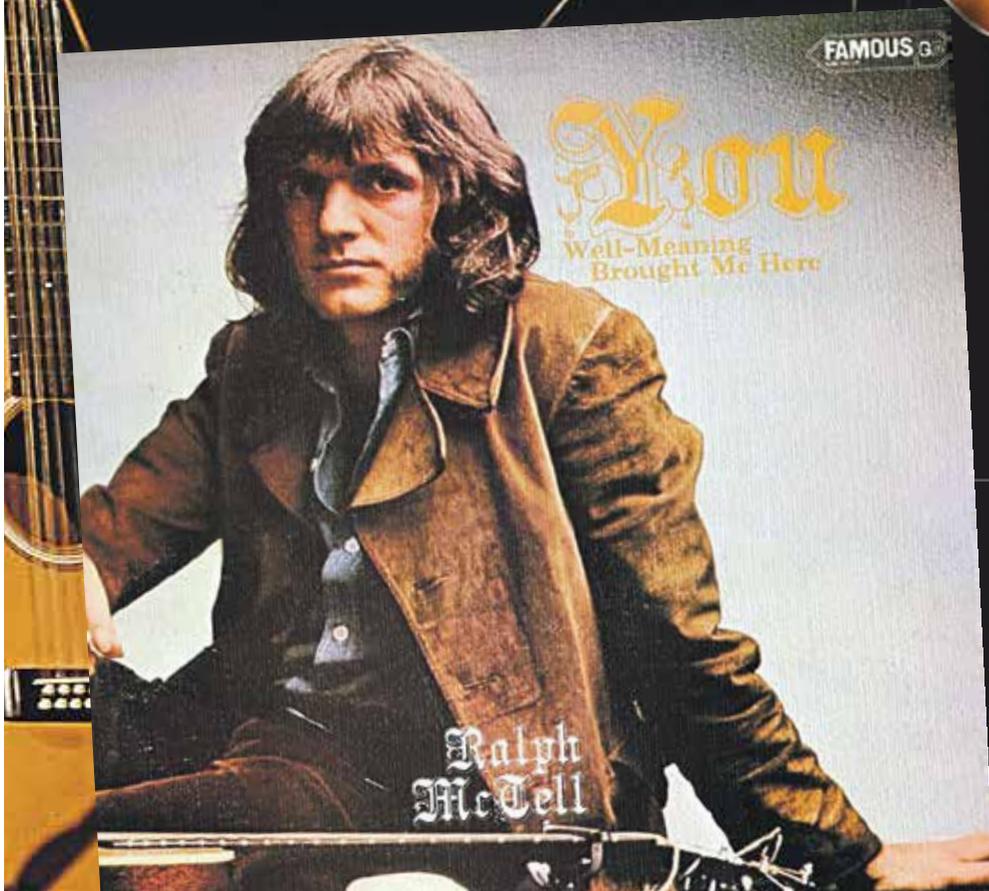
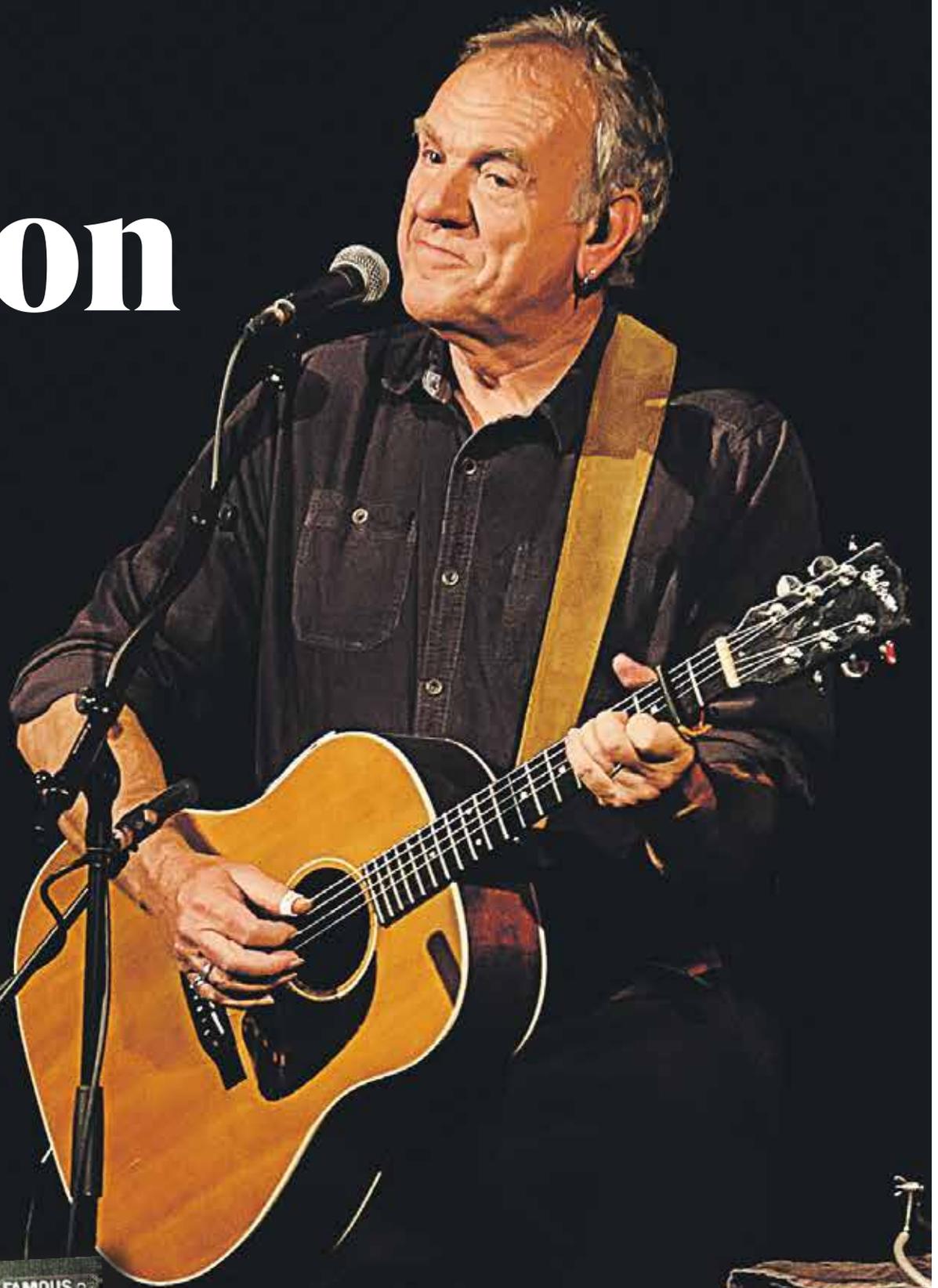
It's not just your social media accounts that are open to the algorithms; your emails and the sites you visit, the results you get from search engines, all of these are run by the bots.

A.I. never sleeps, never ceases; it learns, follows your links, finds your pals to do the same to them. Bots become your friends on social media, telling you things, asking you things, feeding you things, knowing more about you than your best pal. I wonder if the wisest thing we might do is tell them lies about ourselves and vary how we respond to posts and tweets. Ever wondered why Facebook won't let you keep a false identity once it finds out about it? That might be the soundest reason to have one. *Charles Ian.*

Streets of London

BY RALPH McTELL

*Have you seen the old man in the closed down market
Picking up the papers with his worn out shoes
In his eyes you see no pride and hanging loosely at his side
Yesterdays paper, telling yesterdays news
So how can you tell me you're lonely
And say for you that the sun don't shine
Let me take you by the hand and lead you through the streets of London
I'll show you something to make you change your mind
Have you seen the old dear who walks the streets of London
Dirt in her hair and her clothes in rags
She's no time for talking, she just keeps right on walking
Carrying her home, in two carrier bags
So how can you tell me you're lonely
And say for you that the sun don't shine
Let me take you by the hand and lead you through the streets of London
I'll show you something to make you change your mind
And in the all night cafe at a quarter past eleven
Same old man sitting there on his own
Looking at the world over the rim of his teacup
And each tea lasts an hour and he wanders home alone
So how can you tell me that you're lonely
And say for you that the sun don't shine
Let me take you by the hand and lead you through the streets of London
I'll show you something to make you change your mind
Have you seen the old man outside the seaman's mission
Memory fading with the medal ribbons that he wears
And in the winter city, the rain cries a little pity
For one more forgotten hero, and a World that doesn't care
So how can you tell me that you're lonely
And say for you that the sun don't shine
Let me take you by the hand and lead you through the streets of London
I'll show you something to make you change your mind*



"Streets of London" is a song written by Ralph McTell. It was first recorded for his 1969 album *Spiral Staircase* but was not released in the United Kingdom as a single until 1974. The song has been covered by over 200 different artists.

McTell was born on 3 December 1944 in Farnborough, Kent. His real surname is May. He changed it to McTell after Blind Willie McTell, whose 'Statesboro Blues' he loved.

