

THE WORD

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PRO-ISRAELI LOBBY STILL WORKING HARD TO INTIMIDATE DISSENTERS



TORIES IN dismay

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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Jeremy Corbyn's Labour party has been very effective in forcing a right-wing Tory government to backtrack on an unprecedented 25 crucial decisions, the latest being a complete U-turn on NI increases on the self employed. All this has happened since Jeremy Corbyn's appointment as leader in 2015. Compare this with the previous Labour opposition where the vast majority of coalition austerity measures were implemented. The most appalling of which was the decision by the interim leader Harriet Harman to abstain on the welfare bill. Under Jeremy Corbyn that would never have happened and may not have passed at the time.

Jeremy Corbyn is a solid performer at PMQs. Sometimes he is spot on and sometimes he is below par. However, is PMQs just a piece of theatre? I contend that it is. So, how has Jeremy Corbyn and the Labour party forced so many U-turns? The two biggest factors are:

a) Jeremy Corbyn is a true opposition, especially to austerity. The Westminster consensus has been broken.

b) A lot of back room work goes on where the full parliamentary facilities of scrutinising a government's decisions and lobbying happens. Jeremy Corbyn is a tireless and experienced campaigner.

This work behind the scenes, in opposing the government, does not make it into the media but it does get results. Neither the media nor the right-wing in his own party give him credit for his work. In fact they try to paint a picture of ineffectiveness. How can he be ineffective and yet achieve so many Tory U-turns?

The Tories' austerity program has been blunted but they are still pushing on with their privatisation agenda as well as their tax cuts for the rich.

The cosy relationship between the two main parties has been disrupted. This has obviously ruffled quite a few feathers including Labour backbenchers. The Tories are not getting an easy ride.

Here is a list of Tory U-turns. Remember this is not a list from 2010 but from when Jeremy Corbyn became leader.

TORY U TURNS



1. Forcing schools to become academies abandoned
2. Cuts to Personal Independence Payments abandoned after a week.
3. Cuts to tax credits (breaking a pledge in the Tory manifesto) scrapped.
4. Pensions tax relief reform abandoned before Osborne's budget
5. Tory plans to slash police service budgets by 25% scrapped
6. Sunday trading deregulation abandoned after losing a vote in the commons.
7. Solar panel tax blocked.
8. Cracking down on Freedom of Information laws stopped dead in its tracks.
9. The Granny flat tax the stamp duty rules had only been in force a few days before it was scrapped.
10. Changes to the measurement of child poverty statistics abandoned.
11. Tory opposition to scrapping the Tampon Tax abandoned.
12. Scrapping feminism from the A-Level syllabus abandoned.
13. Tory's exclusion of Bahrain and Egypt from list of Human rights priority countries reversed.
14. Tories Scrapping animal welfare codes reversed.
15. Axing the Wildlife Crime Unit abandoned.
16. Repealing the ban on fox hunting abandoned.
17. 1% rent cuts to supported housing delayed.
18. Forced to reverse parts of the the Housing bill.
19. Tories abandon changes to Legal Aid contracts and fee reductions.
20. The Tories Criminal Courts charge scrapped.
21. The Saudi prisons contract abandoned.
22. Scrapping the Human Rights Act abandoned.
23. Pay cuts for Home Office interpreters abandoned
24. Tory blocking of nurses from outside the EU abandoned
25. The planned increase in NI payments on the self employed were scrapped a week after the budget.

NATIONAL ANTI-RACIST MARCH

By Karl Trefor

So another week passes with Mainstream Media coverage of, well, national crises at an all time negligent low while a National Anti-Racist march passes by the BBC buildings.

Having rallied in Great Portland Street, it couldn't have been easier for the BBC news team to report on this event and its impact in a week where Holland could have conceivably chosen a Fascist Government.

Just in the last fortnight the BBC has seemingly played down:-

Budget holes and a u-turn on a u-turn on Manifesto pledges on

National Insurance; Electoral Fraud cases and the Police and Electoral Reform Society reactions; Rebellions on school funding plans; Hard Brexit pressing on by not invoking articles 50 and an admission that the economic plan is not exactly clear.

We did get plenty of SNP vs May, as she seemingly ensured she would lose.

So the BBC slams the stories after the horse has bolted. Maybe the only wise thing Donald Trump has ever done is criticise BBC News.

Here are some images of the March that might have been seen below, by BBC news reporters, as they peered out of their window.





He is a posh whit Oxford graduate, a man who was constantly appointed to be Landsman's right hand man in Momentum no matter what elections said. Lansman has handpicked Sam Wheeler to be his representative on Earth.

Within hours of Gerald Kaufman dying Wheeler had his campaign up and running to be the next MP for the ethnically diverse constituency of Gorton. The Huffington post, no friend of Labour, had written a piece telling the planet that Wheeler was Corbyn's preferred candidate. No one had told Corbyn this.

The lies, fantasies and half-truths then proceeded to reach Paul Nuttall proportions as Wheeler claimed all sorts of ridiculous attributes. Apparently he had made a rousing speech at a JC rally in Salford. I was there it was woeful. He stated he was so poor he had to work in a factory at the age of 14 to keep his family. Well, that would be against the law and the Wheeler family member who owned the factory could be fined for that transgression. He also claims credit for a huge amount of union work that was done by somebody else. We know this because several different sources have reported it to



us. I myself witnessed the attempts by Wheeler and his cronies to call a momentum election in Manchester and not tell the membership. This one was thwarted.

If I could go back in time and stop Blair becoming Prime Minister I would. We do not have that chance but what we do have is the chance to write of another careerists ambitions before he makes that timeless move to the right wing that politicians of his ilk always do. There are plenty of other good JC supporting candidates on the list, please support them.

Here's my take on what is going on in the Labour Party



There is no doubt 'we' won the leadership but the power structures and the majority of the PLP remain in opposition to the views of most of the members and to the Leadership. The Leadership has been undermined, 2 coups, leaks, briefing to the press. It appears that many would prefer to destroy the Labour Party than allow the left to have a leader. The witch hunt is part of this. 'Allegations' against

fellow members have been encouraged, have been used politically to undermine the left, have led to suspensions and expulsions and a real fear of 'speaking out'. Corbyn supporters have been admonished and suspended in droves, many losing the right to vote in the leadership election, having warnings put on their files for using terms like 'traitor' for example. I have complained about 2 members, one

for being threatening the other abusive. One has become a candidate for local councillor and the other, who repeatedly called Corbyn an anti semite, I was informed today, there was nothing found in their tweets that was a problem. I reproduce a selection of what they wrote and re-tweeted.

What can be done? There is one responsesolidarity and a mass movement. *Jacqueline Walker*

THE GORTON CANDIDATES

The intervention of George Galloy appears to have made a real difference to the selection for the Gorton constituency. We now have an all BAME shortlist.

The shortlist for the Labour candidate in Manchester Gorton is: Afzal Khan, Luthfur Rahman, Amina Lone, Yasmin Dar, Nasrin Ali.

We are currently investigating claims that Sam Wheeler has been using contacts he made at Oxford University who now work for the right wing Huffington post to lie about his closeness to Jeremy Corbyn. Whoever stand for Labour is likely to be the next MP as the last election result for there was as follows:



Afzal Khan

Labour	Sir Gerald Kaufman	28,187
Green	Laura Bannister	4,108
Conservative	Mohammed Afzal	4,063
UKIP	Phil Eckersley	3,434

<http://www.stokesentinel.co.uk/>

Hundreds of school cuts protesters march through Sandbach

By KathieMcInnes, posted: March 18, 2017

Up to 1,000 parents, children and teachers marched through a town centre today as they demanded a Government

Schools in Cheshire East Council's area are set to become the worst-funded in England if a proposed new national funding formula goes ahead.

Headteachers say they could be forced to make staff redundant, reduce support for pupils, cut courses and even consider introducing four-day weeks.

http://www.suttonguardian.co.uk/news/15164490.Sutton_MP_Paul_Scully_confirms_he_has_spoken_to_officers_as_police_investigate_Conservative_election_spending/

Sutton and Cheam MP Paul Scully confirms he has spoken to officers as police investigate Conservative election spending

Tory MP for Sutton and Cheam Paul Scully confirmed he has spoken to police investigating the Conservative Party's undeclared election spending.

Mr Scully, who unseated Liberal Democrat Paul Burstow in the 2015 General Election, said he had done nothing wrong and was co-operating with the police investigation.

His comments came after the Conservative Party was fined £70,000 following an Electoral Commission (EC) investigation into election campaign found the party had failed to declare more than £275,000 in expenses.

http://www.thenorthernecho.co.uk/news/15166060.Labour_unveils_plans_for_North_East_transport_and_industry_renaissance/

SHADOW Chancellor John McDonnell has outlined Labour party investment plans to pump £1.4bn into transport links in the North-East, and to revitalise the steel industry through new technologies.

It is part of a wider plan Labour is proposing to create an extra 60,000 jobs in the region by kick-starting a manufacturing renaissance across the north, unlocking economic potential in the region of up to £20bn,

he said.

Speaking at the Labour Party's Regional Economic Conference in Newcastle, Mr McDonnell also talked of the smaller towns and cities in the region that had been "overlooked", which would see investment under Labour.

He outlined plans to put in place an industrial strategy for the region and investing heavily in Carbon Capture and Storage technology, a clean-technology industrial hub in Teesside, and said Labour would commit the £50m needed to create a proposed new Metals Catapult Centre.

<http://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/news/northern-ireland/mary-mcaleese-brexit-could-create-fresh-division-in-northern-ireland-35542192.html>

Mary McAleese: Brexit could create fresh division in Northern Ireland

Brexit could destroy years of goodwill built up during the peace process in Northern Ireland, former Irish president Mary McAleese has said.

She warned the UK's impending divorce from the European Union would create fresh divisions between communities.

Earlier this week the Queen signed the Article 50 Bill into law, giving Prime Minister Theresa May the right to formally start talks to leave the EU.

The PM says she will trigger the process by the end of the month. However, Mrs McAleese has warned that Brexit - and the possibility of a hard border - could seriously jeopardise the progress made in Northern Ireland. She said: "If we're talking about Britain withdrawing from the single European market, (and) withdrawing from the customs union... we know that no matter who says 'everything will be all right on the day', it won't, because it has to change. If the border hardens, I'd be worried that hearts would harden too."

<http://www.hulldailymail.co.uk/hull-council-leader-steve-brady-says-progress-being-made-over-yorkshire-devolution-deal/story-30210881-detail/story.html>

Hull council leader Steve Brady says 'progress being made' over Yorkshire devolution deal

By Angus Young

City council leader Steve Brady says there is a "new realism" among his counterparts over a Yorkshire devolution deal.

The region has yet to unite behind a bid to secure new powers and funding from Whitehall.

The stalemate has led to fears that Yorkshire is being left behind compared to places like Manchester where a London-style elected mayor will be in charge from next year.

Both Hull and East Riding councils have been lobbying for a deal covering the greater Yorkshire area but have faced opposition from authorities in other parts the region, notably west Yorkshire.

However last week 22 council leaders from across the region met in York to discuss how a new joint approach could work.

Cllr Brady, who attended the meeting, said: "I would say there was a very welcome change in the atmosphere.

"I think there is a new realism over the way forward and a general acceptance that one mayor and one combined authority is the right model.

<http://www.chroniclive.co.uk/news/northeast-news/populist-council-north-needed-new-12753792>

A populist Council of the North is needed as new Scottish referendum looms says report

Report says the region needs to act as it is the poor relation to London and Scotland

With a new Scottish referendum back on the political agenda, a 'Council of the North' is needed now more than ever, it is claimed.

A report out today says the urgent need for it is to help the region punch its £300bn economic weight in a UK economy heavily biased towards London and Scotland.

Written by Ed Cox, director of the IPPR North think tank, it says post-Brexit, the North needs a voice and powers to match those in the capital and north of the border.

This includes a new platform for ordinary people, rather than politicians, to 'take back control'.

He wrote of poor infrastructure, a below average research & development spend and a lower skilled workforce which are "symptoms" of this region's economic under-performance rather than its cause.

<http://www.nottinghampost.com/police-pass-general-election-expenses-file-to-cps/story-30209559-detail/story.html>

Police pass General Election expenses file to prosecutors

By Gemma Toulson

Nottinghamshire Police is one of a dozen forces across the UK to have sent files to prosecutors as part of a probe into the Conservatives' 2015 election expenses.

A crown prosecution service (CPS) spokesman said it had received files from: Avon & Somerset, Cumbria, Derbyshire, Devon & Cornwall, Gloucestershire, Greater Manchester, Lincolnshire, the Metropolitan Police, Northamptonshire, Nottinghamshire and West Yorkshire police. Staffordshire.

Once it has received a file, the CPS will decide whether to charge anyone.

A spokesperson for Nottinghamshire Police, said: "An investigation into the 2015 General Election expenses returns has now been completed. A file has been prepared and been sent to the Crown Prosecution Service for final decision."

The Post contacted the Conservative Party and all Nottinghamshire Tory MPs for a comment but there had been no response at the time of publication.

<http://www.birminghammail.co.uk/news/midlands-news/corbys-new-labour-members-barred-12747421>

Corbyn's new Labour members barred from selecting Birmingham council candidates

BY NEIL ELKES

The surge of members, many inspired to join the party following the emergence of Jeremy Corbyn during the leadership race in summer 2015 have all been blocked from taking part in candidate selections.

Almost 100 Birmingham Labour Party members are demanding the right to help choose the slate of candidates who will battle it out for council seats next year.

The surge of members, many inspired to join the party following the emergence of Jeremy Corbyn during the leadership race in summer 2015 have all been blocked from taking part in candidate selections.

National Labour rules set a six month membership probation before full voting

Local

rights are established, but some being barred in Birmingham have almost two years of continuous membership.

They also point out they were allowed to vote in both the 2015 and 2016 national Labour leadership elections won by Mr Corbyn.

<http://www.stornowaygazette.co.uk/news/scottish-news/second-independence-referendum-will-happen-insists-snp-depute-leader-1-4394372>

Second independence referendum will happen, insists SNP depute leader

Angus Robertson has said "Scotland's referendum is going to happen", despite the "Tory arrogance" of Theresa May.

While the Prime Minister declared on Thursday that "now is not the time" for a second vote on independence for Scotland, Mr Robertson condemned the attitude of Mrs May and the Conservatives.

John Swinney insisted that the "kind of country we want to be" was at stake. The SNP Westminster leader accused the PM of "wagging her finger" and treating Scots like they "should shut up and sit on the naughty step" after she rebuffed Nicola Sturgeon's proposals to hold a vote between autumn 2018 and spring 2019.

Mr Robertson told the SNP spring conference in Aberdeen: "Let there be no doubt, Scotland will have its referendum and the people of this country will have their choice... they will not be denied their say. "Just in case some people in Whitehall aren't listening, Scotland's referendum is going to happen, and no UK Prime Minister should dare to stand in the way of Scottish democracy."

He said that if the PM "refuses" talks over the terms of a second independence referendum before the Brexit deal is complete, "she is effectively trying to block the people of Scotland having a choice over their future". Mr Robertson said: "That would be a democratic outrage." "If Scotland can be ignored on an issue as important as our membership of the EU and the single market, then it is clear that our voice and our interests can be ignored at any time and on any issue."

<https://sciscomedia.co.uk/nhs-systematically-destroyed/>

How the NHS is Being Systematically Destroyed

BY DANIEL MARGRAIN

Dr Bob Gill who has worked for the NHS for 23 years and is currently seeking crowd-funding for his documentary film, The Great NHS Heist, recently released a short video presentation where he discusses how the move towards privatising the NHS has been an agenda-driven project continued over many years by successive Conservative and Labour governments'. Over the course of the twelve minute talk, Dr Gill highlights some of the issues the NHS faces and how it is being systematically destroyed.

Key points

These are the key assertions Dr Gill makes in the presentation:

-The intention of successive governments' has been to transform a publicly-funded free at the point of delivery health-care system into something that is driven by the need for profit.

-The privatisation agenda has been a well-planned long-term project.

-Successive governments' have understood NHS privatisation is not in the public interest and thus they have devised alternative narratives in order to deceive the public.

-A key component of this deception has been the deliberate cultivation of a 'scape-goating' culture in which the elderly, immigrants, overweight etc are blamed for government under-investment in the NHS. This lack of investment is portrayed in the media as NHS Trust 'overspending'.

-The hospital network has been deliberately saddled with toxic loans.

-In legal terms, the 2012 Health and Social Care Act abolished the NHS. The result was the emergence of a Quango headed by NHS England's Simon Stevens who has the day-to-day power of managing the service.

-In 2014 Steven's introduced a 5 year 'Sustainability and Transformation' Plan (STP). This will move the NHS closer to the private US insurance system through a process of re-structuring, dismantling, integration, means-testing and merging of existing NHS services.

-Both the NHS workforce and the general public are largely unaware of these plans which have been made deliberately complex and drawn-out over many years. This is yet another part of the plan to deceive, not just the general public, but NHS staff also.

-NHS reforms are reported in the media in a positive way. This is despite the fact that the said reforms will result in its destruction.

-The British Medical Association (BMA) is

largely complicit in the privatisation agenda as illustrated by their capitulation over the junior doctors contract dispute.

-Jeremy Hunt, whose powers are limited, is being used by the media as a distraction.

-Simon Stevens, who has the real power, has been deliberately set-up by the media as a 'saviour' for the NHS, whereas Hunt is portrayed as the 'bad guy'. This is a deliberate media distraction.

-Simon Stevens has one duty and ambition for the NHS and that's to hand it over to his former colleagues at United Health in the US and the US insurance industry.

-Stevens is "the most dangerous public servant in the country."

-The NHS is subject to competition law and is under constant threat from internationally negotiated trade deals.

-As a result of the introduction of a process of data gathering, increasingly the NHS is being geared-up to work against the interests of the patient.

-The NHS is heading in a direction in which doctors will be incentivized to deny patient care.

-The introduction of the principle of private insurance will result in a more expensive system with worse outcomes.

-The plan to fully privatise the NHS is "endemically fraudulent".

<https://www.thecourier.co.uk/fp/news/politics/scottish-politics/389437/economy-secretary-bemoans-spreading-fake-news-scotland/>

Economy Secretary bemoans spreading of 'fake news' about Scotland

An SNP minister lashed out at opponents for "spreading fake news" about Scotland's economy.

Keith Brown, the Economy Secretary, said "talking Scotland down" and its prospects as an independent nation is their "stock in trade".

In a speech to his party's conference, he also announced a £1m war chest to help care leaves get into work, training or education.

He said: "People believe that fake news is something new, but we know different.

"The Tories and our opponents have been spreading fake news for years about our economy, our resources and the kind of future that we could build if Scotland chose an independent future.

"Talking Scotland down is their stock in

trade."

Mr Brown said the Scottish Government is "doing what we can within the constraints of devolution" to grow the economy.

Speaking at the Aberdeen Conference Centre, he hailed the launch of the Oil and Gas Technology Centre last month with £90m of government cash.