McTell re-recorded "Streets of London" with bassist Rod Clements and backing vocalists Prelude. Released as a single (recorded on the Reprise label) on 7 December 1974, it rocketed up the charts to No. 2 in the first week of 1975, became a worldwide million-seller, and won McTell the Ivor Novello Award.

The song is apt for the Britain of Theresa May (no relation to Ralph) as it tells the story of various homeless characters and a world that does not care.



CUTTING THROUGH THE SPIN

WITH LAWYER AND NO BULLSHIT JOURNALIST PETER STEFANOVIC

For goodness sake let's get some perspective on Labour's Copeland by-election defeat! Media commentators have been quick to say the conservative win in Copeland was a humiliation for Jeremy Corbyn.

The BBC said the "slow painful anguish under Jeremy Corbyn" looked likely to continue and the Mirrors associate editor, Kevin

Maguire singled out Corbyn as an "albatross" around Labour's neck. But let's put all this into a bit of context. Only three months ago the Tories lost a 23,000 strong "safe seat" in the Richmond park by-election and I don't recall anyone calling Theresa May an albatross around the conservative party's neck! Let's remember Copeland was a marginal seat, that's right a marginal seat, with a majority of only 2,500! So

does everyone get this now, Richmond safe seat, 23,000 majority, Copeland marginal seat, 2,500 majority! Labour's vote in Copeland started falling under Tony Blair's leadership and that trend was not unique to Copeland.

New Labour lost 5 million voters during its 13 years in power. Copeland was always going to be a tough contest for Labour and let's face it Blair and Mandelson's back

stabbing efforts in the days before the by-elections didn't exactly help! Mandelson was even proudly announcing he works everyday to undermine Corbyn!

Labour also wasn't helped by the selection of an uninspiring candidate from the right of the party, Gillian Troughton, who was a remain supporter in a constituency where sixty percent of people voted for Brexit!

She had also backed the failed leadership challenger Owen Smith last summer. One question that does need asking is why, for such a tough contest, a more dynamic candidate wasn't selected? Corbyn's choice to fight Copeland had been Rachel Holliday, a local activist who had founded "Time to change" in west Cumbria, a social enterprise that tackles homelessness and "Calderwood house hostel" again for the homeless.

She also, incidentally, was named Cumbria's woman of the year in 2015! An ideal candidate you might think but Corbyn's choice to fight Copeland was rejected by the local party! Now no one can say Copeland would have been saved if Corbyn's choice to fight the by-election had been selected but if you're fighting a tough position in a marginal seat you have to select the candidate most likely to win hearts and minds and surely this is another example of why the Party should be following Corbyn and not resisting him!

As for the inaccurate drivel we've seen dripping from a biased media and Labour's right wing even I've been aghast and I thought I had seen everything! One sky interviewer asked Corbyn twice if he would continue as Labour lead-

er, twice Corbyn replied he would because he was determined to deliver social justice in this country and end the injustice of people sleeping on our streets and children growing up in poverty yet the interviewer still felt the need to ask him a third time! The same interviewers aren't relentlessly asking UKIP's Paul Nuttall if he's going to resign and he personally lost the stake by election!

Corbyn has accepted responsibility for his part in the by-election defeat but the party as a whole must accept responsibility as well because this was a collective failure! The loss of Copeland is a time for the Labour party to reflect and harden itself in support of its leader, Jeremy Corbyn for the fight to come.

Labour clearly has to reconnect with its core voters and the starting point has to be a party united behind its leader. When a government which openly forces children, the disabled and the unemployed into poverty so it can cut taxes for millionaires can best Labour in a by-election something is seriously wrong. We have a government which is responsible for soaring homelessness, child poverty and the systematic destruction of our NHS. That TRUTH was clearly not communicated effectively to the people in Copeland and that failure was a gross disservice not only to the people of Copeland but to the millions of working class families in this country and has allowed Politics of hope to be again defeated by politics of tyranny. It's time for the Party to unite behind Corbyn and to start effectively communicating policy!

INDIANAPOLIS, INDIANA, U.S. (USA Today)

- Mike Pence used personal email for state business — and was hacked. Vice President Mike Pence routinely used a private email account to conduct public business as governor of Indiana, at times discussing sensitive matters and homeland security issues. Emails released to The Indianapolis Star, part of the USA TODAY Network, in response to a public records request show Pence communicated via his personal AOL account with top advisers on topics ranging from security gates at the governor's residence to the state's response to terror attacks across the globe. Pence joked Saturday night that the most embarrassing part of the recent news is that millions of Americans learned he was one of the few people in the country to still have an AOL account.

WASHINGTON D.C., U.S. (Independent)

- The Keystone XL oil pipeline will not use American steel, seemingly contrary to a Donald Trump election pledge. The White House has claimed this is due to the language used in a presidential directive, which applies to new pipelines or those under repair. Sarah Huckabee Sanders, the White House spokeswoman, has said it would be difficult for US steel to be used on the Keystone pipeline as it is already under construction. As recently as last week, Mr Trump had pledged that the Dakota Access pipeline and Keystone would not be built unless American steel was used. Soon after taking office, Mr Trump used his executive powers to restart the two pipeline projects that had been blocked by his predecessor, Barack Obama.

LANGLEY, VIRGINIA, U.S. (BBC) - FBI

director James Comey has rejected President Donald Trump's claim on Saturday that his predecessor, Barack Obama, tapped his phone, US media say. Mr Comey reportedly asked the US justice department to reject the allegation Mr Obama ordered a wiretap during last year's election campaign. He is said to have asked for the correction because it falsely insinuates that the FBI broke the law. The development was reported by the New York Times and confirmed by NBC. The justice department did issue an immediate statement in response to Mr Comey's reported request. US media quoted officials as saying that Mr Comey believed there was no evidence to support Mr Trump's allegation.

LONDON, UK (Guardian) - The bus services bill is now back for debate in the House of Commons. This will give local authorities new powers to plan their local bus services. However, in among the measures set to improve buses, transport secretary Chris Grayling confirmed this week that he wants to ban local authorities in England from setting up new bus companies. The House of Lords removed this controversial clause, and we're calling on the government to drop the ban for good. There are already 11 local authority-run bus companies across the UK, providing some of the most successful services in the country. They pick up awards for excellent customer service, invest heavily and run environmentally friendly fleets.

BRUSSELS, BELGIUM (Independent)

The European Parliament has voted to end visa-free travel for Americans within the EU. It comes after the US failed to agree visa-free travel for citizens of five EU countries - Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Poland and Romania - as part of a reciprocity agreement. US citizens can normally travel to all countries in the bloc without a visa. The vote urges the revocation of the scheme within two months, meaning Americans will have to apply for extra documents for 12 months after the European Commission implements a "delegated act" to bring the change into effect.

DENVER, COLORADO, U.S. (Independent) - Tens of thousands of immigrants detained by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement were forced to work for \$1 day, or for nothing at all - a violation of federal anti-slavery laws - a lawsuit claims. The lawsuit, filed in 2014 against one of the largest private prison companies in the country, reached class-action status this week after a federal judge's ruling. That means the case could involve as many as 60,000 immigrants who have been detained. It's the first time a class-action lawsuit accusing a private U.S. prison company of forced labour has been allowed to move forward. "That's obviously a big deal; it's recognizing the possibility that a government contractor could be engaging in forced labour," said Nina DiSalvo, executive director of Towards Justice, a Colorado-based non-profit group that represents low-wage workers, including undocumented immigrants. "Certification of the class is perhaps the only mechanism by which these vulnerable individuals who were dispersed across the country and across the world would ever be able to vindicate their rights." At the heart of the dispute is the Denver Contract Detention Facility, a 1,500-bed centre in Aurora, Colorado, owned and operated by GEO Group under a contract with ICE.

GLOBAL HEADLINE - GENEVA, SWITZERLAND (Reuters)

Polluted environments kill 1.7 million children a year: WHO. A quarter of all global deaths of children under five are due to unhealthy or polluted environments including dirty water and air, second-hand smoke and a lack of adequate hygiene, the World Health Organization (WHO) said on Monday. Such unsanitary and polluted environments can lead to fatal cases of diarrhea, malaria and pneumonia, the WHO said in a report, and kill 1.7 million children a year. "A polluted environment is a deadly one -- particularly for young children," WHO Director-General Margaret Chan said in a statement. "Their developing organs and immune systems, and smaller bodies and airways, make them especially vulnerable to dirty air and water." In the report -- "Inheriting a sustainable world: Atlas on children's health and the environment" -- the WHO said harmful exposure can start in the womb, and then continue if infants and toddlers are exposed to indoor and outdoor air pollution and second-hand smoke. This increases their childhood risk of pneumonia as well as their lifelong risk of chronic respiratory diseases such as asthma. Air pollution also increases the lifelong risk of heart disease, stroke and cancer, the report said.

BRASILIA, BRAZIL (Xinhua)

Brazil's construction giant Odebrecht has been paying the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) guerrillas up to 100,000 U.S. dollars a month to work free of attacks on projects in the rebel-held territories, a Brazilian news magazine revealed on Saturday. The construction company, currently under investigation for bribery, said the protection money, ranging from 50,000 to 100,000 dollars a month, had been paid to the FARC for some 20 years, in exchange for "permits" to undertake projects in the FARC-held territories, two executives of Odebrecht were quoted by the Vega weekly as saying. Odebrecht had admitted paying more than 1 billion dollars in bribes to government officials across Latin America in exchange for lucrative public works contracts.

COPENHAGEN, DENMARK

(NY Times) — Danish Companies Seek to Hire, but Everyone's Already Working. As Europe rebounds from its economic malaise, Denmark is one of a few countries that can boast of nearing a golden era of full employment, meaning almost everyone who is able and willing to work has a job. But instead of being cheered, it is posing new challenges to the country's recovery. More than a third of companies in this industrial and technically advanced nation can no longer recruit enough skilled workers to fill posts. Vacancies abound for I.T. specialists, computer scientists, engineers and mechanics, as well as for electricians and carpenters. The wages needed to lure them are creeping up.

VATICAN CITY, ROME.

(Independent) - Pope Francis has urged families to have fewer children to make the world more sustainable, it has been reported. Peter Raven, a panellist at a Vatican-run workshop on "how to save the natural world", was speaking at a press conference when he revealed the comments made by the Pope. The workshop included a range of experts and the solution was presented by Mr Raven, a botanist and environmentalist. "We need a more limited number of people in the world. In the framework of social justice worldwide we need to find ways for natural resources to be distributed on the basis of compassion and love."

PYONGYANG, NORTH KOREA

(BBC) — North Korea has launched four ballistic missiles towards the Sea of Japan, Japanese PM Shinzo Abe has said. Three of them fell into Japan's exclusive economic zone (EEZ) after flying some 1,000km (620 miles). They were fired from the Tongchang-ri region, near the North's border with China, the South Korean military said. It is unclear what type of missiles were fired, but the North is banned by the UN from any tests of missile or nuclear technology. A South Korean military official said the launch took place at 07:36 local time Monday (22:36 GMT Sunday) and was being investigated to determine the type of projectile used. On Friday, Pyongyang threatened to fire missiles in response to the Foal Eagle military exercises underway between South Korea and the US. The North sees the annual drills as preparation for an invasion against it.

FUKUSHIMA, JAPAN (Independent)

— Experts baffled as robots sent to clean up Fukushima nuclear site keep dying. The latest probe was destroyed in less than a day. A Japanese company tasked with cleaning up Fukushima, the site of the worst nuclear disaster since Chernobyl, has admitted that its attempts to probe the site are failing repeatedly due to incredibly high levels of radiation. The latest attempt to harvest data on Fukushima failed after a robot designed by Toshiba to withstand high radiation levels died five times faster than expected. The robot was supposed to be able to cope with 73 sieverts of radiation, but the radiation level inside the reactor was recently recorded at 530 sieverts. A single dose of one sievert is enough to cause radiation sickness and nausea; 5 sieverts would kill half those exposed to it within a month, and a single dose of 10 sieverts would prove fatal within weeks.

TEHRAN, IRAN (Belfast Telegraph)

— Iran has successfully test-fired a sophisticated Russian-made air defence system. The official IRNA news agency said the test of the S-300 system came during a recent military exercise called Damvand, the name of Iran's highest mountain. It said the test targeted various flying objects including missiles. With a range of up to 125 miles, the S-300 is capable of simultaneously tracking and striking multiple targets. State TV aired footage of the missiles launching from the back of trucks. It said the test was carried out in Iran's central desert.

KOLKATA, INDIA (Reuters)

— Ruling party politician charged in Indian 'baby trafficking racket'. A politician from India's ruling party - and a leader of its women's wing - was the mastermind behind a "baby trafficking racket" that sold two dozen children for tens of thousands of dollars, police said on Wednesday. Campaigners jumped on the arrest - which followed a 10-day police chase for Juhi Chowdhury - and demanded a full investigation into top officials' ties with human traffickers. "She is the mastermind behind the baby trafficking racket," said Rajesh Kumar of the West Bengal CID. "She was involved in the illegal adoption and trafficking of babies from a nursing home in Jalpaiguri, whose owner Chandana Chakrabarty had already been arrested." Chowdhury appeared in court on Wednesday, charged with the trafficking offences. Police have 90 days to file a formal charge sheet and Chowdhury told reporters she was being framed. A leader of the Bhartiya Janata Party's women's wing, Chowdhury went on the run last month and was arrested late on Tuesday night near the Indian-Nepalese border in the eastern state of West Bengal, police said. Investigators had been looking for Chowdhury since they shut down an orphanage in West Bengal and arrested its owner for illegally selling babies to childless couples. The orphanage, in the city of Jalpaiguri, was run by a non-profit organization and had sold at least two dozen children for adoption, police said. The orphanage was using forged documents, fake stamps and certificates to sell the babies, at a cost of 100,000-200,000 rupees (US\$1,500-3,000) each.

ARUNACHAL PRADESH, INDIA

(Reuters) — India to host Dalai Lama in disputed territory, defying China. Indian federal government representatives will meet the Dalai Lama when he visits a sensitive border region controlled by India but claimed by China, officials said, despite a warning from Beijing that it would damage ties. India says the Tibetan spiritual leader will make a religious trip to Arunachal Pradesh next month, and as a secular democracy it would not stop him from travelling to any part of the country. China claims the state in the eastern Himalayas as "South Tibet", and has denounced foreign and even Indian leaders' visits to the region as attempts to bolster New Delhi's territorial claims. A trip by the Dalai Lama, whom the Chinese regard as a dangerous separatist, would ratchet up tensions at a time when New Delhi is at odds with China on strategic and security issues and unnerved by Beijing's growing ties with arch-rival Pakistan. Prime Minister Narendra Modi's administration is raising its public engagement with the Tibetan leader, a change from earlier governments' reluctance to anger Beijing by sharing a public platform with him. "It's a behavioral change you are seeing. India is more assertive," junior home minister Kiren Rijiju told Reuters in an interview.

NAIROBI, KENYA (Guardian)

A British man has been shot dead on his ranch in central Kenya, in a crime officials blame on armed herders responsible for land invasions in the area. Thousands of herders - some armed with spears, others with AK47s - have invaded private ranches and wildlife parks with their livestock, slaughtering animals and destroying property in Laikipia, as they go in search of pasture in the drought stricken-country. Tristan Voorspuy, a British citizen who was born in South Africa, had gone to inspect damage on his Sosian ranch, 190km (118m) north of Nairobi, caused by the raiders when he was killed. Local media reported that two cottages on his property had been torched. Voorspuy spent three years in the British army before moving to Kenya and founding a company specialising in horseback safaris, according to his website.

PALMYRA, SYRIA (CNN)

At least 1,000 ISIS militants were killed or wounded by government forces and Russian aircraft as the Syrian military recaptured the city of Palmyra and surrounding areas from ISIS. Lt. Gen. Sergei Rudskoy of the Russian Ministry of Defence said Friday. Rudskoy told reporters that the offensive was planned by Russian advisers and the Syrian military advance continues to the east of the ancient city.

MELBOURNE, AUSTRALIA (Guardian)

— Some Australians are paying five times more than others to see a specialist depending on their need and location, according to new research. Analysis of Medicare claims published in the Medical Journal of Australia found certain states had higher bulk-billing rates and that fees varied by an average of more than 70%.

Forgotten Bands

a memory of things you thought you'd forgotten, or never knew, or perhaps you weren't even there at the time. By Ian Charles, who was there and forgets nothing, except, perhaps



AFFINITY

People may tell you that the 1970s began on 1st January 1971. For me the preceding decade started as late as 16th August 1962, when Ringo joined the Beatles and the world began, tawdry and new, innocent as Mandy Rice-Davies, promising as a packet of Lucky Strike. It ended prematurely on 6th December 1969 at Altamont Speedway when a boy named Meredith Hunter, not four months older than I was, died after being stabbed and beaten to death at a concert by the Rolling Stones. I was miles away, safely making a total hash of my mock 'A' levels and dreaming of the future, something Meredith had taken away from him the moment someone spotted that he'd pulled a revolver.

In the meantime, the music I was listening to was becoming harder, harsher and more complex. At the same time, I was capable of being blown away by beauty and simplicity. A band I didn't even hear of until recently released an album in 1970 that they'd been working on since 1968. It contains seven tracks, and they're very different from one another. For me, I'd let you discover six of them for yourself and play you the second track on the first side, called Night Flight. The band is Affinity.

The track begins with very cool electric guitar playing chords, joined quickly by some timeless drums I suspect were recorded using just two microphones, set up in the 'Glyn Johns' arrangement. I might be wrong, but before I can make a judgement about that Linda Hoyle's voice comes in and I can

think of nothing else.