<https://www.commonspace.scot/articles/10574/snp-back-national-investment-bank-strategy-boost-scotland-s-economy-snp17>

Scottish National Investment Bank plan backed as alternative to "failed" private sector

A NATIONAL INVESTMENT BANK that puts public interests before private profit has won the support of the Scottish National Party.

Delegates at the party's spring conference have unanimous backing to the policy, and the action of "examining the feasibility and the creation of a Scottish National Investment Bank".

The policy has long been a campaign issue for economic reformers who want an alternative model to the giant corporate centralisation of financial power in big banks.

The motion said that Scotland's economy and future development left "solely in the hand of our private banking and financial sector will be detrimental".

"It would boost productivity, expand the business base, speed up the transition to a low carbon economy and support the creation of thousands of new jobs." Laurie MacFarlane

The result was welcomed by campaigners and economists who want the Scottish Government to push on with greater intervention and economic reforms through its financial agencies.

Ben Wray, Head of Policy for Common Weal said: "The SNP membership has spoken - now the leadership should listen. A Scottish National Investment Bank is exactly what the Scottish economy needs in the post-Brexit landscape: tackle chronic under-investment, provide the patient capital small and medium sized Scottish businesses are not getting and create high-paying jobs.

"In countries like Germany a state investment bank is the norm - there's no reason why that shouldn't be the case here, and the Scottish Government could set it up now. It's an idea whose time has come."

NEWS



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..

Original source Unity March News

By Ed Clarke

Ever since January 20th 2016, there has been talk in the air of an election that was bought by the Conservative Party.

An election that despite the polling data and despite the predictions of the bookies and media commentators, returned a result that left everybody in shock. That day was Thursday May 7th 2015. For the first time in 23 years the British public had returned a majority Conservative Government, despite the previous 5 years of budget cuts and austerity measures that had left the country reeling.

On January 20th 2016, a Channel 4 News investigation had found evidence surrounding 3 by-elections in 2014, that suggested the by-elections in Newark, Rochester and Strood, and Clacton had not accurately recorded the spending returns of the Conservative Party.

As well as this there was evidence unearthed from the 2015 General Election indicating the same offences had taken place but on a much larger, dare I say grander scale. A scale which now seems to show that some very serious offences had occurred. The offences of which I refer to are that of electoral fraud.

Now it is no secret that all political parties have in the past been punished by the Electoral Commission for misdeclared spending returns. In October of 2016 The Labour Party were themselves fined £20k for spending breaches totalling £120k. The Liberal Democrats in December of 2016 were fined £20k after their spending returns failed to include receipts totalling £180k for 300 payments. In the case of The Liberal Democrats this case was also passed to the Police to see if any criminal offences had taken place.

In the case of The Labour Party and The Liberal Democrats neither

parties faced criminal investigations.

January 20th 2016.

It was on this day that the detailed accounts showing all of the spending returns were released to the public. Whilst these accounts show that during the campaigning period for the General Election that the Conservative Party outspent The Labour Party by nearly £3million, buried in the accounts there seemed to be some "creative accounting" regarding the Conservative Party spending returns both nationally and locally.

On January 22nd it became evident after analysis of the spending returns of the Conservative Party there was a very large discrepancy in the local spending return for the candidate in Thanet South, Craig Mackinley. It was in this seat that the Conservatives had gone to war to stop the UKIP candidate and party leader Nigel Farage from winning a seat in the House of Commons.

The spending returns appeared to show £14k of hotel bills had been declared as part of the national spend when in actual fact it should have been attributed to the local spend. The reason for this, is that the hotel bills were specifically for campaigners from the Conservative Party, who were promoting the local candidate in a bid to defeat Nigel Farage. But had they been declared locally this would have pushed the local spend over nearly double its £15k limit.

The offences that had been committed in this decision to declare the spending as national as opposed to local are very serious indeed, as the spending limits are in place in order to ensure a level playing field between all candidates to stop the richer larger parties effectively buying an election victory.

It was on this day the Electoral Commission began their investigation into the spending returns of the Conservative Party.

Forward to February 29th



2016 The Daily Mirror, published a damning article detailing how 29 Conservative Party MPs had under declared their election spending returns during the 2015 General Election. The allegations that were now starting to mount up against the Tories were massive, across the social media networks discussions were awash with news of a stolen election, an election that been bought by the richest of all British political parties. Twitterstorms were being organised almost weekly as there seemed to be a perceived lack of news from our main broadcasters. People were talking of by elections, re runs of the General Election and the possibility of MPs being sent to prison.

If these allegations were true it would be the biggest scandal to ever hit the world of British politics.

Now it is worth remembering

the Conservative majority in the House of Commons is only 12 and with 29 MPs now implicated in this scandal, the potential exists for Tory majority to be completely wiped out leaving the Conservatives with a minority Government and seeking a coalition or there would be calls for a motion of no confidence and the possibility of a General Election being called.

The BattleBus

It was in April of 2016 that the Tories admitted that they had failed to declare the spending for the BattleBus which they had used during the campaigning period but brushed it aside claiming this was "an administrative error".

It was again after a Channel 4 News investigation, over the course of one month a treasure trove of undeclared hotel bills, internal emails and page after page of social media transcripts and

spending that was apparently kept off the books was unearthed. In total 14 seats were won in the South West by the Tories, this enabled them to paint a blue wash of conservatism across the South West of England virtually wiping out the Liberal Democrats.

The Tories maintained that the BattleBus was always a national spend however evidence shows that exact opposite, namely the fact that campaigners were briefed en route to local constituencies about the candidate of the constituency and as to what their local issues were, in fact they were all given a script from which to answer from should any questions from potential voters arise.

Now under the Representation of the People Act 1983, costs incurred promoting a local candidate in an election must be declared as such. If they are not or they are declared as a national spend. The



candidate in question and their election agent have committed a criminal offence.

Criminal Investigations Begin

It was in May of 2016 representatives from 19 Police forces met with the Electoral Commission to discuss what was known, and to see if any criminal investigations needed to be opened into the spending returns of The Conservative Party from the 2015 General Election.

It was decided that criminal investigations needed to be opened however time was already running out. Under the law, there is a statute of limitation that limits any investigations into electoral fraud to 1 year from the date of the offence being committed. The Police had to apply to the courts for an extension of 1 year in which to conduct their investigations. It was at this point the face of the allegations changed,

when the Conservatives went to court to prevent Kent Police from gaining an extension, the Government lost their bid and Kent Police were awarded the extension needed. The judge said,

"If the allegations are found to be true then last year's election result in South Thanet could be voided"

It was at this point the other investigating forces also secured extensions to carry out their own investigations into implicated MPs.

Over the course of next 10 months the news went relatively quiet as to how the investigations were progressing and the wider public especially non Tory voters were started to get worried about a white wash. However those fears were allayed when this month, March 2017 the allegations and investigations were blown wide open. With a Channel 4 News expose, with two campaigners who claimed to have been a part of the

BattleBus tour.

The couple called the Kinsells, said " We worked for the local candidates and MPs to ensure that they won their seat and we were sent wherever they thought we would help."

The couple said that during the tour they were given voter specific data, scrips, and that they were distributing leaflets on behalf of the local candidate. They stated that they have offered to meet the Electoral Commission to present them with their evidence, as they have the police.

It was in this same week, only a week ago that news surfaced that MPs were being interviewed.

The Electoral Commission also released its findings from their own investigation, in which they fined the Conservative government a record £70,000.

The scandal that is Tory election fraud was going into over-

drive, MPs were being interviewed under caution in relation to the allegations. Craig Mackinley was held for 6 hours by Kent police and interviewed in relation to his spending returns. It is also known that Karl McCartney MP for Lincoln has been interviewed, as has William Wragg MP for Hazel Grove.

It is now understood that files from 13 police forces nationwide have been sent to The Crown Prosecution Service, for a decision to be made on whether charges should be brought against potentially two dozen MPs. As I said earlier bear in mind the majority the Conservatives hold in ten HoCs is only 12. The files sent to the CPS is double that. If all 24 MPs are charged and convicted it would be unprecedented and would throw the Conservative Party into utter turmoil. The consequences would be as such, 24 Tory MPs potentially facing 1 years imprisonment, an unlimited fine and

a 5 year bar on holding any public office. It would also mean that Theresa May's government is now a minority just as she plans to take the country out of the European Union. This couldn't have come at a worse time for her.

But a bigger question remains, if 24 MPs are convicted of Electoral Fraud, does that prove that the Government is in power fraudulently ergo all legislation and budgets passed since May 2015 are they themselves fraudulent?

What happens now?

The Crown Prosecution Service now has 10 weeks, in which to decide to allow the relevant police forces to press charges against the implicated MPs.

So by the last weeks of May we may well see prosecutions being sort.

If prosecutions are sort, will there be by-elections definitely. Will there be a General Election quite possibly.

THERESA MAY LIED ABOUT WORKING ALONGSIDE WITH POLICE ON ELECTION FRAUD

<http://stematthewmurray.blogspot.co.uk/2017/03/theresa-may-lied-about-working.html>

By STE MATTHEW MURRAY

Theresa May said yesterday that the Tory party has been working alongside and helping the police who are investigating them for Election Fraud in 2015 but that is a lie and here is why:

Tories tried to block a police investigation into the general election fraud in June 2016 and failed.

The Tories tried to prevent the police being granted more time to investigate the claims, which could lead to the 2015 general election being declared void.

The Mirror last year reported that Kent Police was given a 12-month extension to look into claims the Conservatives broke electoral laws by using national funds to get around the cap on local spending limits.

The Tories had tried to prevent the police from being granted more time at a hearing at Folkestone Magistrates' Court.

But the district judge ruled in the police's favour and warned that any

conviction could see the 2015 election result declared void.

The police are looking into claims that Tory spending on hotels in South Thanet, where the Tories beat Nigel Farage, should have been recorded as local campaign spending.

It is one of more than two dozen police inquiries across the country into possible electoral fraud by the Conservatives.

At the hearing, District judge Justin Barron there was "very significant public interest in the matter being fully investigated."

He added: "The consequences of a conviction would be of a local and national significance with the potential for election results being declared void."

So she blatantly lied about the Surrey sweetheart deal at PMQ's and now blatantly lied about "working alongside police" today. She is a full on liar, a fraud, corrupt and unelected she isn't fit enough to be Prime Minister.

Anti-grammar schools cross-party alliance shows how split the Tories are

<http://voxpolygonline.com/2017/03/19/anti-grammar-schools-cross-party-alliance-shows-how-split-the-tories-are/>

This will shock you: Theresa May is good for democracy in the UK. Why? Because under her, the Tory Party is fracturing badly.

Here, we see that her insistence on trying to revive grammar schools has driven 30 Tories away from her, including former education secretary 'Thicky' Nicky Morgan.

Mrs May has been driven away from her grammar school project by more agile thinkers in the past, but keeps returning to it. This suggests that she doesn't have any other ideas - or she wants to distract us all with something she knows will enflame public feeling.

This story shows us an unelected prime minister with no ideas, whose dull-minded drive to force an unpopular policy on the populace will drive a wedge between her and any thinking people left in the Tory Party. Good.

Theresa May's personal crusade to expand the number of grammar schools is in serious jeopardy today as

senior Tory, Labour and Liberal Democrat MPs unite in an unprecedented cross-party campaign to kill off the prime minister's flagship education reform.

In a highly unusual move, the Tory former education secretary Nicky Morgan joins forces with her previous Labour shadow Lucy Powell and the Liberal Democrat former deputy prime minister Nick Clegg to condemn the plans as damaging to social mobility, ideologically driven and divisive.

The formation of their cross-party alliance against grammar school expansion, which is opposed by about 30 Tory MPs, spells yet more political trouble for May on the domestic front. Last week, chancellor Philip Hammond was forced by a revolt in his own party into a humiliating budget U-turn over national insurance rises for the self-employed, and Conservatives lined up to oppose planned cuts in school funding.

10 humiliating Tory cock ups from just the last week alone

<http://anotherangryvoice.blogspot.co.uk/2017/03/10-humiliating-tory-cock-ups-from-just.html>

1. The National Insurance U-turn

The mainstream media desperately tried to turn the absurd Tory U-turn on their proposed National Insurance hike into an attack on Jeremy Corbyn to deflect attention away from the abject incompetence of the Tory party leadership.

2. A record fine

The Tory party were handed a record £70,000 fine for their dodgy election expenses during the 2015 General Election campaign.

3. Criminal investigations

12 police forces have handed files to the Crown Prosecution Service over the 2015 Tory General Election fraud and Tory MPs are being interviewed under caution about their roles in the scandal.

4. The NHS nursing crisis

FOI requests have revealed that record number of EU nurses have quit the NHS, while the number of new nurses from the EU has slumped by 92%. Meanwhile there is a huge recruitment crisis, with 10,000 less British people applying to train as nurses because of scrapping of NHS bursaries.

5. David Davis' admission

The Tory Brexit secretary David Davis has admitted, as he was being grilled by the Brexit select committee, that the Tory government have done absolutely no research into how bad a retaliatory hard Brexit would be for the UK economy and the British people.

6. Scotland

If there's one thing that's most likely to drive Scotland towards independence it's an English Tory Prime Minister expressing her determination to totally ignore Scottish democracy. The Scottish parliament will vote to hold an independence referendum to give the Scottish

people the chance to escape the appalling consequences of a hard Tory Brexit that they voted so strongly against.

7. Child Poverty

The government's own figures revealed that 100,000 more children (4m in total) are living in poverty than last year. Two thirds come from working families. This looks like continuing.

8. Zero Hours Contracts

Office for National Statistics figures revealed that the number of UK workers on exploitative Zero Hours Contracts rose to an all time record high of 905,000, an increase of 13%.

9. The Housing crisis

The Office for National Statistics have revealed that UK houses are the least affordable they have ever been. Since 1997 house prices have risen 259% while wages have risen only 68% in the same period.

10. Ireland just shamed the UK

In January 2017 Theresa May scuttled off to the United States to lick Donald Trump's boots and beg him for a hastily cobbled-together trade deal for Brexit Britain. Her "begging bowl" speech was an absolute abomination.

Conclusion

The Tory government is an absolute shambles. They're slow-marching us towards a catastrophic nuclear Brexit and the break-up of the United Kingdom; they just did possibly the biggest budget U-turn in living memory; they're trashing the NHS; they're overseeing huge spikes in child poverty and people in unstable work; they're under criminal investigation for cheating their way into power; they're overseeing an extraordinary house price inflation crisis; and Theresa May just got put to shame by the bloody Prime Minister of Ireland.

US forced to admit it wasn't Russia that carried out the latest Syrian atrocity

<http://www.thecanary.co/2017/03/17/us-forced-admit-wasnt-russia-carried-latest-syrian-atrocity-image/>

On Thursday 16 March, an airstrike on a mosque in Syria's Aleppo province reportedly killed at least 42 civilians. But contrary to early reports, it was not a Russian or Syrian government attack. It was carried out by the US-led coalition.

"Targeting rebels"

US military chiefs claim the attack was targeting al-Qaeda rebels in nearby Idlib province. But at around 7pm-730pm local time, bombs fell about 50ft from the mosque in al-Jina, which was packed with 300 people observing evening prayers.

US defence department spokesman Captain Jeff Davis denied that US bombs had hit the mosque. But Middle East Eye reported that:

Major Josh Jacques told Airwars that its target in al-Jina was 'assessed to be a meeting place for al-Qaeda, and we took the strike - it happened to be across the street from where there is a mosque'.

US Central Command, meanwhile, told Agence France-Presse (AFP) that "US forces conducted an air strike" on al-Qaeda, "killing several terrorists". And it said it would "look into any allegations of civilian casualties".

Definitive proof?

Investigative group Bellingcat claimed that evidence showing English lettering had been found at the scene. This, it asserted, shows the missiles used were US 'Hellfire' ones:

BEST OF

US drones appear to have returned to Pakistan

<https://www.thebureauinvestigates.com/stories/2017-03-06/us-drones-return-to-pakistan>

Donald Trump's administration was reported to have carried out a drone strike in Pakistan on Thursday, raising the possibility of a shift in policy after a long hiatus in CIA operations there.

The attack killed two men in the tribal area of Kurram, which lies on the border with Afghanistan, according to government and intelligence officials as well as a local resident.

The reported strike - which occurred the same day as a large US air operation against targets in Yemen - was the first to take place in Pakistan since May last year.

The drone campaign in Pakistan has been known to pause, sometimes

for months at a time. But yesterday's attack - if confirmed - would mark the end of the longest gap between strikes since 2006. The US began hitting Pakistan with drone attacks in 2004, carrying out 425 in total so far.

Tribal sources in Pakistan identified one of the men killed last week as Qari Abdullah Sabari, a commander of the Afghan Taliban, and the second man as Shakir, an Afghan national, according to The News. Two missiles reportedly struck their motorcycle.

Anonymous officials have said that the men killed belonged to either the Afghan Taliban or the Haqqani Network, groups involved in fighting in Afghanistan.

Philip Hammond gave us a budget for tax avoiders and giant firms - John McDonnell

<http://nationalcan.ning.com/profiles/blogs/philip-hammond-gave-us-a-budget-for-tax-avoiders-and-giant-firms->

This week's budget revealed the government's true priorities. It's not about supporting workers or small businesses. It's a government for tax avoiders and giant corporations. Phillip Hammond was boasting about the continuing cuts to taxes for corporations and the super-rich, now totalling £70bn over the next few years, even as he hammered the self-employed with a £2bn national insurance tax hike.

The unfairness of this is very clear.

They're making the minicab driver pay more, but the company they work for pays less. A hairdresser earning £15,000 a year will be £139 worse off as a result of the measures announced. On the day, the government has attempted to disguise the true impact of the change by hiding it behind an earlier revision to national insurance contributions. But anyone earning over £8,000 will be hit by the new changes.

The Kagans Are Back; Wars to Follow

<https://off-guardian.org/2017/03/19/the-kagans-are-back-wars-to-follow/>

By Robert Parry, for consortiumnews.com

The neocon royalty Kagans are counting on Democrats and liberals to be the foot soldiers in the new neocon campaign to push Republicans and President Trump into more "regime change" wars, reports Robert Parry.

The Kagan family, America's neoconservative aristocracy, has re-emerged having recovered from the let-down over not gaining its expected influence from the election of Hillary Clinton and from its loss of official power at the start of the Trump presidency.

Back pontificating on prominent op-ed pages, the Family Kagan now is pushing for an expanded U.S. military invasion of Syria and baiting Repub-

licans for not joining more enthusiastically in the anti-Russian witch hunt over Moscow's alleged help in electing Donald Trump.

In a Washington Post op-ed on March 7, Robert Kagan, a co-founder of the Project for the New American Century and a key architect of the Iraq War, jabbed at Republicans for serving as "Russia's accomplices after the fact" by not investigating more aggressively.

Then, Frederick Kagan, director of the Critical Threats Project at the neocon American Enterprise Institute, and his wife, Kimberly Kagan, president of her own think tank, Institute for the Study of War, touted the idea of a bigger U.S. invasion of Syria in a Wall Street Journal op-ed on March 15.