*My window looks out onto night
And darkness comes, and birds
in flight*

*Without a sound;
Night is ... strange...*

*My spirit looks out into space
On silver wings, and joins the
birds*

*Without a sound;
Night is ... strange...*

*And I see you there
Holding onto the air
With such special care
Floating into my life
Peter Pan doesn't know
What a special time will show.*

And then the track erupts. Lynton Naiff's Hammond B3 organ hits you at 1 minute 29 seconds and it really doesn't matter how cool those drums are, how beautiful Linda sings, how ridiculous the words are, or what the bass player is doing. Linda now is orbiting Mars, and at 2 mins 29 seconds Naiff is soloing like Brian Auger, Vincent Crane, or Keith Emerson. The whole band is supporting him, but he's off on one, and so am I. By 4 mins 29 the jazzy chords are back and within fifteen seconds Linda is singing in that elegiac voice once again.

After six minutes and nine seconds, the track changes again as the guitar begins a solo, or rather what sounds more like a duet with itself entirely of the time and the season, into a fade-out. I need to stop writing now and listen to the track again, so compelling is it, all 7 minutes 19 seconds.

Recommended listening.

OWEN JONES

By David Lindsay

Two years ago, if any event were addressed by Owen Jones, then he himself was the event. But, like Peter Tatchell, he has now joined the long list of old left-wing star turns who resent having been made into supporting acts by a man whom they had spent decades assuming was the cloakroom attendant, yet who turns out to have an appeal beyond their wildest dreams.

Jones's insistence that anti-Trump events are only "official" if they are approved by him is the mark of a man who has quite taken leave of his senses. When I pointed out that his approach to certain previous military interventions and American Presidents made him an impossible spokesman or

figurehead for the opposition to Donald Trump, then he blocked me on Twitter and unfriended me on Facebook, after the manner of a petulant teenager. He is utterly unused to criticism, and he reacts to it very badly indeed.

His flip-flop on withdrawal from the European Union bespoke a lack of order or clarity in his thinking, and a certain opportunism that was also evident in the decision of his close friend, Clive Lewis, to resign from the Shadow Cabinet in order to vote against the activation of Article 50. Lewis is now the other key figure in the "official" demonstrations against Trump.

But when Jeremy Corbyn departs the Labour Leadership, at the time of his choosing and not before the middle of the next Parliament

at the absolute earliest, then he will be succeeded by one of three people. Those are all from the 2015 intake. In no particular order, they are Rebecca Long-Bailey, Angela Rayner and Richard Burgon. None of those is Clive Lewis, nor is any of them likely to engage the services of Owen Jones.

Moreover, two of them are women, but neither of those women is Jess Phillips. Phillips has built a media career on the lie that MPs first elected in 2015, and especially the women among them, have not enjoyed preferment under Corbyn. But they have. So it's you, Jess. It's just you. Yet she is now dropping

broad enough intends that she intends to stand for the Leadership this year. Well, bring that on, say I. For the sheer hilarity, bring it on.

Although Phillips does at least have the advantage of being a member of the House of Commons, and indeed a resident of the United Kingdom. David Miliband is neither of those things. The attempted revival of the Transatlantic Torturer declared that Corbyn's enemies included no sitting MP whom anyone might consider capable of becoming Leader of the Labour Party.

Who cares what David Miliband says about anything? He was once beaten by Ed Miliband, and that is quite a feat. Big before Twitter and Facebook were, he was such an object of ridicule in his day that he would be drowned in the gales of derision these days. But he is a nasty piece of work. Whereas Phillips, Lewis and Jones are merely laughable.





ROBOTS OF WAR

By John Jones

You have a giant robot, we have a giant robot - we have a duty to the science fiction lovers of this world to fight them to the death."

This was the invitation from the CEO of an American robotics company to their Japanese rivals to pitch their robot "Megabot" against the "Kuratas", another huge, gun-toting robot. The weight: about 10,000 pounds, 15 foot of solid nuts and bolts.

Flying metal drop-kick

Kogoro Kurata, CEO of Suidobashi Industry, wants their robots to have a "punch-up", like in the good-old days, and not just a shoot-out. Would that be Queensbury rules, Kogoro? or just good parenting?

Anime and Megabot fans will be thrilled with the forthcoming clank-athon. But from here it looks like an embarrassing homage to

the gods of war and death, indicative of a socio-economic trend where manpower and resources are wasted in the production of rich-boys' toys.

Secret negotiations for the robot-rumble continue.

Play today; tomorrow, for real Must robots fight? With some advanced program tweaks Megabot could rob Kuratas or commit an indecent assault. Maybe this looks like bad taste, but you haven't seen anything yet. The arms industry is continuing to develop robots of war.

In recognition of this development, at the fifth UN weapons review conference in Geneva last week, the Convention on Conventional Weapons (CCW) made a commitment to the long-term monitoring and ethical evaluation of lethal autonomous weapons systems (LAWS).

That's robots of war, to you and me.

US Double standards

Earlier in the year the CCW stated that it was their "view"

(non-binding) that "lethal force shall never be delegated to autonomous weapons systems without the possibility of human intervention."

Yet, according to the New York Times, and in direct contradiction of the UN view, the Pentagon has issued a directive for the development of weapons capable of killing "without human oversight."

Elsewhere, the US is already attempting to subvert international law with its development of robot land-mines.

The US Department of Defence is developing landmine's that they want classed as intelligent robots: intelligent robots are not subject to landmine treaties.

Experimental models respond to potential targets through ground-vibration profiles and can jump over the target or into different locations.

It wasn't me what done it, guv'nor

Make no mistake, and a good

philosopher will tell you, there is no "artificial intelligence", no "autonomous" or "pilot-less" systems. The pilot, at the end of the day, is the programmer.

These phrases point to myths, feebly intriguing get-out clauses for our actions. There are only human operators and advanced methods of targeting. Our hand is in every robot outcome.

Which is one reason why arms manufacturers attempt to off-load national and individual responsibility for remote killing by developing "pilot-less drones" that rely on a supposed "artificial intelligence" (AI). But like the booby-trap, there is always a human operator who is fully responsible.

One of the first "pilot-less" weapon systems was the "Tomahawk" cruise missile which could hunt for Soviet ships "without direct human control." It was withdrawn in the early 1990s following a nuclear arms deal with Russia.

Closer to home

Britain's "fire and forget" Brimstone missile, carried by the RAF's Tornado's, uses laser and microwave to target tanks and distinguish them from trucks and cars.

The Brimstone sends information to other missiles about target acquisition and elimination to minimise waste. Metre-accuracy is maintained through satellite positioning of both missile and target.

Mimicry does not entail identity

It's early days for the technical innovations of robots of war. But all robots are built to mimic our actions in our absence. That does not mean that robots have intentions or an identity, even if they wear lipstick or talk like a hero - that would be animism or voodoo, where objects or dolls become alive in some way.

The human race is the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, of the metal doll: the robot.

THE GEV

By John Jones

Is it a bird? Is it a plane? A hovercraft maybe?

No, it's a GEV or Ground Effect Vehicle. To you and me, it's a plane that travels just above the waves; to the International Maritime Organization it's a maritime ship. Anyway, the Russians are planning to build a very big one with all mod-cons.

The design proposed by the Central Aerohydrodynamic Institute (TsAGI) based in Zhukovski features a 'flying wing'-style hull that doubles as a cargo-hold capable of storing dozens of standard freight containers. The designers say it will compete economically with traditional transport planes

and freighter ships.

The Russian GEV will have four engines running Liquid Natural Gas (LNG), carrying a cargo of up to 500 tons - big. Like all GEV's it will travel 3 to 12 meters (10 - 40 feet) above the waves and will not require special infrastructure to land. Where the terrain allows, the GEV will fly onto the land rather than dock on-shore.

GEV's have been around for many years but never really took off - commercially speaking. Russia has led the field here. Their GEV's from the 1970s and 1980s include the famous, but now retired, Lun - a 243-ton anti-ship missile carrier.

Another large beast was the Russian "Ekranoplan", in use from 1987 to 1990. A smaller version of the GEV - the Russian Aquaglide, is on sale to the public and holds a



small number of passengers.

Mum, a Russian GEV just squashed my sand-castle

Footage of older GEV's shows one skimming over the waves, up the beach and into a field. It looks scary - I've seen the film. I'm not

used to seeing planes bouncing off the sea, over the sand and charging through bushes.

The advantage of travelling at ground and sea level was noticed many years ago when airline pilots reported extra lift at take-off and

landing. Employing the principles behind this phenomena makes the GEV especially financially viable. Airport construction is simplified and cheaper as planes can just roll off the sea.

A problem facing the GEV is wave-drag. This is minimised by a design that incorporates two stubby wings at the front. These provide strong initial lift, away from crashing waves, while a raised wing at the back provides extra lift and stability.

The Russian GEV will incorporate all these designs in a flying-wing with a rear aerofoil, with some adjustments that allow it to fly close to aircraft speeds and heights. Clearly, there won't be any flying fast and close to the waves during storms. H'arr, but it's looking ship-shape, Jim lad.

BALLAD FOR BALLS



Theresa May has swept to power on a tide of popular support within the Tory Party rank and file. But the affection of her colleagues is not enough for Theresa and there is there is still one more heart she wishes she could win. If anyone finds out though, she'll be ruined!