At Your Service? Migrant Women Workers in the UK Hospitality Sector

<http://novaramedia.com/2017/03/10/at-your-service-migrant-women-workers-in-the-uk-hospitality-sector/>

By Ewa Jasiewicz

'Migrant worker'. If you close your eyes and let the mainstream media and Ukip-stoked tropes of the last decade wash over you, you'll probably be seeing an eastern European builder or fruit picker. They might be wearing hi-vis. And they will probably be a man.

In reality, the majority of migrant workers in the UK are women, comprising 54% of the UK migrant workforce. The most common industries for women migrant workers to be employed in are the cleaning and hospitality sectors, as well as elementary process plant occupations - ware-

house picking and packing and food processing.

Poland, India and Pakistan are the main three foreign countries of birth for all migrants in the UK, accounting respectively for 9.5%, 9.0% and 5.9% of the UK's foreign born population. London has the highest percentage of resident migrants, with 36% of its population born outside of the UK.

The London hospitality sector runs on 78% migrant workers' labour, of which women make up 70%, mainly in front of house and cleaning roles. It also has the highest representation of black and minority ethnic workers - nearly twice the national average at 14% according to the UK Tourist Alliance.

In Historic Report, U.N. Agency Says Israel Is Imposing an "Apartheid Regime" on Palestinian People

https://www.democracynow.org/2017/3/16/in_historic_report_un_agency_says

Richard Falk co-author of the report titled "Israeli Practices towards the Palestinian People and the Question of Apartheid" and author of several books, including Palestine: The Legitimacy of Hope. He is professor emeritus of international law at Princeton University. He previously served as the U.N. special rapporteur on Palestinian human rights.

For the first time, a United Nations agency has directly accused Israel of imposing an "apartheid regime" on the Palestinian people.

The report also urges governments to "support boycott, divestment and sanctions [BDS] activities and respond positively to calls for such initiatives." The findings come in a new report published by the U.N. Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia, which is comprised of 18 Arab states. For more, we speak with the co-author of the report, Richard Falk. He's professor emeritus of international law at Princeton University and previously served as the U.N. special rapporteur on Palestinian human rights.

@TOM_WATSON: WILL YOU PUBLISH WHAT YOU'VE SPENT MOSLEY'S £500K ON?

https://skwawkbox.org/2017/03/17/tom_watson-will-you-publish-what-youve-spent-moseleys-500k-on/

The word among Labour activists is that there has been a sudden, massive upturn in the number of bots and fake accounts swamping pro-Corbyn threads on social media - often along the lines of 'I used to support Corbyn but...' - ever since Max Mosley's latest couple of

hundred grand donation last month to deputy Labour leader and 'Project Anaconda' architect Tom Watson.

That brings Mosley's donations to Watson to a tidy £500,000 so far. And fake accounts, with the people/technology to fuel them, cost money.

the new web

EXCLUSIVE

Tory Immigration Law favours Agency over NHS staff



By Anand Kumar

Many are not yet aware of it, but the UK government have legislated to prevent foreign nationals filling essential roles in the NHS, making the NHS reliant on private providers.

As an NHS physiotherapist, I see patients with fractures, hip and knee replacements, and even patients admitted to hospital following a fall. My main job is to make patients as mobile as they can be prior to their discharge.

In addition to being an attack on the staff, it is also a direct attack on the NHS itself.

We conduct safe discharges from the hospital to ensure that our limited hospital acute beds are available for our acutely unwell patients. As I am a senior physiotherapist, I also provide training to junior staff as well as students on placements. The fact that I came to work here from India does not affect my ability to perform these essential roles.

The UK's new immigration law came into force in April 2016, and it requires all non-EU citizens working

in the UK to earn £35,000 on a single contracted salary or leave the country.

This law discriminates against those who work in the NHS. Outside London, a £35k salary is next to impossible to achieve in the NHS in first 5-6 years of employment. Most qualified staff start on a £21k salary and are unlikely to reach to £35k in first 5 years of their employment when immigrants on working visas are eligible to apply for indefinite leave to remain. NHS contracted hours are only 37.5 per week, compared to the private sector, who normally give 40 hour contracts. NHS employees in London get an allowance of up to 20%. The UK average salary is only £28k.

In essence, we have been asked to earn far more than UK average citizens. For an NHS worker this can only be achieved by the NHS paying far higher wages, increasing its costs, or by working for private groups who charge the NHS far more for the same service.

We are also asked to pay extra taxes. While paying tax and national insurance like normal UK citizens, we also pay the NHS surcharge which, according to government, is our health insurance. We are therefore charged twice - NI and NHS surcharge - for the same product.

And after all this, our honourable prime minister talks about her Tory pledge "to fight injustice and make

Britain a country that works for everyone".

Please sign my petition to give a strong message to the government that we respect our NHS migrant workers, that we all are united to support them. In addition to being an attack on the staff, it is also a direct attack on the NHS itself. Our petition goes beyond immigration and cuts to the very heart of healthcare in the UK. Please support your NHS by supporting its workforce.

Some facts and figures:

Shortages of staff are already emerging in the NHS, estimated at 500 physiotherapy posts annually.

Managers are having difficulty in recruiting senior physiotherapists. 34% at band 6 and 46% at band 7.

We all know that providing '7-day service' means we need more staff and more resources.

UK staffing numbers have stagnated. In 2010-48K, 2012-42K, 2013-15-52K, 2016: 49K, France: 2010: 72K, 2015: 84K.

The number will go further down due to cuts on student bursaries. Students will have a loan of approx. £50k by the time they finish their degree.

Spending on agency staff is increasing, which clearly means that we need more permanent staff - "Spending on agency staff increased from £2.2 billion in 2009-10 to £3.3

Petition: Exempt Non-EU NHS professionals from £35,000 salary threshold

Non-EU staff will be forced to leave the UK due to 35k salary threshold
Scan the QR code to support this petition

Or put 'exempt non-EU NHS' into Google
petition.parliament.uk/petitions/176987

The NHS provided me training to become a senior physiotherapist, paid me enough salary that I could afford a nice house and support my family. I am currently earning above 40K with overtime however I have no right to extend my stay because my contracted salary is less than 35K. I do not want to be disloyal to the NHS and move to a private sector just for the sake of acquiring 35K salary. I want to continue to serve the NHS in the same way the NHS have served me. Please support my campaign.

My story: <http://www.stop35k.org/single-post/2017/01/20/Help-us-stay-support-the-NHS>
Contact: anandthephysio@yahoo.com
Twitter: @anandthephysio #anand35k
Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/change35k4NHS/>

billion in 2014-15".

There are three million falls annually among older people, with an annual cost to the NHS of £2.3bn. The Chartered Society of Physiotherapy believes that almost 200,000 of those falls could be prevented annually through physiotherapy-led prevention services, which would save £275m.

RCN identified 3,365 nurses currently working in the UK that may have to leave from 2017 as a direct result of this income threshold. This not only denies the NHS and inde-

pendent sector of experienced nurses, but it also makes no economic sense. It will have cost approximately £20,190,000 to recruit those 3,365 nurses.

Hence, they have exempted nurses from this salary threshold, however other therapist and medical professionals, such as physiotherapists - whose jobs are often as important - are not exempt.

Please sign our petition at - <https://petition.parliament.uk/petitions/176987>



I've written in this newspaper for ten or so issues, says Health Correspondent Ian Charles.

Since I was *transferred* to an Oncologist, The Patient's Eye has focused on that branch of medicine, but today I want to tell you about a couple of my relatives.

Firstly my cousin Sid: or to give him his full moniker El Sidron II (no relation to that darned film) the cave where his remains were found. My wife has always suspected that I have a heritage which is different from that of other people; I've suspected it too. I can point back a few generations to an ancestor who seems to be quite obviously of mixed race, but she shakes her head and points in the opposite direction, to that most European of personae, Neanderthal Man.

Remains studied by teams of Scientists in Australia, Spain and our very own Liverpool University show us a great deal about my older cousin's diet and lifestyle.

It is becoming accepted that, as I've always believed, modern humans possess a percentage of genes that they got from Neanderthals, through some interbreeding before the extinction of the one, not necessarily by the other. African peoples do not possess these genes. Asians don't either, many or most possessing a similar amount of inherited material from early humans called Denisovans.

But caricatures of troglodytic and stupidly primitive creatures don't pass muster; Sid was vegan, cooked his food, had a tooth abscess, and had been trying to self-medicate, or had been prescribed medicines, containing salicylic acid (aspirin) from tree bark, and antibiotic (penicillin) from natural moulds.



Like Yuval Noah Harari, the anthropologist responsible for the best-selling books *Sapiens* and *Homo Deus*, a team from the Museum of Natural Sciences in Madrid consider that my ancient cousins were probably much healthier than modern humans who lived in larger groups and settled in one place where they were subject to illnesses, infections and deficient diets. We don't know whether any of them got prostate cancer.

My diet, entirely from choice

and as an attempt not to work against the medication I've been prescribed, contains as little and as few hormones as possible; I've cut out all dairy (let's spell that out: milk, cheese, butter, yoghurt, cream) as well as eggs and chicken (those tiny birds that are fed on antibiotic and hormone so that within six weeks they resemble Doris Day in size and colour) and only eat fish, and meat such as lamb or goat once a flood. Since our kitchen has experienced disaster on a semi regular

basis for the last two years we ought not to take that quite as literally as we might.

And I have an abscess under one of my teeth.

So here we have an early version of Ian, living happily (we hope) on plants and leaves and roots and shoots and fruits, and taking medicines known about by the culture in which he lived. Only around 5% of his genes are present in modern humans, we reckon. I don't think we can say that the remaining 95%

of genes are those of 'Modern Man' when other sources tell us we share 96% of our DNA with chimpanzees.

And now my cousin Bob; son of my father's brother, is suffering from a pre-cancerous condition of the prostate, as did our dads. He's got many of the symptoms I did five or six years ago. Saving him from late diagnosis and a life-shortening condition (like mine) is our common endeavour. I'm afraid this means giving the NHS a bit of a nudge; I'm sure we're both up for that.

A consultation with a Specialist costs the NHS about £150 and goes like this, writes Ian Charles.

Meetings with my oncologist 5

"How are you feeling?"
"I'm good, yeah, thanks."
"Taking the Enzalutamide?"
"Oh, yes, I most certainly am."
"Any problems?"
"Well I sometimes have unhappy feelings about the worldwide political situation."
"Is that since you started the treatment?"
"Well, not as a result of the treatment..."
"Actually, we sometimes find that people report feeling... edgy?"
"I can generally dispel any gloom or anxiety using techniques I learned on the Macmillan / Coventry University HOPE course."
"Is that the patient self-management course that you coach/facilitate?"
"It is; does your department flag this up to patients?"
"You'll need to speak to Lisa about that; she's more in tune with that sort of thing" (*She is.*)

"Soo... have you any questions you'd like to ask me?"
"Erm, not really, am I on this treatment for life?"
A smile... "We have no plans to take you off once you have had the approval to start, so long as it's doing you good, so long as your bloods are okay, so long as there's no cause for concern..."
"That's good to know! Thank you."
"That's grand." She's what I call 'Posh Yorkshire' and uses this term to convey to me that the consultation is now over. She tells me I'll be back in a month, or two months, and that I might see one of the other consultants, or Lisa, when I can talk to her about the HOPE course.
At the hospital, we call this kind of appointment "The Blessing" and it is a major use of NHS time, and expense. It is far better if the doctors see those patients who are suffering pain, discom-



fort, or whose bloods are showing disturbing trends. Otherwise the use of Specialist Oncological Nurses is better, and I've noticed, they have time, that precious commodity, for the patient and the patient's carers, and seem to know the answers as well as the doctors. If they don't, then they find out, and if they have any worries, they don't play clever and

'reassure' - which is something I have seen in other branches of patient care in the NHS. Perhaps I'll tell you about that on another occasion.

I see a Specialist Oncological Nurse, Lisa, every couple of months. She's really knowledgeable and speaks to my Oncologist for me; at the drop of a hat, or blood marker, or bleeding from

somewhere that shouldn't be bleeding, then you're back into the doctor's consulting room and being given the full range of strategies and treatments to consider.

I couldn't afford privately the kind of treatment I currently receive; Private Insurance cannot do the job as cheaply because there would be always 'an elephant in the room' with us, the shareholders of the Health Insurance Provider, fully expecting a dividend, with a CEO, expecting a bonus, and the Hedge Fund Managers, who have put up the money for the building and the equipment.

That is whence Donald Trump, Richard Branson, Theresa May/May Nut and UKIP's 'Nutty' Nuttall would take the NHS. There is no example of any private system that does things as well as a public, not-for profit one, whether it is a railway, a health service or a pension scheme.

Perhaps you know different.

A BRIEF VIEW OF THE BUDGET

by Kitty S Jones

He's not very bright our chancellor, is he? Self-employed people face an increase in their National Insurance (NI) contributions as the Chancellor says he wants to "tackle the unfair burden on people in employment".

He could have simply reduced the rate of NI that employees pay instead. He's a bit of a wally. We did have a period of economic growth last year, second to only Germany, apparently. Good old Tories, eh? Hurrah! But I wonder who will benefit from that, assuming it's really a growth in the economy? It won't be disabled people claiming Personal Independence Payment (PIP) with severe psychological distress who can't leave the house, that's for sure. Or those suffering epilepsy, both types of diabetes and blackouts who need support with their treatments.

All of these conditions in fact: 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).

What kind of government cuts mobility support for people who can't leave the house alone?

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 (pseudo-

seizures), 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.

What kind of government cuts support for those needing help to manage medication, monitor a health condition, or both?

For many families who are just about managing, the with-

drawal of state support for those who are in low paid work is hardly an incentive to "make work pay". This is one of the other austerity measures that Hammond has chosen to keep. Introducing sanctions for those claiming social security because their employers don't pay them enough to live on is simply a big bully's stick, which would be better aimed at exploitative and miserly big business employers. Fancy punishing people because profit driven businesses pay as little as possible.

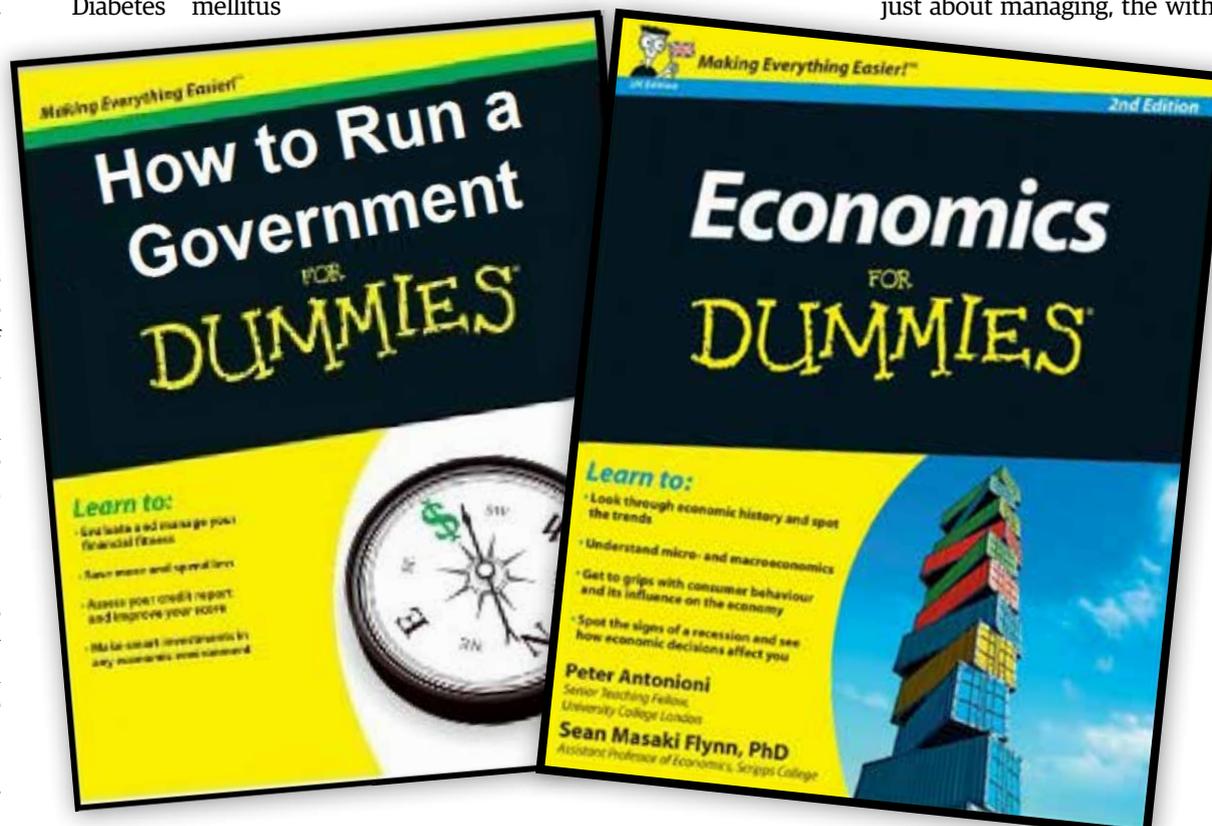
Still if you earn a few hundred thousand, you are set to do rather well yet again from another Tory budget. It's remarkable how those need it least always get the financial "incentive" isn't it? Carrots for the fat cats.

Meanwhile those who need it most pay for those who need it least.

That's the Tories wielding a stout stick and giving out a good thrashing if you dare to fall ill.

It's the same peevish and spiteful mentality as "making work pay." Instead of ensuring workers get a decent rate of pay, like you'd think from the Tory claim, the truly nasty party cut benefits and decided to impose punishing conditions on people who need state support indiscriminately, regardless of the reason, instead.

That's pure upper class malice. And greed.



By Charles Spedding

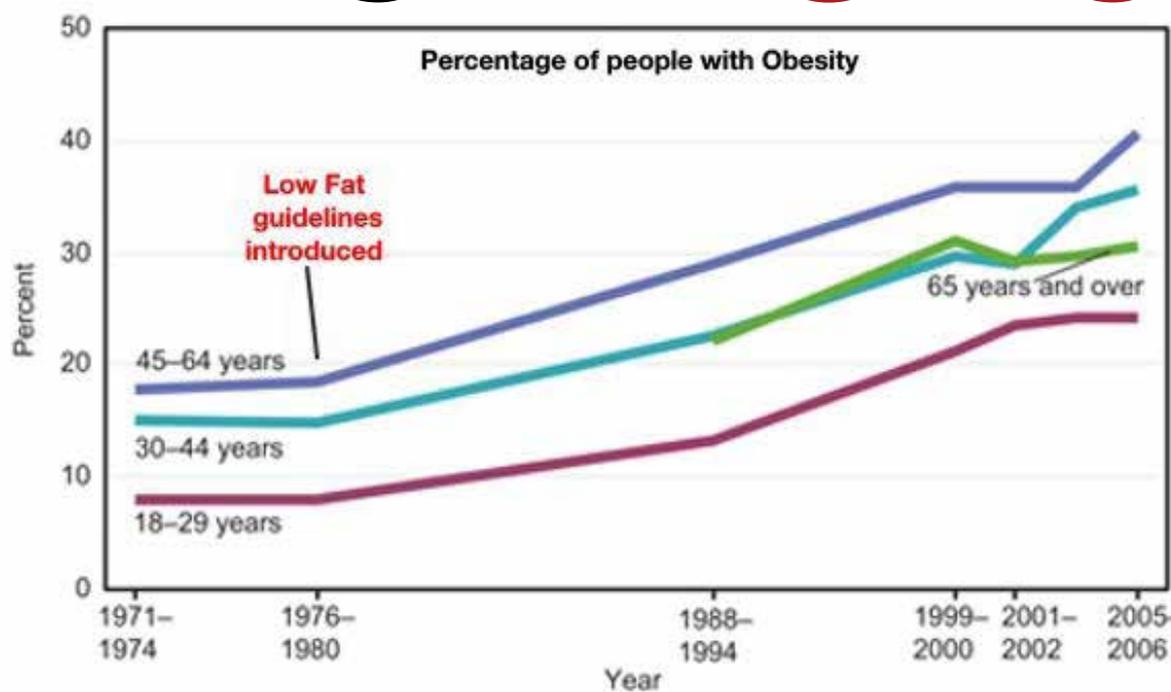
The huge problems facing the NHS are being laid at the door of Health Secretary, Jeremy Hunt. He is certainly making relationships between Government and the doctors worse by enforcing a contract that nobody wants. However, the enormous pressures exerted on the Health Service are not his fault. They are the fault of successive Governments over the last few decades.