**Theresa was
distraught**



**Jeremy
loved his
wife**



**She had
tried
everything**



**She went back
to torturing
poor people**



By Mara Leverkusen

“One must need to be strong – otherwise one will never become strong.”

Sorry, Britain, but we need to have a word about your delusional cowardice. I'm kind of tired of being lectured on how marvellous the British empire is and how kind and awesome this government is, looking upon us with love and meritocracy. Research this: Crimes of Britain. Twitter and Facebook accounts of a project that details what was really behind the British Empire until as recently as the 80s. How beloved figures like Churchill ordered the starvation of millions as military strategy. It is true that most readers of this rag will be leftist bleeding hearts, but the tragedy is among those, many will project their own good intent and humanitarian outlook onto the military industrial complex, ie the modern state, thus missing out on the fact that whichever evil you protest meekly against in the public square isn't accidental, it's deliberate. Some of you may know austerity is eugenics. Some of you excuse it with regurgitated ready-made Guardian opinions praising the virtues of hard work and its corollary, the deserved misfortunes that befall those that

don't comply with the economic imperative of working hard and spending hard. This fundamental trust in the system with decorative protest at its edges is sign of British cowardice. The system is rigged. You have Stockholm Syndrome.

Corbynistas need to get red-pilled in order to win. You can't win if you underestimate the fight. Or think the system is fair.

In this country, people have been domesticated to mistake passion for lunacy. Strong beliefs branded conspiracy theories. Submission a virtue. Bland the celebrated flavour. Well, not where I come from. Happy to be Romanian and therefore more passionate, more suspicious of government, less brainwashed.

It was a matter of geopolitics that Romania was under the thumb of neighbour empires; but living under constant tyranny makes you ever angry, always skeptical. Living in the Empire however, tends to mollify the masses who have it better: look at the middle class. The working class may know their government is fucking them on purpose. But you attract social blackout if you try to argue this to the middle class, who are completely bribed and delusional in their little comfort zones.

The middle class expect you to pat them on the head, tell them “you did good”, like you praise their car and gardens, they want you to similarly praise their mild political activism. They show up with funny stories of decorative anti Trump political activism that doesn't change anything and sit there waiting for you to be vocally impressed. But alas! that no real anger is detected, no actual abstract understanding shared, no mention of war or starvation in Yemen or homeless Britain because that's “not done”. Middle class twittery has taken over

Labour making it from an honest workers' party—an effort of survival, into an effort of socialist peacocking and virtue signalling.

You're not a real anything if you don't accept that bitter truth warrants bitter conversation and solving problems is not going to be made over polite conversation. Fuck it, we're at war. I mean the government is at war against us. Austerity is eugenics. The good people in Labour are silenced by the middle class twits who are upset in their subservient sensibilities that you suggest wealth isn't real and work isn't as noble as they think; if you point out that cars and houses aren't all that when the health service is KO—you get pariahed. It just so happens the former naturally float to Corbyn's humanitarian, honest side of the party, and the latter naturally drift in Corbyn area until they believe Guardian articles about how weak a leader Corbyn is; then their deep love of “appearing proper” & the Stepford lifestyle makes them embrace the right wing labour because right wing labour knows to seduce through the authority of established power, the self-assured tone of Blair types with big \$ backing and MSM support; and the Meritocracy ideology which is as fraudulent as late stage christianity: “indulgences”. If the “you get what you deserve” idea is so based, how do you explain 90-year-olds ending homeless after a lifetime of paying into the system? how do you explain the constant theft of our assets through debt and inflation but the increase of working hours? work more, end poorer, seems to be the rule. People who like nice things more than their future and believe that working hard is the way forward are eventually going to end up serving Tories no matter how much they sob over the

death of NHS, in public squares or at home on Twitter. They are the tacitly pro austerity, pro war, pro cuts, pro Trident hyenas that believe human worth is only what you are able to produce in an economy where mostly useless ecological disastrous shit is produced that is a burden on the planet. Work hard, spend hard, and throw away through planned obsolescence so the cycle repeats itself ad infinitum. Or at least, until you get ill and then you're encouraged to die so you're replaced by other more efficient worker bees.

The morals surrounding this have the steel enforcement of crowd mentality and the authority of loud Lamborghinis dashing on our highways as symbol of success. These people think they're right and their arrogance is mind bending when you know how they're leading us onto tyranny. They vote right wing Labour; they vote Tory. They vote you down in life if you don't smile on command and talk pleasantries. This is Black Mirror.

How do you counteract this? And the answer is: offending them. Let's reclaim insults from the polite linguistic cage they've put us in; let's smash their safe spaces; let's insult their stupidity. Let's curse. Let's voice anger once again. Let's talk like adults. Let's not be prudish Brit cucks. Let's not be apologetic deceitful two-faced cowardly Britain, let's reclaim humanity. Smash through the pussified values of the middle class and be angry lucid minded working class. We're all working class anyway, just some of us more confused by the shopping drug.

OFFENDING IS A HUMAN RIGHT.

“Turns out the secret formula to equality is letting everyone be racist to each other.”

TOP 5 IDEALS

Here is something very simple that might make a difference. Let us as Socialists find 5 things we agree on as priority and build the WORD newspaper, and the movement around these. Maybe that will unite us. This is how we voted.



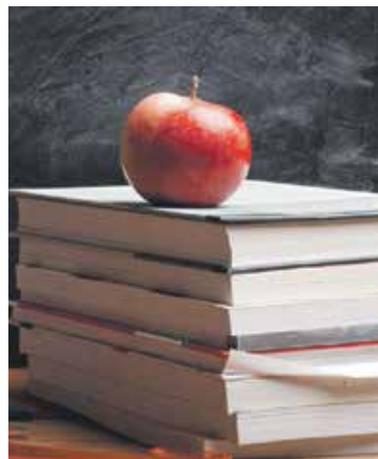
NHS

Stop trying to kill it, lie about it or tell us we cannot afford it. We could in 1945 and we can now.



Housing

In our various different group polls we called for affordable and decent housing.



Education

Education should be an egalitarian and fair system without the pernicious influence of Grammar and private schools.



Universal basic income

With technology changing the way jobs are done we need to find a way that we can all live.



Social care

We are all living longer? We are surviving due to our NHS. We have enough money for Trident so we must have enough for dignity.



nist Party of India (Marxist-Leninist) (CPI ML) also stated its support for her and for repeal of AFSPA, calling for nationwide agitation. In November, at the end of the eleventh year of her fast, Sharmila again called on Prime Minister Manmohan Singh to repeal the law. On the 3rd November, 100 women formed a human chain in Ambari to show support for Sharmila, while other civil society groups staged a 24-hour fast in a show of solidarity.

In 2011 the Save Sharmila Solidarity Campaign (SSSC) was launched to highlight Sharmila's struggle and in December 2011, Pune University announced a scholarship program for 39 female Manipuri students to take degree courses in honour of Irom Sharmila Chanu's 39 years of age.

She has only met her mother once since the start of the fast as seeing her mother's anguish may break her resolve. She said "The day AFSPA is repealed I will eat rice from my mother's hand.

On March 28, 2016, she was released from judicial custody as charges against her was rejected by a local court in Imphal. Sharmila kept her vow of neither entering her house nor meeting her mother till the government repeals AFSPA and went to continue her fast at Shahid Minar, Imphal on the same day of her release. She was again

arrested by the police under the same charge of attempt to commit suicide by means of indefinite fast.

In 2014 two parties asked her to stand in the national election, but she declined. She was then denied the right to vote as a person confined in jail cannot vote according to law. On 19 August 2014 a court ordered her release from custody, subject to there being no other grounds for detention. She was re-arrested on 22 August 2014 on similar charges to those for which she was acquitted, and remanded in judicial custody for 15 days. Amnesty International has declared her as a prisoner of conscience.

On July 26, 2016, Irom Sharmila, who had been on a hunger strike since 2000, announced that she would end her fast on August 9, 2016. She also announced that she would contest state elections in Manipur and in fact challenge Okram Ibobi Singh the chief minister of Manipur for his seat.

She is currently canvassing by bicycle, with the voting beginning 4th March and counts finalised 11th March.

Her poetry, much of which has been written during her imprisonment is inspired by her homeland and the study of grief and death - although Sharmila is determined to live a long and full life.

Emma Lea interviews Joseph D'Lacey, author of Splinters, about his writing.

Emma: So how did you get started with writing?

Joseph: Before I wrote novels, I worked up to the task by writing short fiction; it's a great way to experiment with style and to practice wrapping up a concept in a neat package. If you can do that, you can write a chapter and if you can write a chapter, you can probably write a book - eventually. That was how I progressed into full-length fiction.

For a long time, I came back to short fiction between longer projects because, when trying to make a name for yourself, having a back catalogue of successful story-writing helps to get you noticed. At least, that was the case in the late nineties/early noughties when I was starting out. This collection spans over ten years of work, hence the variety of style and content.

I make almost no time for short fiction these days and that feels wrong. I'd like to create a space in my routine to do more of it."

Emma: Reading *Lights Out* was a real struggle for me, as I was afraid of the dark well beyond the point where it would have been acceptable, is this story based on your own fears?