We spend £120 billion on health care each year and every year we need to spend more. If the system was working, we would be spending less money each year because people would be getting better. The question we should be asking is not 'How much should we spend?' but 'Why are so many people ill?'

I have worked for most of my life as a Pharmacist but I recently left the profession. Over the years, I saw hundreds of people with metabolic diseases. They regularly took their prescribed medication but I hardly ever saw anybody get better. The drugs were treating the symptoms but not the disease. Metabolic diseases, like heart disease and type 2 diabetes, are caused by lifestyle choices and to overcome these ailments we need to tackle the lifestyle that caused them. This makes sense to us but not, of course, to Pharmaceutical companies who are making a fortune out of medicating problems caused by a bad diet.

This problem began in 1983. That was when the Government issued its first Official Dietary Guidelines. The guidelines were copied from the American guidelines that had been introduced in 1977. We were all told that to avoid heart disease, we had to reduce our intake of fat, especially saturated fat, and replace it with carbohydrate. The publicity behind this dogma has been so effective that everybody now believes that saturat-

NHS PROBS



ed fat clogs our arteries and causes heart attacks.

Everybody believes it except for the people who have studied it. There was never any proper evidence that this was true. It was a hypothesis that an American researcher, called Ancel Keys, believed in. Through arrogance and force of will he squashed every opinion that contradicted him and he persuaded an American Senate committee to produce the dietary guidelines that we are all saddled with today. There is no evidence that eating saturated fat causes heart disease. In fact, a recent study looking at the whole of Europe showed that the countries with highest intake had the lowest level of heart disease and the countries with the lowest levels of saturated fat intake had the highest

levels of disease.

When the guidelines came out, food manufacturers starting removing fat from their products but with no fat in them, they tasted like cardboard. To get over this, they invented things called trans-fats which gave their processed foods a better feel and texture. Unfortunately, these hydrogenated oils caused a long list of health problems and experts now agree they should not be eaten. They were often used to increase a product's shelf life, but, sadly, not your life.

The food industry moved on and realised it could improve taste by adding lots more sugar. We ended up with such ridiculous things as 'fat free yoghurt', where they take the naturally occurring fat out of milk and replace it with sugar. Then they

label it 'the healthy option'. We are starting to learn that sugar is the real danger to our health rather than fat. All the sugar we consume is responsible for the obesity epidemic and the huge surge in type 2 Diabetes that followed it. It is also responsible for many of the cancers that overweight people suffer from. Experts in the field are starting to refer to Alzheimer's diseases as type 3 Diabetes. The millions of people who are suffering from these awful diseases are overloading the NHS. This why we spend more money every year without ever reducing the number of patients needing help. The problems faced by the Health Service are caused by what we all eat and we eat what the Health Service says is 'healthy'. Clearly, it is not.

We have reached a position where people are fed by the food industry which pays no attention to health and are treated by the health industry which pays no attention to food. Big food companies make a fortune selling us highly processed fake food which they lace with addictive substances like sugar. Big drug companies encourage the education of doctors to always think in terms of which drug to give for a problem. Doctors are not taught to think about what caused the problem and how to reverse it. A small number of doctors around the world, however, are reversing people's diabetes with a low carbohydrate diet. Official NHS policy says that type 2 diabetes cannot be reversed.

Jeremy Hunt could solve the NHS crisis in a stroke. He should rip up the Dietary Guidelines and encourage us to eat the naturally occurring fat our ancestors thrived on for millions of years. At the same time insisting that we avoid the sugar and excess carbohydrates that are making so many people ill. He won't do it, of course, because there is too much vested interest at stake. As usual, it is up to us to do something about it. Because our food is so far removed from what we evolved to eat and so corrupted by the food industry we have become a fat and sick nation. I calculate that the UK population is at least 2,000 million pounds overweight. Consequently, I have launched a campaign to do what Mr Hunt will never do. It is called 'Who wants to lose a Million Pounds?' By encouraging people to eat what our bodies are designed to eat, instead of the false food promoted by industry, I hope to create a group of people who collectively lose a million pounds in weight. It can be found at loseamillionpounds.com and it aims to improve people's health, happiness and weight. Something I was not able to do by medicating people's problems as a Pharmacist.

Virgin Care

Virgin Care's £128.4 million bid to take over adult community care for parts of Kent has been put on hold.

Richard Branson's private care group was to have taken over work at Sittingbourne Memorial Hospital and Sheppey Community Hospital on April 1 after being awarded a seven-year contract by health commissioners in January.

But the current provider, Kent Community Health NHS Foundation Trust (KCHFT), has launched a legal challenge in the High Court which has stopped contracts being signed.

It says it is concerned Virgin will be unable to deliver its services in time.

Negotiations have stumbled over computer systems in the hospitals and the fate of staff who will not automatically transfer to Virgin Care. It is unclear what will happen

to staff and patients after the April 1 deadline passes in four weeks' time.

However, Swale council's cabinet member for health, Cllr Ken Pugh (Con), said the NHS Swale Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) had confirmed to him that KCHFT has been told to continue to provide services until the situation is resolved "within the next few weeks".

Lesley Strong, Acting Chief Executive for Kent Community Health NHS Foundation Trust, explained: "We have been working with the CCG and Virgin Care during the past month on the transfer of services from April 1. We have been concerned that Virgin Care was awarded the contract on price over quality and as further information has become available, our concerns have increased.



"We need to seek reassurance that Virgin Care is able to deliver on its bid, in the timescales it indicated, for the safety of patients and staff. We appreciate the CCGs have the right to test the market but this decision needs to be made in full possession of all the facts.

"We have asked the CCGs to provide us with the detail of Virgin's bid to provide assurance and the CCGs are considering this request. After careful consideration, we've asked for the courts to intervene, which means the contracts cannot be signed while this happens."



The CCG was responsible for awarding the contract to Virgin.

Its spokesman Lorraine Denoris said: "The CCG received notice on February 19 that proceedings had been started by an unsuccessful bidder in the Technology and Construction Court (part of the High Court of Justice).

"The challenge has been brought under the Public Contracts Regulations 2006.

"This triggers an automatic suspension under Regulation 47G of the Public Contracts Regulations 2006 which requires the CCG to refrain from entering into a contract in respect of the services until the proceedings are determined, discontinued or otherwise disposed of."

She said the CCG had been advised not to comment further.

KCHFT has issued a similar challenge to the CCG's sister organisation NHS Dartford, Gravesham and Swanley CCG, which awarded Virgin the contract to run adult care at Gravesham Hospital, Gravesend and the Livingstone Hospital, Dartford.

Virgin Care spokesman Nic Parkes said: "We are currently involved in a procurement process so it would be inappropriate for us to comment further at this time."

Cllr Pugh said: "My gut reaction is that KCHFT was not up to the job in the first place and has now made a play to delay the contract. As far as I am concerned they are shooting themselves in the foot. It smacks of sour grapes."

PRO-ISRAELI LOBBY STILL WORKING HARD TO INTIMIDATE DISSIDENTS



By Alex Taylor

As you probably know they would be - you won't perhaps be surprised to learn that pro-Israeli forces in social media land are not taking any substantial break from the keyboard as far as we can tell this year (except perhaps just for a quick SodaStream® produced with resources stolen from the Palestinians).

What might surprise you are the types and variety of rabid Anti-Palestinian activists. It's not clear who is funding some of this, and it may even be that some of the protagonists are actually just back-room obsessives.

Luke Akehurst is no back room keyboard warrior however and seems oddly enthusiastic to start throwing abuse around on Twitter. You'd have thought he'd be more respectful as someone who presumably wants to remain in the Labour Party, but he lost his rag



somewhat after being deselected by Oxford CLP, who no longer require his services on the executive committee.

Some of the amused responses to this were rather cruel and shallow and entirely unnecessary and offensive. But one commen-



tator (e.g. me) suggested that Luke would not be short of employment of the wrong sort, in any case. His well-hidden Pro-Israeli allegiances (as revealed by Al Jazeera in "The Lobby") would surely give port in the storm - and perhaps one of the reasons why he was let go so unceremoniously?



Luke is happy to enter the fray (time on his hands these days I guess!) but to spite being offensive and libellous in his comments it's actually his Pro-Israeli pals who start mentioning "compliance" the shady Labour Party office who decides who to ban from the party. Think of the extraordinary amount

of research that "cashstien" or (((Sjofn))) has done to discover me as not only the author of the tweets accusing Akehurst of taking Israeli funding, but also in unearthing further evidence that I'm a member of the Labour Party.

Then throw in the absurd language used to attempt to generate some kind of fear and accusation "enabling and supporting Anti-Semitic abuse of Luke Akehurst." Not actually *being* abusive, not actually *being* anti-Semitic, but *enabling* these actions, presumably by...using letters and words perhaps??? I have to admit, that yes, some of the very same letters I've used there - especially the letter "e" will probably be used in future abusive and anti-Semitic comments. For this I am truly sorry.

Apart from that the only conclusion I can reach is to be amazed by the total lack of dignity with which some people are prepared to behave in the attempt to hide their shady dealings with the brutal and murderous regime in Israel.

The Sun is The Bloody Rag of Hillsborough

BY DAVID LINDSAY

The Sun is The Bloody Rag of Hillsborough, and the persecutor of my friend (yes, still my friend), Tom Watson. The Times employs Oliver Kamm, the tormentor of my friend, Neil Clark. But try as I might to work myself up about Rupert Murdoch's attempt to purchase the rest of Sky, I cannot bring myself to do so. What would such an acquisition make any worse?

The BBC gives little or no platform to those who understand the lesson of the EU referendum result in the United Kingdom, and of the election of Donald Trump in the United States, which is that the workers, and not the liberal bourgeoisie, are the key swing voters. The BBC gives little or

no platform to those who locate identity issues within the overarching and undergirding context of the struggle against economic inequality and in favour of international peace. The BBC gives little or no platform to those who welcome the fact that the EU referendum was decided by those areas which voted Leave while voting Labour, Liberal Democrat or Plaid Cymru for other purposes, and which have thus made themselves the centre of political attention, except, of course, on the BBC.

The BBC gives little or no platform to those who celebrate the leading role in the defence of universal public services of those who would otherwise lack basic amenities, and the leading role in the promotion of peace of

those who would be the first to be called upon to die in wars. The BBC gives little or no platform to those who have opposed from the start the failed programme of economic austerity. The BBC gives little or no platform to those who opposed Tony Blair's privatisation of the NHS and other public services, his persecution of the disabled, and his assault on civil liberties, all of which have continued under every subsequent Government.

The BBC gives little or no platform to those who have opposed every British military intervention since 1997. The BBC gives little or no platform to those who oppose Britain's immoral and one-sided relationship with Saudi Arabia, and who reject the demonisation of Russia. The BBC gives little or

no platform to those who have the real eyes to realise real lies, recognising that the truly fake news is propagated in support of the economic policies of neoliberal austerity and the foreign policies of neoconservative war.

The BBC gives little or no platform to those who reject any approach to climate change which would threaten existing or potential jobs, workers' rights, the right to have children, travel opportunities, or universal access to a full diet. The BBC gives little or no platform to those who seek to rescue issues such as male suicide, men's health, and fathers' rights from those whose economic and other policies have caused the problems. And the BBC gives little or no platform to those who refuse to recognise racists, Fascists or op-

portunists as the authentic voices of the accepted need to control immigration.

Over-concentrated media ownership, especially by a foreign national who is not based in this country, is inherently problematic. But in the very great scheme that is these things, the biggest problem is not Rupert Murdoch. He already owns a lot of Sky, on which the much-maligned RT does indeed provide these platforms. He now also owns talkRADIO, on which they are provided by the much-maligned George Galloway, whom Murdoch has not sacked, and who is a friend and comrade of mine and of Neil Clark's. As the proprietor of the whole of Sky, Murdoch might even do some good.

UBI (FROM GRAUNTIAD)

Finland has become the first country in Europe to pay its unemployed citizens an unconditional monthly sum, in a social experiment that will be watched around the world amid gathering interest in the idea of a universal basic income.

Under the two-year, nationwide pilot scheme, which began on 1 January, 2,000 unemployed Finns aged 25 to 58 will receive a guaranteed sum of €560 (£475). The income will replace their existing social benefits and will be paid even if they find work.

Kela, Finland's social security body, said the trial aimed to cut red tape, poverty and above all unemployment, which stands in the Nordic country at 8.1%. The present system can discourage jobless people from working since even low earnings trigger a big cut in benefits.

"For someone receiving a basic income, there are no repercussions if they work a few days or a couple of weeks," said Marjukka Turunen, of Kela's legal affairs unit. "Working and self-employment are worthwhile no matter what."

No grammar schools, lots of play: the secrets of Europe's top education system

The government-backed scheme, which Kela hopes to expand in 2018, is the first national trial of an idea that has been circulating among economists and politicians ever since Thomas Paine proposed a basic capital grant for individuals in 1797.

Attractive to the left because of its promise to lower poverty and to the right - including, in Finland, the populist Finns party, part of the ruling centre-right coalition - as a route to a leaner, less bureaucratic welfare system, the concept is steadily gaining traction as automation threatens jobs.

A survey last year by Dalia Research found that 68% of people across all 28 EU member states would "definitely or probably" vote in favour of some form of universal basic income, also known as a citizens' wage, granted to everyone with no means test or requirement to work.

In a referendum last year 75% of Swiss voters rejected a basic income scheme, but that proposal - to give every adult an unconditional minimum monthly income of SFr2,500 (£1,980) - would have meant increasing welfare spending from 19.4% to around a third of the country's GDP, and did not have government backing.

Basic income experiments are also due to take place this year in several cities in the Netherlands, including Utrecht,

benefit. Pensioners would be paid a citizen's pension of £7,420 a year. Housing costs would be dealt with separately.

Finland set to give every citizen 800 euros a month and scrap benefits. The scheme would be broadly similar in cost to the current welfare state but a slight increase in spending would be paid for by clawing back the benefit when people started earning over £75,000.

Crucially, the payment would not be conditional on "signing on" or attending a jobcentre. The payment would not be paid to those in prison, however, and only got to citizens.

Anthony Painter, the director of policy and strategy at the RSA and the report's author, said the proposal would re-shape Britain's

Tilburg, Nijmegen, Wageningen and Groningen. In Utrecht's version, called Know What Works, several test groups will get a basic monthly income of €970 under slightly different conditions.

One will get the sum as unemployment benefit, with an obligation to seek work - and sanctions - attached. Another will get it unconditionally, whether or not they seek work. A third will get an extra €125 providing they volunteer for community service. Another will get the extra €125 automatically, but must give it back if they do not volunteer.

The Italian city of Livorno began giving a guaranteed basic income of just over €500 a month to the city's 100 poorest families last June, and expanded the scheme to take in a further 100 families on 1 January. Ragusa and Naples are considering similar trials.

In Canada, Ontario is set to launch a C\$25m (£15m) basic income pilot project this spring. In Scotland, local councils in Fife and Glasgow are looking into trial schemes that could launch in 2017, which would make them the first parts of the UK to experiment with universal basic income.

Basic income for all: a 500-year-old idea whose time has come?

The Green party in the UK has supported the idea of a citizen's wage, partly owing to rap-

idly increasing job insecurity and the rise of the gig economy, and partly owing to the massive costs associated with administering increasingly complex and unwieldy welfare systems.

Proponents of universal basic income argue that it can be more efficient and more equitable than traditional welfare systems, and will also protect people better as economies change through automation.

"Credible estimates suggest it will be technically possible to automate between a quarter and a third of all current jobs in the western world within 20 years," Robert Skidelsky, professor of political economy at the University of Warwick, said in a paper last year.

He said a universal basic income that grew in line with productivity "would ensure the benefits of automation were shared by the many, not just the few."

Economists Howard Reed and Stewart Lansley saw further benefits in a report for Compass last year. As well as a solid income base in an age of increasing economic and social insecurity, a universal basic income would offer "financial independence and freedom of choice for individuals between work and leisure, education and caring, while recognising the huge value of unpaid work," they said.

Opponents, including the Conservative government which rejected a call from the Scottish National party last year for a basic income scheme, see it as unaffordable and unlikely to incentivise people to find work.

UBI

The UK's welfare system should be replaced with a single universal basic income paid to all citizens whether in work or out of work, a think-tank has suggested.

Researchers at the RSA say a standard flat payment made to every citizen would help reduce poverty traps caused by the benefit system, improve the lot of those in work, and improve fairness.

A proposed model for the scheme would see each adult paid £3,692 a year or £71 a week, with children also receiving a payment corresponding roughly to child



welfare state to better reflect modern society.

"The welfare state has become incredibly complex whilst locking

those it seeks to help in a vicious circle of low pay, insecurity and an intrusive state. The RSA doubts the current system can be fixed," he

said.

"A system of Universal Basic Income is the best alternative to help people improve their own lives over time - it provides better security to support people's needs to work, learn, set up a business or care for their family."

The researchers recognised that varying housing costs across the UK would present challenges for such a scheme but suggested ways in which it could be adapted to cope.

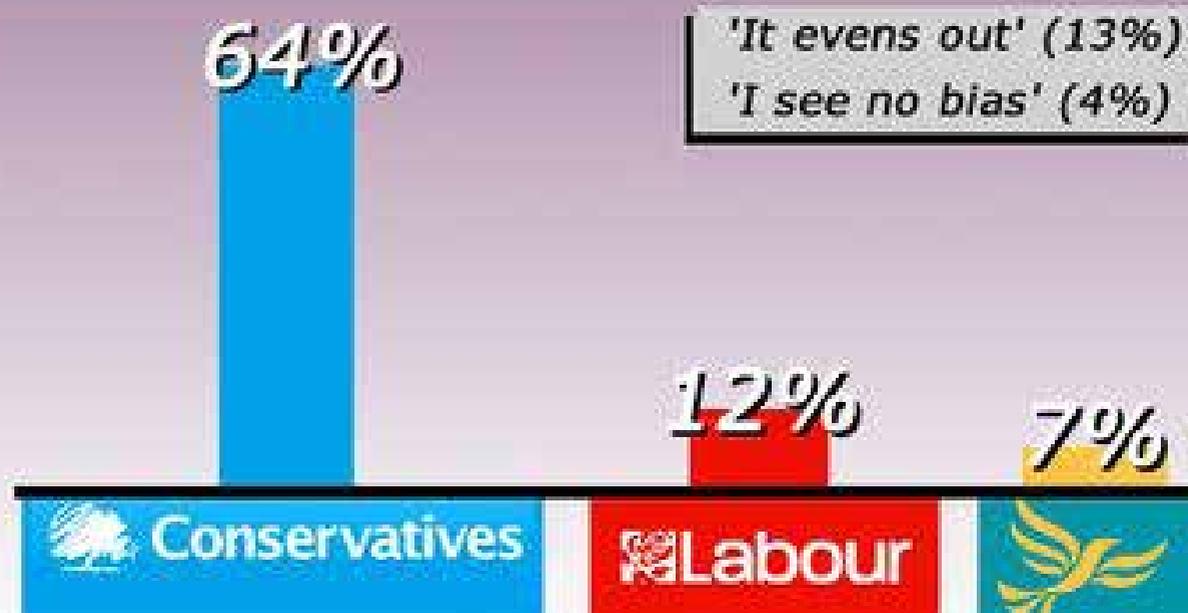
Universal basic incomes, also called citizens' incomes, have long had proponents on both the left wing and right wing of politics. The Green Party has long argued for a similar change, and the idea is advocated by the Spanish left-wing party Podemos.

BIDMEAD - MEDIA BIAS

There is no doubt that the Labour party has suffered in its battle with the mainstream media but little has been quite as blatant as the coverage over the last few days. This week, we have seen first-hand how skilfully the media is able to warp a story to their own gain. On Sunday, Corbyn released his tax return to the public in a call for more "openness and transparency" from party leaders and those in positions of political power, saying "I am publishing the detail of my tax return here, on my constituency website. I have made it clear that I think it is right for party leaders to be open and transparent about their tax arrangements".

This decisiveness and ability to lead by example is exactly what many people look for in a leader and is the positive public action that Corbyn needs to continue in order to start building up trust with the public once again. However, the vast majority of the stories focused on claims that the tax return was not completed correctly. The problem arose after claims emerged that Corbyn hadn't included the money he's entitled to as leader of the opposition. Since then it has been cleared that not only was Corbyn's tax return completed correctly by professional accountants, but that many of the claims from the papers were "entirely false". The money was in fact included under the 'benefits' section as classified by HMRC. Despite this clarification, no major newspapers have issued a public apology to correct the public perception, other than publishing Corbyn's own rebuke. On top of this obvious aim to find fault in any story surrounding Corbyn, very few stories have picked up on Prime-minister Theresa May and Chancellor Phillip Hammond's refusal to match this act and release their tax returns

In your opinion which party benefits most from any bias you have witnessed?



and the few that mentioned it still insisted on mentioning the untrue claims against Corbyn. The conflict of interest is clear to see when many of the people in charge of the mainstream media are known tax avoiders, which then begs the obvious question "what does Theresa May have to hide?"

However this bias is more than frustrating, it's damaging to the democracy that our country relies on; because the majority of the mainstream media decided to follow this story, the debate has been shifted away from the actual issue and once again onto petty arguments against Corbyn. We have not had the time to discuss the validity of public politicians sharing their tax returns, or question why so many are scared to do so, or even open out the discus-

sion into the widespread problems surrounding tax evasion because we have been so busy fighting off these baseless claims. The media's job is to inform us on the issues and events in our country and open up the public to these debates, however due to their bias and ideology they have done quite the opposite. They have blinded us to the issues through misdirection and lies.

On a cheerier note, in a week where it has felt like this non-story has dominated the news it has been fantastic to see the Labour party standing up to the media elite in a calm but firm, truly Labour, way. Corbyn met this bias professionally by saying "Transparency invites scrutiny. I welcome it as should all those seeking highest office. My taxes fully paid,

nothing missing, nothing hidden". This ability to come out firm against the claims whilst remaining calm and positive shows the resolve and understanding that is required from a leader.

Meanwhile, Shadow Chancellor John McDonnell has been on the offensive, hitting out against the media bias that the Labour party continue to fight against. He said to the Guardian that "it's been a 360 degree struggle to survive" against the media attacks on the leadership, adding that it is "exhausting; you spend your time having to rebut stuff continuously". According to McDonnell, this has made it difficult to get Labour's message and policies out to the public, as any story is turned into another attack on the leadership. McDonnell

also spoke to the Independent this week, and was able to talk in detail about these messages and policies through a firm, polite and calm interview where he said "a government led by Jeremy Corbyn would boost spending on hospitals, social care and public services, protect working families' living standards and tackle gender inequality".

Does this new approach to the media and this ability to be firm and direct whilst keeping true to the ideals that people support mean the start of a new PR plan from Labour's leadership? Hopefully, if the labour leadership team can continue to come out fighting, being active and vocal in the media, being kind but firm, that may give the left something strong to rally behind. Only time will tell.



Joe Solo Column

Take any Facebook thread about politics. Then read down it and watch how friends bicker and batch about how things aren't precisely how they want them and this person is wrong, or that person is right.

That thread may involve 20 or 30 people none of whom agree with either the original post or each other.

Then imagine 65 million people all doing the same.

That is how hard it is to build enough of a consensus to get the opportunity to run the country.

The Tories can do that because they represent self-interest and self-aggrandisement; and if those Facebook threads tell you anything it is that there is plenty of both in this country.

The greatest irony of all in politics is that it is far easier to get self-interested people to



agree- largely out of self-interest of course- than it is people with a more altruistic aim.

The latter will spend decades arguing over the best way of unit-

ing while never actually doing it.

That is what you are seeing in Britain right now.

There is indeed strength in unity, alas there is also strength in enough people willing to wait for crumbs from the table in the belief that their crumb will be biggest because they deserve it more.

These people would willingly fight you for the right to punch themselves in the face.

But on we must go.



By Karl Trevor

Following a couple of days canvassing with the campaign team of Gareth Snell M.P. (He won Stoke Central you know!!) I was at a loose end in my Tory whitewash constituency.

What is a boy to do? Then for once Facebook didn't do my Libertarian Head In, it invited me via Karen Constantine to canvass for the May Kent County Council election campaign in Thanet South, deep in UKIP Councillor territory and to meet and leaflet with Vic Paulino from Hope Not Hate into the bargain. Canvass Tote bag, Spatula and a souvenir bag of North Staffs Oatcakes for Karen and off we go...

Now I have met many UKIP voters and they are mostly happy to chat and have some banter, as the voting



public generally are. The non-voting types frustrate, but whatever someone's views, discussing them is a good, sociable and democratic thing. My issue with UKIP is, as Will Self referred to Farage, the 'grubby opportunism' of UKIP Candidates for council seats, many of whom are not local and have little to offer their constituents. So what does Labour have to do to convince Workforce voters that they are worthy of being KCC Councillors.

Policy focus for both Candidates include reinvestment in to Ramsgates struggling business community, continued campaigns for safety and crime, NHS and Social Care service provision and the homeless.

Raushan Ara - is well known in Ramsgate as she and her family have run a well known Restaurant business for 30 years and she has raised her family there. She has been involved with charity fund-

KEEPING THE PRESSURE ON UKIP

raising and International Women's Day for some time and is participating in POW!Thanet in March, raising funds for Ramsgate MEN-CAP with an International Food Fest. Raushan has worked tirelessly with community groups, the

homeless and vulnerable people in Ramsgate, galvanising them to help clean up public areas in the town centre. She says 'I feel that more women should become involved in politics, and hopefully I can set an example to other women, showing



that being a mother and a business woman should be no barrier to being involved in politics.'

Karen Constantine - is already a Councillor for the Newington Ward in Ramsgate. Housing has been a key activity for Karen, with only 10% of the 2200 waiting for Social Housing successful per year in Thanet. Whilst pushing for more housing, Karen supports those cases 'sofa surfing' and in temporary accommodation. Thanet has the highest rate of sexual offences in Kent and this has been an active

campaign for Cllr Constantine. She has been consulting with Ramsgate MP Craig Mackinlay and the Police. She continues to press for appropriate funding to the solutions agreed, including improved streetlighting.

www.hopenothate.org.uk is a cause both candidates support and they are supporting by are targeting leaflets in all the wards in Ramsgate. The Hope Not Hate co-ordinator in the South East is by Vic Paulino, who's drive and enthusiasm drew me to spend the day leafleting the whole of the Northwood Ward with Vic.

So in conclusion winning County Council seats is hard graft and those who work locally are the best qualified. Are UKIP capable of providing this, does Brexit now render them obsolete. We work and wait, but here's hoping all local Labour Candidates help us 'Spring' a winner in May 2017.

The Essex Socialist says

"Momentum, what is happening? My Socialist Opinion!"

Jon Lansman is a Labour Party activist who worked on Jeremy Corbyn's 2015 leadership campaign and subsequently founded the Pro-Corbyn organisation Momentum. Recently a new constitution was passed that in effect goes against everything Momentum was set up and marketed to be. Momentum originally encouraged people to join up and become active; claiming to be "...a group independent of the Labour party's leadership..." and stating "...it will work with everyone who supports Jeremy's aims of creating a more, fair equal and democratic society..."

So what does this new constitution mean for the grassroots activists who have become a part of Momentum? From July 2017, any paid up Momentum member (and yes there are thousands) can no longer be part of Momentum, unless they join the Labour Party, they can attend meetings but not vote or hold any key position within their local branch.

It would appear that Labour Party members who were wrongfully expelled during the purge of 2016, our socialist brothers and sisters who have supported Momentum's aims and objectives and those of no party allegiance are no longer wanted.

In its early days Momentum

claimed that as it grew "it would develop democratic governance structures at every level of the network" but on October 28th 2016 at a very hastily organised meeting Jon Lansman brought these structures tumbling down. Michael Chessum a member of Momentum's steering committee has accused some of the so called "Left" in Momentum of "having absorbed the modus operandi of Blairism during the wilderness years"

Many feel the new undemocratic constitution has been drawn up by Jon Lansman as a step towards affiliation with the Labour Party and his own growing frustration with socialists with-

in. His recent resignation as the director of Momentum could be seen as an indicator that he may be seeking election to the steering committee at the conference later in 2017. Lansman ultimately controls the company which owns Momentum's database and access to 21,000 left-wing activists which in effect gives him ultimate power.

Lansman's own branch, Southwark Momentum have rejected the new constitution branding it a "coup" stating "this branch condemns the undemocratic dissolution of Momentum's elected National and regional committees and the imposition of a new constitution by the steering majority" They have also called upon all Momentum branches to oppose the Coup. My own branch of Momentum in Havering (which is Labour member managed) and includes

one Socialist Party member opposed the new constitution in its entirety on the 21st January 2017.

I can conclude that at this moment in time, all future decisions within Momentum will be driven and decided by Labour party members, which in effect makes Momentum's original intent a farce and in my opinion is an obvious plot to oust the more Left of centre activists it originally welcomed.

I have contacted Momentum with regards to the appeals process for expelled members and also Jon Lansman for his feedback, to date these appeal requests have been ignored.

Follow the Essex Socialist on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram and look out for my Blogs on WordPress.

Many families have their secrets. May be a child out of wedlock. Uncle Bill that's never talked about. Cousin Jane defrauding her employer.

Mine was granny Olive. In her later years she moved nearby & as an eight year old, that was the first I knew I had a grandmother. She was never a close or cuddly grandmother, just someone my father took responsibility for as she aged & eventually died in 1977

Not for many years was her past discussed. I always knew my dad was brought up in Barnados homes as he fervently supported this {and other} charity but it wasn't done to question the circumstances surrounding his admission to the care system.

Around 2002 my father, in passing told me why he & his siblings {too numerous to mention} were Barnados kids.

It seems grandmother murdered her youngest child Reggie & was subsequently sentenced & admitted to Holloway prison.

Enough was said.

Instantly into judgement mode. This distant, remote grandmother who I never really knew was a murderer. How callous to kill your own child. I was a grandmother myself by then & know how precious children are.

So 2010 both my parents had passed away & I wanted to know more about the demonic Olive.

No-one to ask so I googled her name. There she was in a paragraph from a 1931 paper. Olive had made the news!

I went to the National Archives and requested the papers connected with her trial.

The historic court case papers duly arrived. But I was totally unprepared for their content.

Olive was a struggling single parent of 4 boys. The father{s} had all fled the scene & she was again pregnant. Reggie's father had promised her some help but it was never forthcoming.

On Christmas Eve 1930, the heavily pregnant Olive and her boys had no food, were facing eviction from the 2 rooms she was renting and she had no way of earning



MY GRANDMOTHER THE MURDERER aka A Socialist is Born

an income and no social support.

She went to the workhouse to ask to be admitted. They were full. There was no room at the workhouse. She was turned away.

Many issues resonated between life in the 1930's and the desperate situations people find themselves in today's Tory run Britain.

Food banks, homelessness, the erosion of the NHS, lack of mental health services.

So Olive was imminently homeless, hungry with 4 young mouths to feed and more than likely suffering from post-natal depression

Tragically she returned home, turned on the gas stove, placed the

sleeping Reggie there and walked the streets with the other boys. On her return Reggie was dead.

In 2017 I see the return of the depressed times of the 1930.s. But I see opulence and greed. I see corporate giants secreting money that could feed, clothe & house the poor. I see the poor being judged &

vilified. It's an uncomfortable comparison but seems to be coming full circle.

Let's keep on with the socialist message. Let Reggie's death serve as a reminder that history mustn't repeat itself.

RIP Uncle Reggie. Shame we never met.

Whispers in the Dark

History might be written by the victors, but the vanquished don't always go quietly into that good night; the Labour 'Right' still beavers away, convinced that 1997 has yet to happen, that one day *Their Time Will Come Again*.

In the local parties, a scene is played out. A number of yesterday's people cling to the fiction that this year, next year, the year after, the Party will get over its collective madness and bring back the beaten to show us all how to win!

My own Branch Party has suffered from chronic neglect. There is no left-right split because the Left has never existed here; instead a lot of old campaigners, long past

campaigning, worry about what might be happening elsewhere. Having coffee one afternoon with a local councillor, I asked her if she knew anything about Momentum.

"They're all Trotskyites, aren't they?" she replied fearfully.

Another friend patiently explained that Momentum's role, last summer, was to provide space where new, enthusiastic party members could turn up and talk about what it is like to be in a Party, what Socialism means, How to Campaign, why it is a bad idea to assume that party members who disagree with you are 'the Enemy.' We expressed a belief that Momentum's job might have been completed.

I don't think she was convinced, but I know she trusts us, so much so that together he, she and I, and a few more people committed to healing the wounds of the past year have begun a programme of development in the Branch Party. In this we are **together.**

Renewal began when the Branch Secretary resigned, and two months later the 'new' Secretary resigned over Article 50. The Branch Chair left the Party altogether for the same reason. This is the guy that having lost his position on the CLP Exec last June, told me he was looking upon it as a sabbatical, and that he'd be back within a year.

So my pal Ron and I turned up to a Branch meeting and came away as Chair and Secretary. "How

did that happen?" I asked him later in the pub. We came to the conclusion that the few members of the Branch that you could call 'active' recognised that we needed to move forward, and that we need to do it together as a team.

Three miles down the road there is a neighbouring Branch where the conquered see themselves as some kind of Resistance Movement. They meet in secret a week before meetings of the Branch party. When the Exec meets to decide upon the Agenda, and table a motion for CLP, or organise a bit of door knocking, the *'Exec in Exile'* also meet, to decide what disruptive acts they can effect and what tactics they will use to undermine the Chair, the Secretary and the next meeting.

So who are more like militants from the 1980s? Who are the subversives now? Who seem determined that we mustn't win in 2020? Who, moreover, didn't get in their cars and campaign in Copeland and Stoke last month?

And how do I even know about them? The truth is that this right-wing group is internally disunited and disloyal. They have nobody to rally round, no philosophy beyond that of disparagement, and no appetite for taking on Theresa May's Tories, unless it is to 'Press for a Second EU Referendum.' Absurdly, some of them report to me, knowing full well that to talk to a journalist means that your secrets are no longer that. They cannot even do Rebellion properly.

Some Insurrectionaries they are!

I C P D L W J N I T Q D D S L
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 N A I D R A U G Q U N E J I T

Word Search Puzzle

MEDIA

BBC
 CHANNEL
 DAILY MAIL
 DAILY MIRROR
 EVENING STANDARD
 GUARDIAN

INDEPENDENT
 METRO
 MORNING STAR
 SKY NEWS
 SPUTNIK
 TELEGRAPH

Sudoku

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Compiled by Karl Trevor

On Saturday an estimated Few Libtard Snowflakes demonstrated in London. Something to do with Racial equality apparently.

John Piennars for the BBC, Richmond Park.

Rupert Murdoch's favourite film is 'Citizen Kane'. As a child growing up in Austria, young Rupert collected antique Sledges and Snowglobes. Later in life an unfortunate case of illiteracy on a Visa application resulted in him becoming Australian. He recently married a famous Texan which has nothing to do with buying controlling equity in Fox TV.

Former Labour safe seat occupier David Milliband jetted in to the UK last week to recruit other ex politicians for the International Rescue Commission. This year he was courting Paul Nuttall. After lengthy discussions Mr Nuttall stormed out in a rage stating to reporters that he was too old to drink Thunderbird in the Wood and raise money for foreign spongers. Mr Milliband wrote an article for the Telegraph full of bitterness and spite about Jeremy Corbyn nicking his office. He left in a heavily armoured pink Rolls Royce driven by a Nigel Farage lookalike.

Tory MP's under investigation for electoral fraud and expenses indiscretions are to fund charitable causes. Golf Clubs, Masonic Lodges and Police Benevolent Associations are expecting big donations by Easter.

Red Leicester Cheese is an urban Myth.

Shortly before his death Sir Isaac Newton wrote 'I don't know what I may appear to the world, but to myself I seem to have been only like a boy playing on the shore and diverting myself now and then finding a smoother pebble or a prettier shell than ordinary, whilst the great Ocean of Truth lay undiscovered before me. Shortly after he was hit by a Bus.

Fashion News - This seasons highlights include; - In Milan the Medieval Codpiece and Winklepicker shoes return.

Paris its bright pullovers tied around the neck and sunglasses Coiffured onto the head.

New York its Vest and Braces with a Gold Snipers Rifle.

There is a German company called 'Schindlers Lifts'.

The real reason for Donald Trump's ire at Sweden can be revealed. In Stockholm the pictured Lingerie is becoming increasingly popular. Named as Gruoller Grabbnotts they are selling like Hot Cross Buns.