Joseph: I'm so glad to hear that the story put the frighteners on you - I love that kind of response from readers.

This tale hinged entirely on that very simple question; What if there really is something under your bed?

As a child. I remember going through the ritual of checking under the bed before getting in and then slowly losing confidence in what my eyes had seen until, eventually, I was convinced there was something crouched there, biding its time. It was enough material to cut a story from and I hoped it would touch a nerve for lots of readers.

Splinters by Joseph D'Lacey published by Timeline Books

By Emma Lea, February 2017

Splinters is very well named as a collection of twelve short stories with no connecting theme or style.

It was a very strange experience - reading this book. I suspect the fact that I was listening to Tom Waits - Bone Machine only added to the surreality of the evening. Right from the off it has, shall we say adult themes?

The unnerving sense of voyeurism that begins explicitly with the first story, *Lenses*, in which the characters watch each other watching each other in a series of clever but not pretentious stories within



I used the same fear in the novel *Blood Fugue*. The protagonist, Jimmy Kerrigan, has two personalities; in one he is terrified of the dark and in the other he rules it. It was great to be able to flip a character from that particular weakness into the strength of its opposite. There's hope for us nyctophobics yet...

Emma: How did you decide on the order of the stories?

Joseph: The publisher of *Splinters*, (and co-owner of The Big Green Bookshop in Wood Green) is the wonderful Simon Key. He read forty or fifty of my short stories...and made a selection.

He was also responsible for the order of the stories and I love it that he put a little bit of grotesquery and humour at the end. Though, I think the main reason was that he felt it appropriate to wrap things up with a good old zombie apocalypse!"

Emma: What's the funniest thing anyone's ever said about your work?

Joseph: The most ridiculous thing, was from an agent who, on finishing a fantasy I'd already pitched to her as written for adults,

said: "This isn't going to work as a children's book." I felt like I'd thrown six months of my life in a dumpster at the time. I can laugh about it now, thank heavens.

Emma: how would you describe the difference between fiction and non fiction writing?

Joseph: Writers of fiction occupy the territory between magician, court jester and shaman.

They take the things we cannot clearly see about ourselves and makes mirrors so that we can look at those things, at least a little more clearly. It's paradoxical, isn't it, that though we set out with fabrication as a goal, we can end up revealing something pure and unadulterated.

And yet a writer of non-fiction, someone who strives for precision and factual detail actually blurs reality simply by passing it through their own lens.

Great fiction imparts great truths with a subtlety and depth that non-fiction never can."

Emma: So what's next?

Joseph: I'm working on an epic eco-fantasy (apply the same rules that we just did with the eco-horror sub-genre!).

It was the first novel I ever tried to write - about twenty years ago, longhand - and is set in a world where humans are in second place on the food chain. This means that none of the characters or cultures in this other realm have the supremacy that you and I take for granted.

The novel will explore what it would mean if every human life was intended as a gift to the world rather than what it is in our world today - a drain on resources.

I'd love to tell you more about it but I never do that until after the writing is done!"

(The full interview is available at readingroomcafeproject.com)

the story that fit together like nesting dolls until you finally see everything for what it is.

The tone has been set now, for the intimate tales of family and fear in *Lights Out* and *Alter Girl*. As I read on I felt the disturbing sense that I was spying on all of these characters, these couples with their children and their monsters.

The bizarre nature of the tales grows through the skin and body shedding to keeping a decaying girlfriend in the fridge. Yet I read on I must have been utterly absorbed as I devoured *Splinters* in a single evening.

Books not Bombs, Art with a Heart, Poetry not Poverty, Books not Bombs, Art with a Heart, Poetry not Poverty, Books not Bombs, Art with a Heart, Poetry not Poverty

ES YOUR ICIAL!

wards the running costs of the centre.

It came into being over 10 years ago, the brainchild of music teacher Emily Hewson, who'd travelled the world working with people from all walks of life, and introduced this unilateral flavour of songs to the group,

Unfortunately for us, but fortunately for Emily, after a successful year leading the group, she secured full time employment and after a brief period where she tried to balance the commitments of a job with her dedication to the group. She had to admit defeat, and the facilitation of the group fell to yours truly (me)

As I've said, my voice can only be described as passable, and

many have passed me by when they hear it. And as I was only there originally in a support capacity, this represented a challenge comparable to hopping up Everest. But the god of singing smiled on me, and with the dedication of the group, and a sprinkling of terrible puns (supplied by me), the group survived, and indeed thrived.

After an enjoyable 2 year rollercoaster ride, that saw the group's health progress from intensive care to recovery, to now just needing the occasional check up, the group took a huge leap forward, in the shape of singing coach, Sheila Gott. Out of the blue or should that be blues, Sheila, a renowned professional singer, and voice coach offered her services, and vocal talent to the group, and a new era began.

She brought with her a wealth of professional experience gained from working with some of the biggest names (and shortest too) in the music industry, 'Take that', to name just one'. Under her tutelage, the group took a step forward comparable to Neil Armstrong's first step on to the moon. Under Sheila's guidance, and my misguided attempts at humour, the group flourished and people who wouldn't have said boo to a goose (although it's always puzzled me why people would want to say boo to a goose), found the confidence to express themselves within the group, and eventually in public. The true extent of the increased confidence was evident when one of the members, who originally wouldn't have approached a goose let alone said boo to it, conjured up the confidence to sing, in public at an open Mic night in the centre of Stockport.

The group took another quantum leap forward with the addition of keyboard player and piano tutor Kim Roberts whose skills gave the group more flexibility and freedom to explore a wider variety of musical styles, and released us from the enslavement of backing tracks.

Allan sums up by saying .

Which leads me to where we are now:

After a years nomadic existence owing to fund-

ing cuts. The group has found its home at Disability Stockport. Over the course of the last year the group as exceeded all expectations performed, at Stockport Market Hall, Stockport Mind's Christmas Carol Service, and recently at a pageant, charting Stockport's musical heritage; earning accolades from young and old alike.

I asked him what the future held? He said he hadn't a clue, but it'll be fun finding out.

From what I've witnessed today - I'm sure it will be. After an hour of singing and (surprising myself), dancing, I emerged from the group with a smile the Cheshire Cat would kill for and with more than enough energy to give the Duracell bunny, a run for it's money.

Singing4fun definitely does what it says on the tin - and the beauty of it is there's lots of groups like this scattered around the country. And I'm sure if you ask Ms Google nicely she'll tell you about the one nearest to you.

But no need to take my word for it. You can experience the benefits of singing for yourself. Just take a deep breath and fill those lungs, open your mouth and let rip. You'll soon feel the energy coursing through your body. I can't guarantee you'll get the lead in the next production of Les Misrables - but I can definitely guarantee you'll feel less miserable.

I'll end on that note. I think it's a middle C.

Q: How easy is it to get started with poetry?

A: Very!

There are lots of writes but no wrongs in poetry.....

And a great way to dip your toes into the water is to go along to a WRITE OUT LOUD poetry night and see what you think.

You will find that poets and lovers of poetry are real people, living real lives.....and are more likely to be seen sitting drinking cups of tea in plastic chairs in jeans than lying on velvet chaise longue wearing velvet smoking jackets in opium dens!

Robert Burns wrote his first poetry whilst ploughing fields.

Simply go to the Write Out Loud website.....click on the Gig guide (immediately underneath Write out Loud on the screen) and step into a new and exciting world.....

Keep your eyes peeled in your local libraries for posters of free events close to you - many libraries offer readings by local writers or host local writing groups.

You Tube is a veritable cornucopia of poetry.....check out Benjamin Zephaniah's £Money£.....truly inspiring and heartfelt!

Books not Bombs, Art with a Heart, Poetry not Poverty, Books not Bombs, Art with a Heart, Poetry not Poverty, Books not Bombs, Art with a Heart, Poetry not Poverty

WE ARE
 Labour

SOFTLY, SOFTLY

Softly, Softly.

After a year of organised confusion within Labour, a failed coup and an increasingly hostile media, we need to recap and make something very clear: this is not about Jeremy Corbyn but about his ideas, writes Jack Thomas.

Most critics would welcome a return to 'business as usual' cross-party neoliberal consensus, but the result of the 2015 general election, in which Labour offered 'more of the same' as a supposed alternative to Tory austerity, shows us an open path to electoral defeat.

In 2008, neoliberalism crumbled as banks collapsed; Gordon Brown became the scapegoat, and Labour lost the 2010 general election.

The PLP had five years to offer viable alternatives, to speak up against socially and economically damaging austerity policies raining down on us, but they didn't.

By 2015, the negative effect of austerity policy had been recognised in mainstream economics; the rest of the world adjusted their approaches. This should have been a gift to the Labour Party. The Tories were caught with their hands in the till with the LibDems complicit.

While we begged the Labour to give us something to vote for, in 2015 they remained a pro-austerity party and their 'solution' to

Tory cuts was further austerity, the Labour leadership perpetuating a discredited economic falsehood, allowing the rich to get even richer at the expense of the rest. The world looked on in morbid fascination; despite all the evidence against it, the UK was obsessed with economic nonsense.

In order to push a mainstream view of economics into mainstream politics, offering a viable economic alternative to a thoroughly discredited ideology, it needed a relatively unknown back-bencher, Jeremy Corbyn, to speak up, using his candidacy in the leadership election following Labour's 2015 general election defeat, as a platform.

Just let that sink in; that's not how opposition is supposed to work, which is why Corbyn's critics always seem to criticise him as a person, but don't challenge him on his policies, knowing that they cannot win that argument.

Corbyn's policies are not only very popular and realistically achievable, but they're based on OUR ideas, so his critics argue that he isn't the right person to lead Labour. Even Theresa May tried to do it! Why? What's it to her?

During the failed coup last summer, rogue factions in the PLP described the talent within the par-

ty and how there were many, far more adept than Corbyn, but when the leadership race began, ALL OF THEM backed away except a man so unpopular with the membership that Corbyn increased his already record-breaking mandate!

John McDonnell has recently announced that a 'soft coup,' a rebellion behind closed doors, is underway, its goal being to erode Corbyn's popularity within the membership, so that in the interests of unity, we might compromise on his position as leader. If anyone thinks replacing Corbyn with someone more 'pragmatic' (read: neoliberal) will provide a better opposition to the Tories, then consider how ineffective an opposition Labour demonstrated between 2010-2015.

If a deal were brokered and another principled, left-wing socialist took his place, the PLP, the press, and the broadcast media would behave just the same; nothing would change. Don't be fooled into thinking that socialism would get any greater opportunity to flourish in the Labour Party under new leadership. This isn't about Corbyn, and never was.

This is all about our ideas.

We know the ideas work, because they built the NHS and welfare state, and provided millions of us with social housing.

At a turning point in an increasingly unstable world, without our socialist ideas and economics we're in serious trouble.



Women who made a difference

SOJOURNER TRUTH

Although known as Sojourner Truth this lady was born a slave in 1797 with the name Isabella Baumfree, only changing it in 1843! She was said to be one of twelve children brought up until the age of 9 speaking only Dutch the language of the slave owners on a farm to the north of New York. As was the practice she was sold on several times before finally coming to reside on the property of John Dumont at West Park, New York. It was during these years that Truth learned to speak

English for the first time.

Although Dumont was relatively benevolent there was a tragic incident when she fell in love with a slave, Robert, from a neighbouring farm. When Robert's owner found out about the liason he beat Robert so badly he later died from the injuries, the reason being he would not own any child from their union. Sojourner later married an older slave, Thomas with whom she had three children, having had two earlier fathered either by Robert or her owner.

Although Dumont promised to free her twelve months before legislation to emancipate slaves in New York State came in, he reneged on this when a hand injury made her less productive. She showed loyalty for some time but walked out in 1826 to freedom with her infant daughter Sophia. She found refuge working for the Van Wagenen family whilst the state's emancipation

law came into effect. With their help she became the first black woman to win a case against a white man getting back her son Peter who had been sold illegally to an owner in Alabama.

She became involved in an evangelical cult and started street corner preaching. Although illiterate she gained a wide knowledge of the bible. She moved on to join the Northampton Association of Education and Industry in Massachusetts. Founded by abolitionists, the organisation supported a broad reform agenda including women's rights and pacifism. She met many abolitionists including William Lloyd Garrison who got her book published in 1850 called *The Narrative of Sojourner Truth: A Northern Slave* which she dictated to friend, Olive Gilbert.

However her emergence as a powerful member of both abolition and women's rights was down to her imposing presence (six foot tall) with a powerful voice driven by her deep religious conviction. She settled in Michigan after travelling the streets as a wandering orator who also sang gospel songs. She collected food and clothing for black regiments in the Civil War and once met Abraham Lincoln in the White House.

Although she began her career as an abolitionist, the reform causes she sponsored were broad and varied, including prison reform, land rights and universal suffrage. She failed

to get land for freedpeople but not for want of trying. She showed the way for later civil rights workers with her direct language on the subject: 'Give 'em land and an out-set, and hab teachers learn 'em to read. Den they can be somebody' Her fear that abolitionism would falter before achieving equality for women proved prophetic.

Her most famous speech was delivered at the Women's Convention in Akron, Ohio, on May 29, 1851 and as later been tagged as "Ain't I a Woman". In it she argues that women are the equal of men in terms of their workload and suffering. In answer to male heckling she says "Look at my arm! I have ploughed and planted.....and no man could head me! And ain't I a woman. I could work as hard as a man.....and bear the lash as well". She concluded "If the first woman God ever made was strong enough to turn the world upside down all alone, then these women here together ought to be able to turn it right side up again! And now they are asking to do it, the men better let them".

Sojourner died in 1883 and now there are many statues to her, numerous schools named after her, she is to be featured along with other women in the suffrage movement on a ten dollar bill, and she is included in the Smithsonian Institution's list of the "100 Most Significant Americans."

WHAT A WOMAN AIN'T SHE? WHAT AN INSPIRATION!

Whatever happened to the flower people?



We were the generation that was going to change the world. We made love not war (I can hear my father saying, "One wonders whether they are capable of either."). We Banned the Bomb.

We lived in communes and went on peace marches and sang protest songs. We joined the CND. We camped out on Greenham Common.

What happened to us? Did we all become merchant bankers, business tycoons or, Heaven forbid, politicians? Do we smile indulgently at our younger selves who were so naïve we hadn't realised that the important thing was making money?

We sold out. We sold out and now we have got what we deserve. The two greatest world powers are ruled by a madman and a psychopath, and the fascists are marching again all over the western world.

People I know, nice people, say that we can't take any more refugees because Britain is full and we have enough on our plate with our own homeless. And so we turn away the desperate and the destitute who are dying trying to escape the bombs and their own harsh regimes.

The Earth, our only home, is slowly choking to death.

And we shake our heads and say that perhaps it won't be so bad. Maybe Trump won't turn America into one huge unreality show. Maybe Brexit won't destroy the British economy and our cherished National Health Service. Maybe it doesn't matter that Theresa May has scrapped the Human Rights Act and ordered more nuclear weapons. Maybe climate change is a hoax.

We should be marching in the streets again. We should be camping outside the White House and the Kremlin and the Houses of Parliament. We should be writing to our MPs and our senators and demanding another election, another referendum.

We should not just be sitting here afraid to speak out.

What happened to the flower people?

GOING



Stanley Acrimonious runs his jaundiced eye over the weekend's results:

Leicester 3 Hull 1

Free of the constraints of having a serial loser as coach, Leicester's revival continues. Will it be enough to avoid the drop? 'Course it will.

Liverpool 3 Arsenal 1

Two vastly overhyped managers and their overhyped players met at Anfield and the German guy with the German name beat the French bloke with the German sounding name. Well, their teams did; we sometimes forget it's really about the players.

Black Sox 1 Bournemouth 1

The Holidaymakers came to Salford and there was a bit of fighting at the end of the first half, which saw Ibrahimović (he of the second half missed penalty, where he did that thing where you put the ball too near the

keeper in an attempt to look like a crafty and cunning master stroker of penalties) falling over, getting a minging boot in the face, elbowing the erstwhile perpetrator, who then pushed him in the chest.

"See here, magnificent Swedish possessor of sharp elbow; I push you where it hurts not really at all."

After a lot of fussing around, and comparing notes from witnesses, Mr Friend the ref sent the chest pusher, appropriately named Mings, off the field for a second yellow card. Foolish boy. You will see and hear more about this incident once the FA have watched it, but to both sides I warn, the referee is not your Friend. There could be retrospective punishment for any number of tall Swedish players sporting a funny hairstyle.

Stoke 2 'Boro 0

Looks like Middlesbrough are setting themselves up for the FA Cup and relegation; they're probably not going to achieve either.

Swansea 3 Burnley 2

The Swans needed the points more than Burnley and received more of the luck. Sam 'Bertie' Vokes of Burnley was involved in several of the game's turning points, but if ever there were a need for a Video-ref like they have in Square-ball, this would be a good match to showcase that need. Together with all the other matches last weekend. And every weekend.

Watford 3 Southampton 4

Apart from a goal on the half hour from Tadic, six goals came either right at the beginning or at the end of each half. This makes for exciting stuff. See what happens when neither team have anything to play for except bonuses.

West Brom Baggies 0

Crystal Palace 2

Is this the start of a Crystal Palace revival? Can all three of the bottom clubs now play out of their skins for the rest of the season and avoid 'the drop'?

No, three have to go down, and much as you'd like it, they're

not going to be the two Manchester clubs and Arsenal.

Spurs 3 Everton 2

This is how titles are won, though you have to wonder if they're just too far behind at this stage. Chelsea are not renowned for choking late in the season, and there is an expression 'going all Spursy' for what Tottenham do when you think they've a chance of some success.