Following the political fallout



FAKE NEWS OR IS IT?

from the earth shattering defeat in Copeland due to Mr Corbyns dislike of Nuclear Weapons, Labour have rapidly rewritten the 2020 Manifesto. The Party has pledged to allow Radioactive equipment such as Xrays, CT Scanners and Microwave Ovens to be used in any Hospitals left in public ownership.

Nineteenth Century intellectuals Charles Darwin and Karl Marx were actual bezzies mates. Darwin's home is in Downe in Kent and is a few yards away from where Nigel Farage MEP was born and Charlie and Karlie would play sliding down stairs with the Darwin kiddies. Today you can see Darwin's signed, first edition of Marx Das Capital. Through marriage to the Wedgwood family Charles Darwin is related to Hillary Benn M.P.

No fake news will appear in The Word on 1st April

New Planets discovered by NASA with mystery black women involved! The film 'Hidden Secrets' will be on limited release at an Art house Cinema nowhere near you, ever.

£33,000,000,000 of free work was 'given' by employees in 2016 free say TUC. More than 5 Million people did unpaid overtime last year, with educational staff the highest in unlocked hours given up. 5 Million workers do an average of 8 hours per week unpaid, which the average earner would receive £6000 per year for. Meanwhile the Budget Spring statement from Phillip Hammond is due.

On 24th February, whilst crowing about the Copeland by election win the Government imposed three things to demonstrate their commitment to the Workforce;

160,000 disabled citizens had benefits cut; 38 Sure start centres closed and Canterbury Hospitals Critical Injuries Department closure was announced.

Being Impulsive is good for your work. Sarah Brennan writes in 'People Management' by the CIPD. Google it. Go on. Do it now. No?

The new Doctor Who will be an asexual hybrid BAME LBGQTQ played by Toby Jones. The new series is being written by Quentin Tarrantino and is set to start filming in Cardiff at Easter. Malcolm Tucker will be crucified on Cardiff Arms Parks goalposts. The Doctors Assistant will be played by Jacob Rees Mogg or Jess Phillips.

Following a huge drop in the viewing figures of QI since Sandi Toksvig took over, the Blairite Comedian Alan Davies is to be re-

placed with Keith Harris.

Two years ahead of the release of Gremlins III Lego have started to sell figures and 'Lego Dimensions computer games.

In Foreign News, everyone hates us.

9 out of 10 cat owners prefer Crystal Methadone to other leading Opiates, research in Rhyl has found.

During the Napoleonic Wars, a French ship of the type chasse marée was wrecked off the coast of Hartlepool. The only survivor was a monkey, allegedly wearing a French uniform to provide amusement for the crew. On finding the monkey, some locals decided to hold an impromptu trial on the beach; since the monkey was unable to answer their questions and because they had seen neither a monkey nor a Frenchman before, they concluded that the monkey was in fact a French spy. Being found guilty the animal was duly sentenced to death and hanged on the beach.

Peter Mandelson is so convinced that it is 1997 that his care coordinator has been forced to wear a Shellsuit and John Lennon style glasses. After advice from Alastair Campbll, Sir Peter is also expected to front the reformed Britpop band Shed7. The irony that the original singer 'Rick Witter' has since become Cockney rhyming slang has missed both individuals. Several PLP members have formed an Oasis tribute band to raise charity money for Sir Peters Tailors bill. Their hit single 'Soft Coup Boogie' is available on KTel as a 78rpm vinyl disk, only on sale in Woolworths.

The Mathematics of Fallacy is an actual thing. In 1970 Paul Dunmore wrote a thesis on Generalised Logic in order to overcome the pedantry and laborious methods present since 400BC. Essentially he tried to short cut endless reiterative refinements in search of precision and accuracy by getting as close as mattered given the context. His postulations were pissed upon by the development of McCains Micro Chips in Curry Sauce.

Quoted in New Statesman 14th Jan 1950 - FISSION AND SUPERSTITION.

This is the tale of Frederick Wermys, Whose Parents were not on speaking terms. So when Fred wrote to Santa Clause, It was duplicate because, one went to Dad and one went to Mum.

Both asked for Plutonium. See the result? Father and Mother, without consulting one another, purchased two lumps of largest size, intending them as a nice surprise. Which met in Fred's Stocking and levelled 10 Square Miles.



- ANSWERS**
1. Escamillo.
 2. The Matrix, The Matrix Reloaded and The Matrix Revolutions.
 3. Hair and its diseases.
 4. Glenn Hoddle.
 5. [a] "How many Tears" reached no 10, [b] "Tears on my Pillow", no 1, [c] "Dancing with Tears in my Eyes", no 3, [d] "The Tracks of my Tears" no 9 and [e] "Tears of a Clown", no 6.
 6. The Virgin Islands.
 7. Five years.
 8. Joshua.
 9. Jo-Whitted Tsonga.
 10. [a] Ireland, [b] Jamaica, [c] Morocco (North Africa), [d] Korea and [e] Wales.
 11. Annual Percentage Rate.
 12. Royal Naval Air Service & Royal Flying Corps.
 13. Gerald Scarfe.
 14. Franz Joseph Haydn.
 15. [a] Crows, [b] Rats, [c] Fish, [d] Pig and [e] Chickets.
 16. Severus Snape.
 17. Biological & Chemical.
 18. Kingston-upon-Thames, Kensington & Chelsea and Greenwich.
 19. A sheep (one that leads the flock).
 20. Bleak House (Mr Krook).

1. In Bizet's opera, "Carmen", what was the name of the toreador who falls in love with the title character?

2. Which three films make up the Matrix trilogy?

3. Of what is Trichology the study?

4. Under which manager did David Beckham make his international debut for England in 1996?

5. What songs with "Tears" in the title were UK top ten hits for the following artists, [a] Bobby Vee (1961), [b] Johnny Nash (1975), [c] Ultravox (1984), [d] Smokey Robinson & the Miracles (1969) and [e] The Beat (1979)?

6. By what name do we now know the islands previously called the Danish West Indies?

7. In years, what is the length of term for a French President?

8. In which book of the Old Testament do we read about the fall of Jericho?

9. Who did Novak Djokovic defeat in the Australian Open final of 2008 to win his first major?

10. With which countries do you associate the following food dishes, [a] Colcannon, [b] Jerk Chicken, [c] Lamb Tagine, [d] Kimchi and [e] Cawl?

11. In credit agreements, what does the abbreviation APR stand for?

12. Which two bodies merged in 1918 to form the Royal Air Force?

13. Which artist produced the animations for Pink Floyd's "The Wall"?

14. Which classical composer was known as "The Father of the Symphony"?

15. What animals complete the names of the following pop acts, [a] Counting ..., [b] Boomtown ..., [c] Country Joe and the ..., [d] Blodwyn ..., and [e] Buddy Holly and the ...?

16. Which character was played by Alan Rickman in the Harry Potter series of films?

17. Which two forms of warfare were outlawed under the Geneva Convention of 1925?

18. Which three London boroughs are prefixed with the Royal title?

19. In agriculture, what is a bellwether?

20. In which Dickens' novel does a character meet his end by spontaneous combustion?



Brownies

Yesterday, because I'm a bit like that, I thought 'I wonder what would happen if I just blitzed all the ingredients for brownies in a blender, poured it into the tin and baked it?' What happened was they came out exactly the same as when I've done it the proper way and I had brownies in less than 30 minutes flat. The Aztec element - those discoverers of the cocoa bean who used it to make a bitter, spicy drink - was a good pinch of chilli and a quarter of a teaspoon each of cinnamon, ground star anise and ground caraway seeds added to the mixture. You can use any spices you fancy - cardamom would be nice although I'd probably steer clear of cumin. No-one wants a curry brownie!

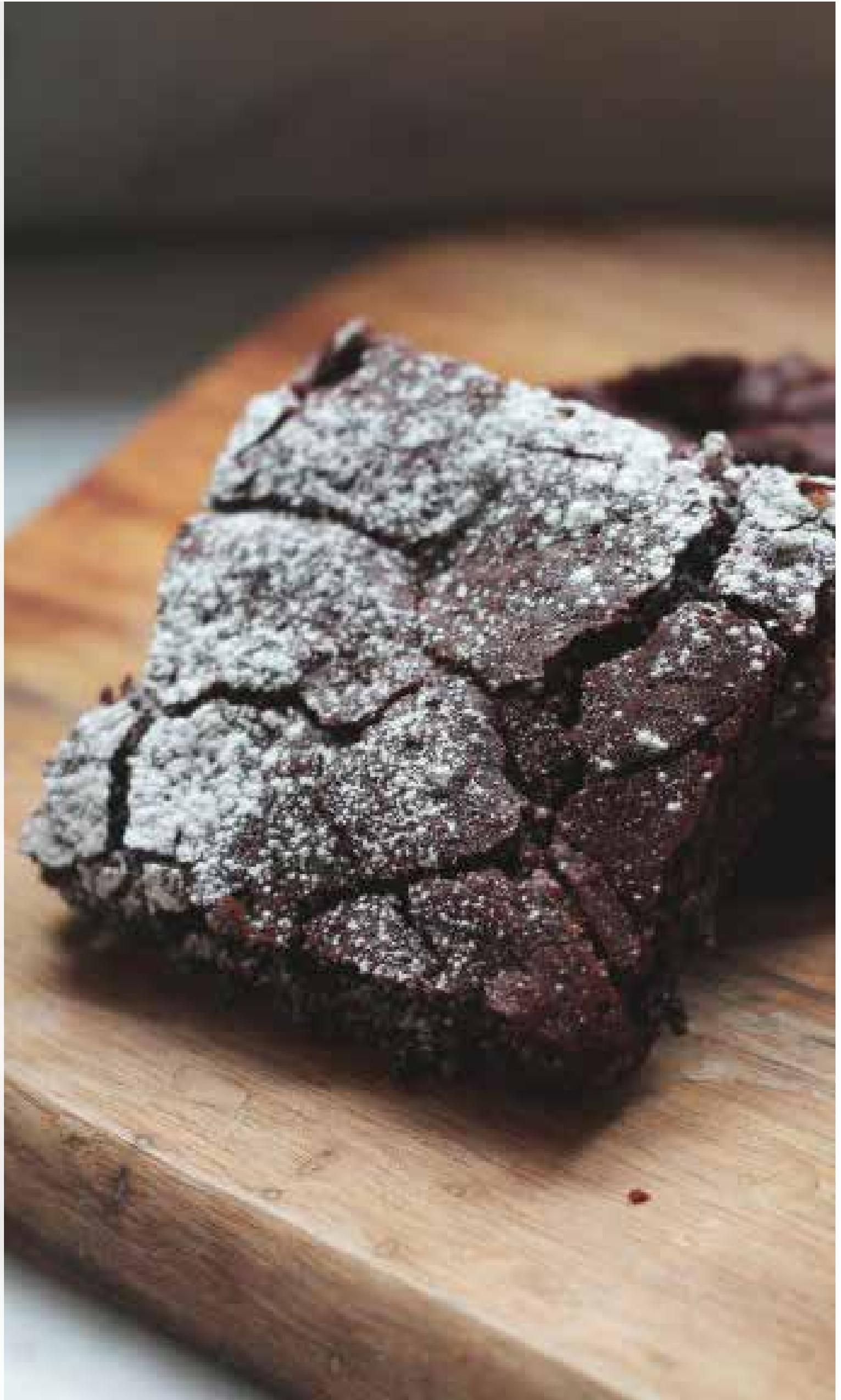
To glaze the top I added water to my own homemade chilli jam (but you can buy it in most supermarkets), strained out the chilli bits and brushed it on while the brownie was still hot. The brownie recipe I used is below, but I reckon any recipe will work by just putting it all in the blender until it's smooth, pouring it into the tin (I use those silicon sheets - you don't even have to grease them) and baking at 170 or gas mark 3 for 20 minutes. That may not seem like long but it's enough, as long as the egg is cooked it's fine to eat and the less time it has in the oven, the higher the squidge factor.

Ingredients

- 200g dark chocolate (I used Tesco's 85%)
- 200g sugar
- 100g butter
- 4 eggs
- 60g plain flour
- 60g cocoa powder
- Pinch of sea salt
- Spices of your choice
- 2 tablespoons chilli jam/jelly

Method

as above.

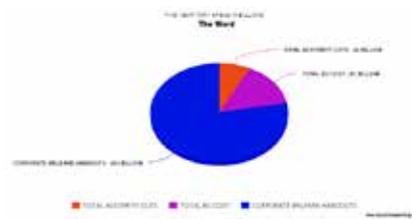
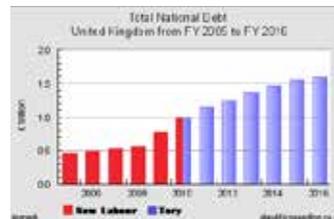
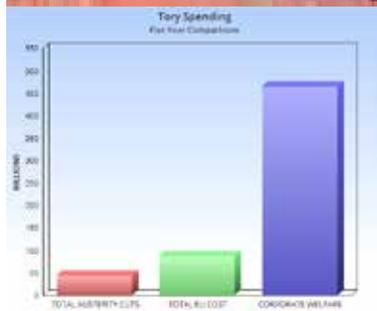


TORY 'CORPORATE WELFARE' SPEND EXCEEDS FIFTY YEARS

Over the last parliament the Tory austerity drive has cost well over thirty thousand British souls. Given the brutality of Tory cuts, one would expect some reward for the enormous sacrifices our Great British family has made these last seven years, yet under Tory rule the national debt has risen at record pace. Debt has almost doubled since 2010, surging from 950 Billion to 1.652 Trillion Pounds - an increase of well over fifty percent.

Given the sheer depth of savings and the savagery of cuts to our entire state, one must wonder where all of our money is going. According to research conducted by Kevin Farnsworth, a senior lecturer at York University, the answer is simple - the Tories give it all away to multinational corporations. They simply hand it to foreign powers.

Since 2010 the total handouts to corporate powers is over ten times the total saving of all austerity measures. The entire cost of EU membership over the same period amounts to less than a fifth of that given away to multinational corporations by our corrupt Tory gov-



ernment. Farnsworth estimates Tory Corporate Welfare to cost Taxpayers £93bn a year - the annual transfer of more than £3,500 from each household in the UK - more than double the average council tax bill. For comparison, the annual cost of EU membership is a mere £1,000 from each household in the UK.

This corporate welfare epidemic means we actually pay for the activities of multi-national giants like Amazon, while also exempting them from normal taxation. According to analysis by The Guardian "In 2012, Amazon was attacked by MPs on parliament's public accounts committee for avoiding UK tax. Yet in the same period, the online retailer was awarded £16.5m

in grants by the administrations of Scotland and Wales to help build distribution centres. To link the Wales plant to the transport network, the Welsh assembly built the mile-long "Ffordd Amazon road" at an additional cost of £3m."

The scale of Tory handouts now exceeds even the bank bailouts of 2008 - and there is no global financial crisis to even attempt to excuse it.

As many as fifty thousand citizens have fallen to the brutality of Tory austerity, victims of outright elitist hypocrisy. A study published in the Journal of the Royal Society of Medicine states: "The long-term decline in mortality in England and Wales has reversed, with approximately 30,000 extra deaths

compared to what would be expected if the average age-specific death rates in 2006 to 2014." The analysis, performed by the London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine, the University of Oxford, and Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council, rules out data errors, cold weather and flu as main causes, stating "the evidence points to a major failure of the health system, possibly exacerbated by failings in social care".

In addition to the so-called 'excess deaths' caused by failings in our cash-starved health and social care services, the Tory drive has led to massive rises in both poverty and suicide. According to the charity C.A.L.M., the suicide rate has raised so much that it is now 'the

biggest single killer of men under 45 in the UK'. Food banks have become as normal as supermarkets. Over a million three day emergency food parcels were handed to hungry families over the year April '15-'16, with half a million more to September '16 from the Trussell Trust alone.

This amounts to the organised cruelty or killing of a large group of our citizens due solely to their economic status; the definition of an economic pogrom.

The ill, injured, disabled, elderly and children - the frail, the vulnerable, the poorest - have been the worst hit during the Tory drive to poverty. Casualties include the Child Poverty Commission, child poverty targets and child protection laws. The Tories forced the closure of over 1,000 Sure Start Centres, accelerating the decline in early years funding. Per-pupil funding is set to decline for the first time in decades, amid farcical plans to redraw 21st Century Education in the image of bygone Colonial Era elitism.

Repeatedly condemned by the UN for human rights abuses against our own citizens, the Tories have preached the necessity of austerity for the last decade.

We now know this to be an outright lie.

Sources -

<http://tinyurl.com/hstoz2p>
<http://tinyurl.com/zowgacv>
<http://tinyurl.com/zrwlrc6>
<http://tinyurl.com/grul79y>
<http://tinyurl.com/oufpk3k>
<http://tinyurl.com/hc5uksv>

CHAD

Chad could be a really lovely country. It has a variety of terrains, with a huge wetland, semi desert and desert, and broad grasslands and grazing. Wildlife includes elephants and crocodiles.

Chad has a strategic location astride the historic caravan trails from East Africa to West Africa. Empires based in Chad have ruled large parts of Africa. There is a rich history to explore.

Although the population is only 12.83 million there are more than two hundred ethnic and linguistic groups.

In 1920 the French conquered Chad. The French increased the cotton growing for French needs from 1929 onwards. The French did even less for Chad's economic development than France did for

most of its other colonies.

The French granted Independence in 1960. The history is of civil wars and lesser conflicts ever since. Libya to the North gradually occupied parts of Chad until they were kicked out by a national revolt in 1987.

From 2003 crude oil exports have been an important export.

There are now several hundred thousand refugees from Sudan living in Chad.

The United States State Department Human Rights Report reads:

"Chad is a centralized republic in which the executive branch dominates the legislature and judiciary. In 2011 President Idriss Deby Itno, leader of the Patriotic Salvation Movement (MPS), was elected to a fourth term with 83.6 percent of valid votes. Major opposition figures boycotted the presidential election, which had a low voter turnout. In 2011 legislative elections, the ruling MPS party



won 118 of the National Assembly's 188 seats. International observers deemed both elections legitimate and credible. Civilian authorities did not always maintain effective control of the security forces."

"The most significant human rights problems were security force abuse, harsh prison conditions, and discrimination and violence against women and children."

"Other human rights abuses included: arbitrary killings by security

forces and use of torture; arbitrary arrest and detention, incommunicado detention, and lengthy pre-trial detention; denial of fair public trial; and executive influence on the judiciary. The government restricted the freedoms of speech, press, assembly, and movement.

"The MPS party dominated the political process, and government corruption remained a problem. Societal abuse of refugees was a problem. Child abuse, including

female genital mutilation/cutting (FGM/C) occurred, as did early and forced marriage and the sexual exploitation of children. Trafficking in persons, particularly children, was a problem. Interethnic discrimination occurred, as did discrimination against persons with disabilities; lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and intersex (LGBTI) individuals; and persons with HIV/AIDS. Forced labor, particularly forced child labor, occurred."

"The government seldom took steps to prosecute or punish officials who committed abuses, whether in the security services or elsewhere in the government, and impunity was a problem."

"Members of Boko Haram, the Nigerian militant terrorist group, killed numerous persons in the country, often using suicide bombers."

If you were a citizen of Chad, where would you start?

By Ian Chuck

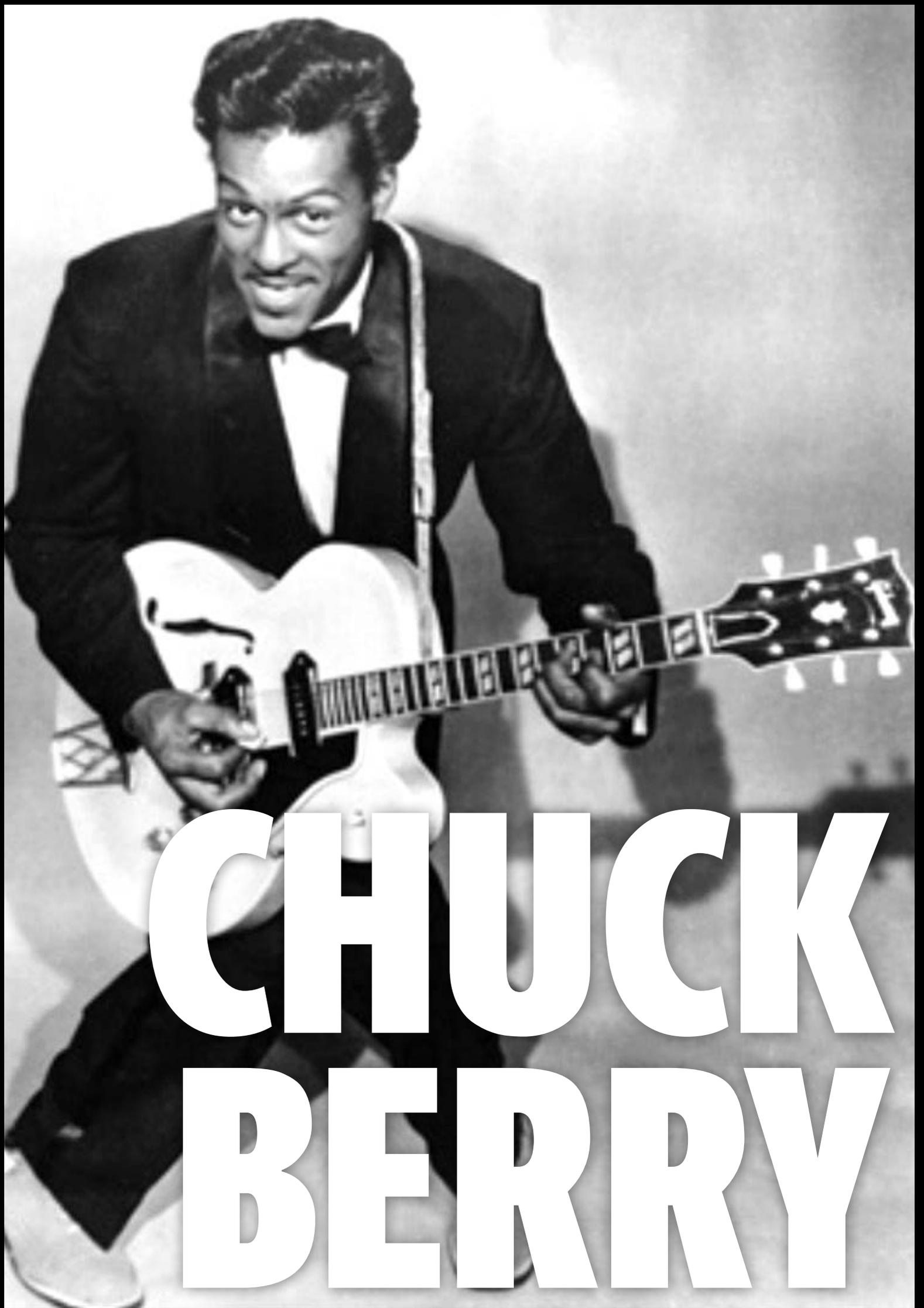
A black guy called Charles in the USA gets called Chuck. He'll run the risk of arrest, either for something he has done or something he hasn't. He'll be envied if he gets too 'high' and looked down upon if he doesn't. It all came true for Charles Edward Anderson Berry, without whom there would have been no Beatles and the Rolling Stones would have remained possibly 'Best R&B Band in Dartford.' The UK music charts would have been dominated by crooners, skiffle, and Cliff Richard.

Chuck Berry's life was interrupted by a jail sentence for armed robbery, and another for taking a minor across a county line. He claimed he drove the 14-year-old there to work as a hat check girl at his night-club; the prosecution said he had given her a see-ing to with his 'ding-a-ling' though he had a 70-year (obviously not at the time) marriage and four kids. Although you can be stopped in the States for DWB (Driving While Black) the worst it can get you is possibly a life-ending beating. It only results in imprisonment if you do something wrong during the beating or have something dubious in the vehicle with you. How the cops must have rejoiced to find an under-age girl.

While in jail, he continued writing; he wrote "The Promised Land" as he studied a road map of the USA. He got five years, but his case went to several appeals, successfully arguing that the judge's comments were racist and prejudiced the jury against him. He continued recording like there was no tomorrow. Tomorrow got delayed, and he served around eighteen months, coming out to find himself a major broadcasting star.

The music of Chuck Berry is a unique 'Bridging' Phenomenon. Not truly Black Rock and Roll (go see) or pure Blues either. There were many Rhythm and Blues acts, but these weren't real *Rock and Roll* (a less than serious, less than fun, commercialistic impersonation of R&B by white players.)

Chuck Berry managed to be *Proper Rock and Roll* with only moderate cheesiness, retaining the fun, the excitement, and the authenticity of Rhythm and Blues. My top twenty pop hits from the period include about fifteen or sixteen Chuck Berry songs and a little bit of Little Richard. His writing was often racy - about a broken marriage and an estranged daughter, about schoolgirls, about starting ones first job when Chuck looked old enough to be the job-seeker's dad. Cars, journeys and places also featured, but so did songs



about the music itself, not a blues theme, but definitely a Rock and Roll one. Like the Blues, his music told a story; like Rock and Roll, he played it with a swagger and in his case a Duck-Walk; and like much of the R&B that grew up around him, guitar riffs were

prominent. Unlike those of others, his riffs sounded good; Angus Young would be proud of them.

He spoilt it a bit for me by making a song about his Ding-a-Ling.; lavatory humour in his middle age. He had become a legend, yet lowered himself to the

new standards which followed the relaxation of censorship after the nineteen-sixties. By then we were listening to Prog, then Punk, then Reggae, Metal and Disco, and after that, just rubbish as Money completely took over a scene it had previously dominat-

ed only most of.

Valar Morghulis as we say in High Valyrian, (all men must die - sooner or later) and to that the response is *Valar Dohaeris* (all men must serve.) Chuck Berry has done both. God Bless you Charlie.

MARR WATCH

BBC News at 9am led with the Death of Chuck Berry, without whom there would have been no Beatles, no Stones. Then on **the Marr Show** the Newspapers were examined in all their irrelevance.

Ruth Wishart was rolled out to repeat Sunday Herald claims of a second Scottish referendum (yawn) Sturgeon versus May:

"Two women, both having their dials set to **caution** are gambling with their careers."

Michael Crick (Channel 4) told us about the Tory election fraud and fine, battle buses full of Tory flash mobs ran up large hotel bills. Guess where Marr wanted to talk about? South Thanet!

Amanda Platell (Daily Mail) wasted time quoting Ruth Davidson. Platell 'loves' Rod Liddle, critical of MPs 'shafting' voters (yawn) and discussed an early general election (yawn)

Mark Thomson (New York Times) told us "nobody expected Trump to win" (yawn)

Donald Trump went after the NYT then called them 'a jewel' and said the media were the True Opposition. Now he's attacking them again; their News, their Business Model.

And Fake News: this is where short phrases win out over long explanation. (Read that phrase again)

"Donald Trump can make things true by saying them" (who else is like that? Hmmm?)

Advice for Osborne: "Time Consuming."

The Weather: massive weather events over the USA have brought us ... rain, especially in ... Cumbria (wake me up when this is over)

Ruth Davidson (irrelevant) came on to talk about Sturgeon (relevant) and May (sadly relevant.) Her stylist had done really well, though, but I'm not going on; I don't judge women by the way they look. If I did, I'd do it in a less serious newspaper than this, like the Times or the Daily Mail.

Marr got Davidson going about the Single Market and some po-



litical stuff that hardly concerns her, but she wouldn't stop or be interrupted; like a taxi driver, Ruth stands for nobody. Marr should have asked her about her perfectly feathery fringe. Instead he asked her about George Osborne.

"He can't combine both jobs." (yawn)

Griff Rhys Jones is back on stage at the Garrick as Harpagon in *The Miser* by Molière. There was an intention to make this into a modern comedy yet make it more classic. And in the end they left it how it was and played it as Molière wrote it. (Is this even a story?)

Marr asked about Mel Smith, and **Alas Smith and Jones** (yawn)

Tony Blair has started a new policy institute (Think Tank) to end Angry Divisive Politics. (Think 'New Labour') And he had him on.

"It happened on your watch: bank regulation ending, the cheer-leading for globalisation?"

"Yes but ..."

At least Marr had this one Labour Figure on his programme, with legs like cardboard cut-outs, hard square knees, the day before yesterday's tie, Trump-Orange skin, 2015 shirt, let's not judge him by the quality of his stylists eh?

"Nothing wrong with populism, so long as it's giving answers!" (It is, Tony, it's just too obvious even for you.) This section of the programme went on for far too long but shows the BBC's clear pro-Left bias ;-). Advice for George Osborne? (oh please, Andrew, you didn't ask Griff who has arguably more political relevance than Blair)

Madness came on last; Marr showed some fab videos from before they tried to sell peas on the adverts, but then Suggs and some of the boys performed something else. I neither watched nor listened. It was like a bad jazz club when the real band has failed to turn up. I woke up and the programme had ended; True Peace.

NO BULLSHIT LAWYER



By Peter Stefanovic

The election expenses scandal is about to blow in a big, messy and very bloody way which could see Theresa May kicked out of Downing Street as police take action following their investigations into fraudulent Tory election expenditure! We have very strict laws on election expenses in this country, laws which are there to protect our democracy. Last year channel four unearthed compelling evidence the conservatives had flouted and broken election laws not only during the 2015 General Election but also in three earlier by-elections! The electoral commission and more than a dozen police forces have been investigating these allegations, the biggest investigation of its kind. Up to 30 Conservative MPs are being investigated over their 2015 general election expenses, a number greater than their parliamentary majority, get it now!

In May last year Police forces began applying to Magistrates courts for a one year extension to the time limit on investigating the allegations. Remember election expenses fraud is a criminal offence so MP's could not only lose their seats they could actually be thrown in jail! We could be looking at by-elections triggered across the country. Theresa May might even lose her commons majority! If enough Conservative MPs are removed from their seats we shall have to ask ourselves what this means for any decisions made by the conservative Government, including Brexit! The implications are startling and unprecedented in scope!

Whilst the Conservative Party has publicly been saying it's cooperating with the ongoing investigations this could not be further from the truth. In fact, after arrogantly offering little or no explanation to the allegations made against them they have deliberately attempted to obstruct the investigation. The electoral commission had to repeatedly ask for disclosure of relevant material it needed to investigate the

allegations and even had to apply to the high court for an order that would grant them access to the parties records! An electoral commission witness said at the time the investigation had been delayed and hindered by the failure of the Conservative party to provide complete and timely disclosure to allegations which went to the very heart of our democracy. These aren't exactly the actions of a party with nothing to hide! The Government even went as far as hiring a top QC to thwart the investigation by Kent Police into Conservative Craig Mackinlays campaign spending during his battle with Nigel Farage in South Thanet! Again not the actions of a Party with nothing to hide!

The "administrative oversight" argument used by the Conservatives is not exactly plausible for a party whose MPs go out of their way to claim the cost of a paper clip!

Now at last it looks like we shall shortly know the outcome of these investigations as 12 police forces pass their files to the crown prosecution service and Downing Street is said to be "deeply worried about the outcome". That's hardly surprising, Senior figures fear 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. It's understood the paper trail involved in election expenses cases may make prosecutions easier than in other fraud cases.

On 16 March the Electoral Commission published its findings along with a £70,000 fine for the party but it's what action the CPS decide to take that has everyone waiting with baited breath.

If the Conservative party has stolen democracy from the people in this country we are entitled to have that democracy given back to us so let's hope we see the CPS do its job properly.



BY MARA
LEVERKUHN

IS FEMINISM REALLY FOR WOMEN?

If you circulate the idea you deeply mistrust the state or voice the opinion feminism along with other -isms may have been hijacked.. people will generally treat you as a conspiracy theorist. A conspiracy theory is nothing unusual in practice. In criminal law, conspiracy is a very common occurrence.

Time Magazine's financial columnist Justin Fox writes:

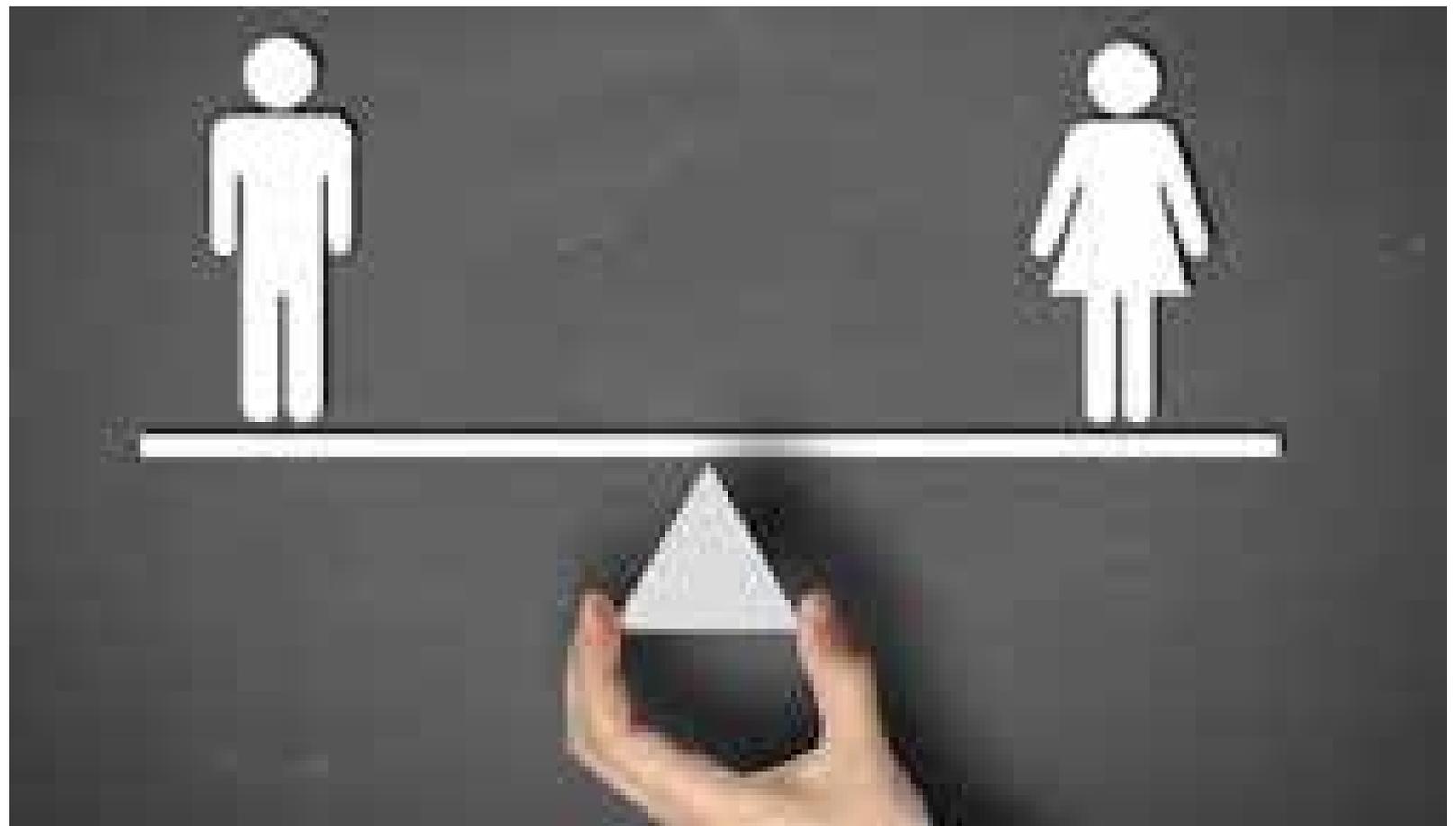
Some financial market conspiracies are real ...

Most good investigative reporters are conspiracy theorists, by the way.

Historically, many conspiracies were proven to be true. Watergate. Savile.

However. Its application has become a tool of staining dissident thought. The state does bad things. Sometimes very bad things. Savile. Bad, bad, things, harboured by a respectable institution—the BBC, for many years; people who raised a finger to speak about the evil were fired or silenced. There you go. Conspiracy. Proven true. Such is the scale and deviousness of this, that people should be permanently prepared to accept now that even outlandish “conspiracy theories” might be true when it concerns the state.

I assume, unless you have been living under a rock, that you've heard about the CIA leaks of March 6th. The breadth, scope and powers that CIA has been allowing itself are truly the stuff of sci-fi dystopian movies. Yet it is all true. Now your TV can spy on you. Your vacuum too. And your phone provider, manufacturer and every tech company along the way is CONSPIRING to implant technologic backdoors under state pressure so that all you dream, write, text and photograph is now the property of CIA. The leaks show stealth control of cars, for instance, developed with the aim of untraceable assassination. You're most likely not even in



the US. But CIA has life and death powers over you. And a plethora of tech tools to know every little thing about you.

It takes a particular flavour of gullible dimwit to trust that this extreme asymmetric type of power won't be used for evil or against you in any way. Or that your freedoms aren't completely violated like this for a solid reason. I.e., the state lying to you.

What is, really, the feminist call for safe spaces?

Recently unclassified documents I read on the zerohedge website show black and white evidence of CIA strategizing the concept of conspiracy theory to discredit criticism or scrutiny of the government.

What irks me with people who dismiss conspiracy theories is the naive belief in the progressive human nature. Have you watched

Shakespeare? Seen what power does? What makes you think the resorts of power have changed since? We are in a post enlightenment world? Really? Have you heard about nuclear bombs? Is that progress in the direction of peace, or...a technological progress that gives corrupt power godly scope? Have you heard of Iraq? Look up George Galloway's documentary “the Killings of Tony Blair”. That's the modern state. Labour even.

That's who you're defending. Good night.

So what I have to say ladies and gentlemen will be an old fashioned conspiracy theory against feminism. Based on what contemporary feminism is achieving, I'd say it's clear it's not working for women or the large mass of society; but rather it furthers division, creates tension, undermines gender relations, discriminates blatantly and aggressively against minorities,

Theresa's Secret

To spite various front bench blunders and political faux pas, Theresa May is enjoying such little press criticism that she still has time to hanker after her one true love - Jeremy Corbyn. But if anyone finds out - she'll be ruined!



and degrades the debate.