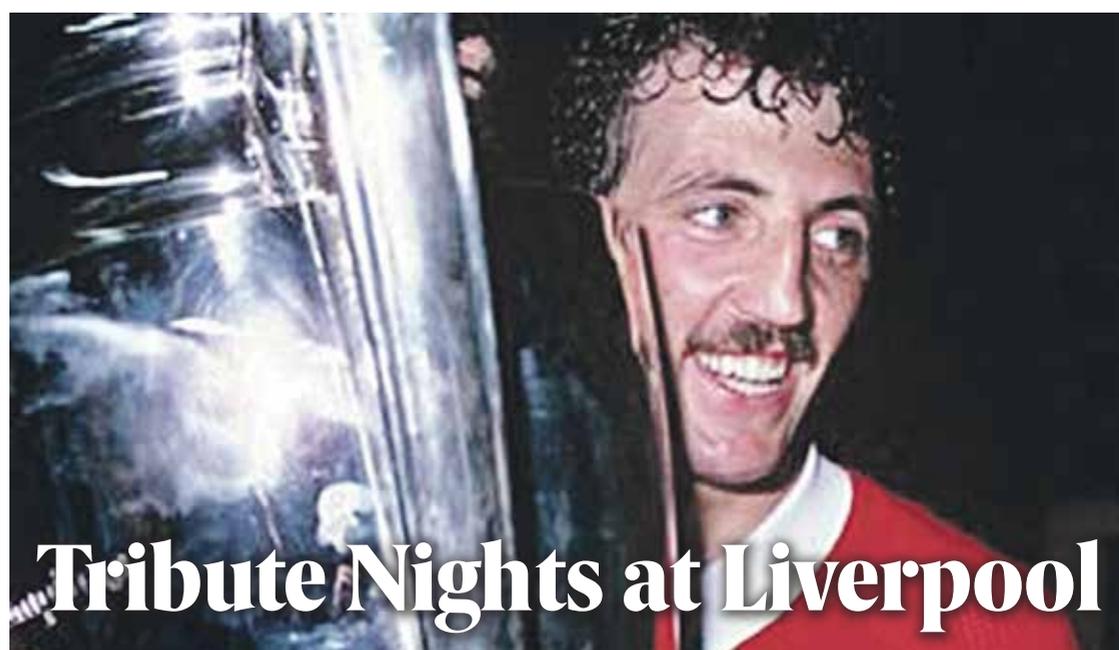
Kane notched another two goals, having played like an England centre-forward, and Deli Alli scored what would eventually be the winner, with Everton getting two late ones to pull the game back to 2-1, then 3-2 in stoppage time.

Sunderland 0

Manchester Citeh 2

Talking of clubs needing a revival, Sunderland were in the bottom one before this game, and are still firm favourites for relegation after it. Two local lads, Aguero and Sané, got the goals that pleased the 'real' Manchester club and its fans.

ALL SPURSY



Tribute Nights at Liverpool

By Jeff Goulding

It's a scene that has been played out many times during Liverpool's illustrious history. A player enters the arena to a crescendo of applause and cheers. Two of his teammates rush to greet him. They embrace and You'll never walk alone fills the air. The sights and sounds are so familiar. The passion is not dulled, but time has moved on.

These were not scenes from Rome or Wembley though. This was not a halcyon Anfield, built by Shankly in the 60s and decorated by Paisley in the 70s and 80s. This was instead the Devonshire Hotel, Liverpool and a 'Scouse Tribute Night' organised entirely by supporters of the club, in aid of their heroes.

That night Tommy Smith, Chris Lawler and Tommy Lawrence, men who had been the very foundations of the club we love today, embraced again and once more soaked up the admiration they so richly deserved. In other events Ian St John and Willie Stevenson have been similarly honoured.

Liverpool supporters have always prided themselves on the bond they have with their heroes. The days when fans and players got the bus home together after the game may have passed into history, but the sense of belonging to a "great society,

where people all around you are loyal and passionate," as Shanks put it, has never left us.

The Kop invented individual songs for these legends in their playing days and serenaded them before kick-off, one after the other. Now they have hung up their boots, the admiration and respect remains mutual.

Ian Golder, one of the organisers of the events, explains how the former players and legends felt when first approached, "they are so humbled to be recognised by the fans individually," he said. "Willie Stevenson in particular was almost moved to tears, because he thought the fans had forgotten about him."

As someone lucky enough to attend Stevo's night, I can testify to the fact that it meant the world to him. In truth it's the least the man deserves. This is a guy who helped us to our first FA Cup. Along with his teammates he lit up Anfield for so many years.

It's fitting then that the atmosphere at these tribute nights can be as raucous and passionate as any game under the Anfield floodlights. In particular the event held in honour of Chris Lawler turned Liverpool Town Hall into the Kop for one night only.

Ian recalls the night that still gives him goosebumps. "We had this young lad, known as Irish Luke, who Peter Hooton of The Farm had brought along.

He got up at the end and sang every verse of Liverbird Upon my Chest, a tribute to Shankly's best. Everyone was clapping and stamping their feet.

Chris was then led down the red carpet to a waiting taxi as Mike Dean, of the Hat, Scarf and Badge store, started singing 'There's only one Chris Lawler.' It went on for 15 minutes and a video of it went viral."

Despite the grandeur of the venue, Ian says the event had a raw feel about it. This was no corporate affair. Instead it was a uniquely Scouse tribute, with supporters and players coming together as one.

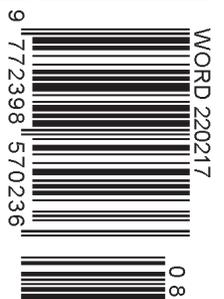
"The idea was borne from the fact that we don't believe the club help or look after these lads anywhere near enough. They are the very foundations. They are the Shankly boys," said Ian.

This sense that more should be done to help ex players, many of whom are living with illness, led local historian, lifelong red and radio host, Frank Carlyle, to set up the tribute night concept. His aim was to honour the heroes, while at the same time helping out charities too.

To date, Cancer Research and the Alzheimer's Society have benefited and next up is local charity "Save our Katie." The charity hopes to raise funds to send a young girl, suffering from Leukaemia, to Seattle for vital treatment.

	Team	P	GD	Pts
1	Chelsea	26	36	63
2	Tottenham	27	33	56
3	Man City	26	24	55
4	Liverpool	27	24	52
5	Arsenal	26	24	50
6	Man Utd	26	17	49
7	Everton	27	14	44
8	West Brom	27	2	40
9	Stoke	27	-8	35
10	Southampton	26	-2	33
11	West Ham	26	-9	33
12	Burnley	27	-10	31
13	Watford	27	-14	31
14	Bournemouth	27	-15	27
15	Leicester	27	-15	27
16	Swansea	27	-24	27
17	Crystal Palace	27	-11	25
18	Middlesbrough	27	-11	22
19	Hull	27	-29	21
20	Sunderland	27	-26	19

ENGLAND WOMEN IN BRILLIANT WIN



March 8th is international women's day yet the BBC in celebration decided to only run a live version of the match on an obscure channel. They compounded the insult by cutting off without any post match roundup or commentary. Meanwhile at the same time on BBC one we had an hour of highlights of the men's game without even a mention of what was taking place in the USA. Imagine for a moment if this was the other way around...?

If England men had achieved the equivalent and beaten World champions Germany it would have been on every news channel yet because we still live in basically what is a sexist society the match was not even broadcast on a main television channel. The game was played to a full house of passionate American "soccer" fans chanting for their team. The "she believes" tournament is made up of the world's four best teams as a curtain raiser to the new women's season. USA, England, Germany and France are now the elite international sides of female football. England were handicapped by the ban on women's sides com-

peting under FA rules which lasted into the seventies. This meant that other international teams had a head start on what should have been OUR game. Only recently has the introduction of the Women's super league meant that professionalism has allowed this country to catch up.

Karen Carney, despite illness, was the England star player and Ellen White scored a late winner as England beat world champions USA in the "She Believes Cup" in New Jersey. Early on USA showed a lot of style as England left back Stokes was repeatedly beaten for pace.

The game was edging towards a goalless draw before Lucy Bronze's superb strike hit the crossbar in the 90th-minute and substitute White scored the rebound.

England, the lowest-ranked team at the event, lost their opening game to France 2-1 and play their final match against Germany on 7 March.

England are second in the table behind France who drew 0-0 with Germany.

With both England and USA yet to start their domestic sea-



sons, the two sides were evenly matched in front of a sell-out crowd on a freezing cold night in New York.

Lioness's goalkeeper Siobhan Chamberlain denied Rose Lavelle from close range before America's Ashlyn Harris saved well to stop Nikita Parris in an even first half.

Chances were few and far between in the second period. England captain Steph Houghton went close with a 25-yard free-kick but Harris clawed the ball to safety.

Mark Sampson's side looked dangerous in the last 10 minutes and White clinched England's first ever victory in the tournament.

Match-winner White was "absolutely buzzing" that her goal had given England a famous victory.

The 27-year-old's strike gave the Lionesses just their fourth win over the World Cup holders and their first home defeat in 23 games.

White said: "To get the win, to get the goal, to beat USA on home soil; I'm pretty ecstatic to be honest.

England celebrate substitute Ellen White's 90th-minute winner.