Gloria Steinem

Evidence 1: Gloria Steinem, household feminist, worked for the CIA. There is a youtube video of her talking about it. Until the 70s, she would openly discuss this. As her prominence grew, this fact was concealed. She is part of the team behind the Womens March in february. Large scale display of cosplay feminism and vagina clothed activists. Achieved anything? No. Be careful about your CIA manufactured authority figures.

Evidence 2. SWERF. I was a fan of Julie Bindel until I entered dialogue with her on the topic of SWERF: sex work exclusionary feminism. Or, attempted to enter polite debate; because she blocked me. I was trying to call the lady's attention that in the first world many sex workers are quite happy with their form of employment, which is quite high paying, independent and flexible. Sex work of course, includes many types of sexy jobs: from erotica writers, strippers, cam girls, burlesque divas like Dita von Teese, all the way to escorts and dominatrices. The dominatrix especially is a paradox in the face of pretend feminism: here's a dominant woman who does what she wants and charges for it; yet the feminist fascists want to force this woman into office wage slavery, in the age of what is otherwise celebrated as liberal western times. I am prepared to ignore the influence of Bindel and her kind; but merrily grazing along socialist paper Morning Star when I found the International Womens day supplement; wherein lay two powerfully and misguidedly anti sex work articles by Anna Fisher and Rae Story. The former is proposing the Nordic model of sex work laws, which semi criminalizes sex work. Completely ignoring the vast sector of consensual, business minded sex work that is not even prostitution, let alone street based, they imagine a society where you're only respected as a woman if you don't make money out of a biological function that is, more



or less, the reason we exist in the first place. The convenient, biased and illogical mass generalization of sex work as tragic trafficking is completely delusional and masks a preoccupation with virtue signaling; sort of a reinvention of prudish christian morality, through the lens of exploitative neoliberalism. Why let this group of entrepreneurial women earn a living as independent self employed operators, with the ensuing freedoms, when they can be coerced into low wage slavery for corporations that drive the planet into ecological disaster. Pardon me if I think these meek attempts at moral politicking are in fact serving the gangrenous exploitative economy of the western societies, i.e., the opposite of their declared goal.

What's more, policies focused on one segment of the population as opposed to the whole, unrepresented and disenfranchised working class, ends up serving the division. I find it hilarious that you seek to achieve equality by emphasizing the difference and asking for preferential treatment in a system where the lower classes are equally, indiscriminately ..oppressed. The ideology that all men have it better and women are crushed in the west, is outrageously unrealistic. The vast inequality of tory britain has no time for gender differences: look at the disabled, ill, pensioners, young, poor. It is

the disenfranchised and vulnerable that this economy oppresses. among that, half of them women. But if you really want to fight the Labour cause, and achieve a just fair society, shouldn't the focus be on the difference between the rich and the poor rather than ..woman and man? There may be vestigial female discrimination in Britain. Domestic crime definitely seems to affect women disproportionately. I would suggest the opposition treats this as a serious issue. But it's definitely, unfortunately, NOT the major issue we have to fight in this country. It seems to me like men and women are in shit together in Tory Britain. And they'd gain far more from fighting together than focusing on how the men have an infinitesimal superior layer of shit.

Twitter is full of dire misogynic social justice warriors whose slacktivism is aimed at fellow pauper men. The poor men have no responsibility for political frameworks; they're just as victimized. The end result of contemporary social media feminism is intellectually discrediting women in the eyes of men; alienating potential allies; wasting everyone's time. this is not dissimilar to the conservative plot of blaming the immigrants for something the banks and the corporate state have done: defraud the nation. If everyone is busy blaming their cell mates,

the real perpetrators go unpunished. And that's a pivotal reason for my suspicion that as it exists, feminism has been bitterly, cynically hijacked into a tool of more oppression. There is no room for gender bickering; we, the working class, are all oppressed. We have much more to gain from unity than division. The powerful seed the conflict through informational tools developed since the 70s. If you have the time, please look up Cointelpro. The deep state's methods of infiltrating left groups are known and unclassified; common knowledge. Yet somehow, the contemporary application of these principles, that since the 70s, only gained more momentum, finance and power from the state, is met with ridicule by the fellow leftie. After this week's CIA leaks, how do you argue with any ounce of credibility that the CIA do not operate in a large scale deceitful manner? if they infiltrated and destroyed the Black Panther from within, what makes you think they haven't done the same with feminism? Have you heard about Bernays? He used feminism to sell cigarettes. Your righteous desire to stand for vaginas is used to keep you and your fellow man economically enslaved.

I dream of a world where not just women, but men and transies together, have freedoms once more and free time. I dream of a world where real causes get the public attention, and twitter insults don't get people censored; but economic injustice makes people's blood boil. I've seen feminist women let a fellow woman starve, and be humiliated by her poverty; they said she deserved it. But then swiftly defend a middle class woman's honor on twitter against slightly offensive words from unknown people. That's not an ideology of substance; that's now the justice I need. I need a new, logically sound, deeply fair, human ideology. Not for the easily hijacked sensibilities of the middle class woman; for the stomach churning unjust fate of the poor human.

FeminismPoliticsLabour Party-Conspiracy TheoriesCIA

MY TOP 5 POLITICAL HEROES

1. One of my first political heroes was Malcolm X

"As a young black man who was growing up and loved hip hop I'd hear about this guy Malcolm X and I thought who the hell is this? Is it made up? Public Enemy and KRS-One talked about him. We didn't have the Internet then, so I started going to the library and I read Alex Haley's biography of him and I was absolutely amazed at his life and then how he came full circle [to disavow all racism]."

2. I've a lot of time for Clement Attlee for obvious reasons

"He's a favourite for so many people. He let Churchill be Churchill during the Second World War and then obviously what he did after the war [on welfare]."

3. Tony Benn, I'm a big fan of

"Sometimes I so wish he was around today because he had the ability to grasp a situation and then would explain it to people in a way that made so much sense. On the Left I think we sometimes miss that, someone who can say something and make it sound like commonsense. He made it look very easy and it's a very rare talent. I don't think he always had it, but he definitely had it in a certain point in his career."

4. Barbara Castle

"She was one of the first, that I know of, modern politicians."

5. Harold Wilson

"The first modern Labour politician."

At PMQ's Theresa May tries out her seductive new laugh on Jeremy Corbyn, hopeful of making a good impression.....





- Bands you thought you'd forgotten, never knew, or is it that you weren't even there at the time?

By Ian Charles, who was there and forgets nothing, except, perhaps

#4 Savoy Brown 1969

The received wisdom about band changes is that it doesn't matter who joins or leaves a band, so long as you have roughly the same number of members after all the changes as you did at the start. Savoy Brown used to be a six-piece British Blues band, formed in London in 1965 by Kim Simmonds, a guitar player who is still with them, after all this time. Now they're down to three. There have been 63 other musicians in the band since

then, and 17 'guests' make a total of 80. Either Kim is great at attracting band members or else he's rubbish at keeping them. It could be that he gives people a little time to play the blues with him before they go on to other things, like John Mayall with his Bluesbreakers. There have been keyboard players, harmonica players, saxophonists, percussionists, a welter of drummers and bassists, though not so many guitar players, but then why would they need any when they've got Kim, who's a decent harmonica and keyboard player himself?

In 1971, I went to Uni and bought myself a record player; I discovered a copy of Savoy Brown's fourth album 'A Step Further' (1969) reduced in a record shop.

I took it back to my room in halls and played it and was hooked. The first side is written almost entirely by vocalist Chris Youlden, who was in the band for three years, making four records with them, before leaving to forge a solo career. Neither he nor Savoy Brown were quite so good without the other. His voice was a defining part of the sound, and I don't think they ever really replaced him. A Step Further was the definitive Youlden album, and side two featured the famous/infamous Savoy Brown Boogie, where members of the band improvised on a groove, bringing in other themes and tunes. It's credited to Youlden and Simmonds, and recorded live. Dave Peverett, unusually a guitarist/vocals, is named as Lone-

some Dave (contract issues?) and who stuck it out over five albums.

Interestingly to me, bass players that preceded Tony Stevens included Bob Brunning, original member of Fleetwood Mac; if John McVie hadn't agreed to join Peter Green and the others, they might have had to call their band Fleetwood Bob, and Andy Pyle, who came from one of my other forgotten bands Blodwyn Pig via Juicy Lucy, and went on to play with the Kinks and Wishbone Ash. Some of these bands seem to have had as many people passing through as Savoy Brown, and remind me of that wall of fame at Old Trafford - "Who's Ever Played for the Black Sox?"

It was an almost totally new

line-up that made Street Corner Talking in 1971. The best track in my opinion on that album was the Kim Simmonds title track, which had some very cool organ and guitar. The next album Hellbound Train was pretty much back to Simmonds with a little bit of input from his sidemen. Nothing they did before or after A Step Further, where there seems to be have been a genuine sharing of leadership, has worked quite so well, and demonstrates for me the virtue of cooperative endeavour. Chris Youlden, Kim Simmonds and Lonesome Dave were a great front-line; Roger Earl, Tony Stevens and Bob Hall excellent side-men.

Recommended listening: <https://tinyurl.com/zkwra39>

Norway shows the way on carbon emissions. The 'ethics watchdog for Norway's £740 bn. Sovereign wealth fund will recommend this year that the fund exclude or put on a watch list several firms in the oil, cement and steel industries for emitting too much greenhouse gas.

Carbon emissions are a new criteria for the fund, built up from the proceeds of Norway's oil industry and operating under ethical guidelines set by parliament'.

Reuters.

New Internationalist: Congrat-

ulations on their 500th. Edition of the magazine since its beginning in 1973. Long may it bring in depth reporting of world affairs. As with The Word it is 'not a mainstream organisation. Its news values are not those of the herd-driven corporate media.'

It tackles issues largely ignored by other publications and is not answerable to any proprietor, also accepting only advertising that passes its ethical criteria.

The magazine is inviting you to be part of a change and not let the media be run exclusively by a

Hope and Good News

few press barons like Rupert Murdoch. In their appeal they say 'Together we can be part of the chorus that says: Yes, a better world and a better media are possible'.

To find out more about their Community Share Offer go to fastandheart.org or ring 01865 413304

Canada: Teachers' union has, after almost 15 years won a victory in British Columbia when Cana-

da's highest court overturned an earlier ruling by the Court of Appeal and upheld an earlier ruling that 'the unilateral nullification of working conditions substantially interfered with the union's constitutional right to freedom of association'.

In order to reduce costs the BC Education Minister had stripped the teacher's contract of its clause covering class size. It had caused

education funding to drop well below the national average but the ruling has already allowed the creation of over 1,000 teaching jobs in the state.

This was one victory amongst others which has seen working people in diverse sectors

have the right to make proposals over their workloads.

New Internationalist March 2017.

FACE OF THE FUTURE

SPACE TRAVEL

by John Jones

There's no doubt about it, the Russians make the best rocket engines in the world. Even our cold-war buddies, the Americans admit it.

The Russians "have a Lamborghini": "a beautiful system," says Shawn Philips, director of Edwards Air Force Rocket Lab testing grounds (AFRL). He compares it to the US's best rocket which he describes as "something like a semi-truck engine".

Philips' admiration for the RD-180 is for the Russian kerosene/liquid oxygen powered space-rocket engine, used in the US Atlas launch vehicles.

Full-scale rocket testing for new engines is currently too expensive for the Americans - over a billion for a new engine, so they now want to develop the idea of clustering successful engines such as those from Russia's RD series.

The politics of space travel

Since the American-backed fascist coup in Ukraine Obama's own neoconservative political engine wants to stop NASA, the American space agency, from using Russian engines. This has caused great problems for the agency, which is now rushing to replace them by 2022.

US paranoia didn't extend just to Russia, but to India which in the early 90's incurred sanctions from a US fearful of uppity developing countries gaining space-rocket technology.

India was stopped from buying new rocket technology from the Russian company Glavkosmos, so bought old models and tarted them up instead. It now has its own working cryogenic rockets. Cryogenic rockets use propellant gases cooled to a liquid state, such as liquid hydrogen and oxygen.

India's cryogenic C-25 engine was successfully tested in January this year. Other countries using cryogenic systems are France, Japan, and, of course, US, Russia and China. Unlike India, China was too big for the US to sanction.

"Green" fuels

All rockets throw things out the back to move forward. The technology is about what they throw and how they throw it.

Nearly all current rocket engines throw out hot gases from chemical reactions. They have two tanks. One tank carries an oxidizer (oxygen, nitric acid, etc.) and the other tank a fuel (hydrogen, kerosene, hydrazine, etc.). These

are brought together in the combustion chamber where they burn together and leave the nozzle to generate thrust.

The best theoretical oxidizer/fuel combo is fluorine/hydrogen, but is far too toxic to use, generating an exhaust of very toxic hydrofluoric acid (which etches glass).

Liquid hydrogen and oxygen (LOX) come a great second with water as the chemical exhaust-product; while a kerosene/oxygen mix is easier to handle, and generates carbon dioxide and water/steam as hot gas waste.

NASA is currently investigating special "green" fuels that use relatively non-toxic, though more expensive alternatives to liquefied gases and toxic fuels such as hydrazine (a relative of ammonia) and its derivatives. Green fuels include dimethylaminoethylazide (ah..don't it roll off the tongue), and ammonium-hydroxy nitrate.

All said and done, rockets powered by chemical reaction create large thrust but use buckets of propellant - which soon runs out. This makes chemical-reaction rockets unsuitable for journeying over very large distances.

Next-generation rocket engines are being designed that avoid the use of chemical reactions and are more economical with fuel. Rockets based on some of these designs create low-thrust (low-volume) high-speed exhaust, which over time can propel the spacecraft to very high speeds - useful for long distances.

Let's take a look at some of these new engine designs.

The Mighty Atom

Atomic engines have been tested since 1955 though never put into service. As of 2013 NASA is studying the option of developing atomic engines at its Marshall Space Flight Centre.

Generally, a fuel, such as hydrogen, is heated by uranium in a reactor and the high-temperature gas propelled through a nozzle. Thrust is currently twice that of chemical rockets, but overall

efficiency is offset a little by the weight of the reactor.

Dung-powered Rockets

Other forms of engine are being rapidly developed - plasma and ion engines. Plasma engines are in production and have been repositioning Boeing satellites since the 1990s. Plasma engines heat their propulsive gas electrically, not chemically.

A gas, usually Xenon, is sent through pipes and into a reaction chamber where an electrode, powered by batteries or solar panels, sparks the gas into a very hot "plasma". Magnets contain the plasma and accelerate it through an electrically charged grid and out the back at very high speeds, propelling the spacecraft.

Other methods of generating high-temperature gases or plasma include bombarding the fuel with radio waves.

Plasma rockets, it has been seriously suggested, can also use animal waste products as fuel, heating them up and ejecting them into space at high speed. In the near future we may be traversing the mysterious universe in modified toilets: to boldly go... is a dream for many. Scotty - stay upwind.

Ion engines

The other engine currently of interest is the ion engine. This engine sends out charged particles (ions) from a fuel container. The fuel can be as simple as a metal or ammonium salt solution. "Ions" are simply the electrically charged form in which these elements or molecules exist in water or in crystals.

The latest ion engine is the electrospray. This has no moving parts and is about as big as a coin. It doesn't look anything like a rocket engine and is powered by batteries. Naturally, the electrospray engine is not powerful, but their continuous low-thrust, high-speed exhaust, and modularity allow developers to build rockets big enough to suit. Spacecraft that use them can reach very high speeds over time.

It takes power to operate the plasma and ion electrospray engines. Boeing's plasma, electric satellites operate at 3 to 9kW, compared to 5W for Lozano's ion electrospray ion system.

"CubeSat"!

Enter a new, minimalist vision for the space rocket - the CubeSat. This is a miniature spacecraft powered by tiny electrospray engines. It doesn't generate enough thrust to leave the ground and so gets into orbit inside another main rocket vehicle.

Cubesat's measure a mere 10 centimetres on each side and weigh less than 1.5 kilograms. They can be designed for menial tasks such as repairing space stations, but could even travel into interplanetary space. They offer significant savings over traditional, heavier, rocket engines.

Accion Systems hope to test-crash an electrospray-powered cubesat on the moon, soon.

The far, far Future

As for the very far-distant future, we might abandon the principle of throwing things out the back to generate thrust and instead use sail-power, where large sails attached to the space-craft catch the "solar wind" from the sun's particles and light.

Even further in the future, we can only imagine. The use of singularities (tiny black holes) or compressed neutron matter as power sources offer a tempting vision for their convenient size if nothing else. These ideas, and the possibility that we can travel by by-passing the limits of physical space through "worm-holes" for example, may turn out to be conceptually incoherent or physically unachievable.

Poltergeist Power!

I think that if we ever want to mimic the flight capabilities of the Star-Trek Enterprise and the spacecraft reported in UFO incidents, then we must abandon technology and learn to work with the possible phenomenon of telekinesis, or else be satisfied with remaining in our own region of the galaxy. Interstellar and intergalactic distances are truly, truly, enormous.

Here we reach the limits of science. And maybe there is a terminus to technology, and other opportunities will suggest themselves to us if we can abandon our current beliefs (... and all just to get from A to B).

Finally, if our rocket doesn't go fast enough then you can bet some scientist will try to compensate by making us humans go slow enough. Suspended animation springs to mind. Count me out there, even with double-pay overtime. You can beam me up now Scotty.



TORONTO, CANADA (Reuters) — Canada's border authorities detained more Mexicans in the first 67 days of 2017 than they did annually in any of the three previous years, according to statistics obtained by Reuters. The spike comes immediately after Canada's federal government lifted its visa requirement for Mexican citizens in December. Many Mexicans looking north have shifted their focus from the United States to Canada as President Donald Trump vows to crack down on America's undocumented immigrants, about half of whom are Mexican. On Friday, Reuters reported, immigration judges were reassigned to 12 U.S. cities to speed up deportation. The Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA) said it detained 444 Mexican nationals between Jan. 1 and March 8, compared with 410 for all of 2016, 351 for 2015, and 399 for 2014.

WASHINGTON D.C., U.S. (AP) — Young Americans: Most see Trump as illegitimate president. Jermaine Anderson keeps going back to the same memory of Donald Trump, then a candidate for president of the United States, referring to some Mexican immigrants as rapists and murderers. "You can't be saying that (if) you're the president," says Anderson, a 21-year-old student from Coconut Creek, Florida. That Trump is undeniably the nation's 45th president doesn't sit easily with young Americans like Anderson who are the nation's increasingly diverse electorate of the future, according to a new poll. A majority of young adults — 57 percent — see Trump's presidency as illegitimate, including about three-quarters of blacks and large majorities of Latinos and Asians, the GenForward poll found. GenForward is a poll of adults age 18 to 30 conducted by the Black Youth Project at the University of Chicago with The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research.

LOS ANGELES, U.S. (NBC) — 'Power Rangers' Star Ricardo Medina Jr. Admits to Killing Roommate With Sword. A former TV star of the "Power Rangers" superhero series has pleaded guilty to stabbing his roommate to death with a sword two years ago. Ricardo Medina Jr., 38, faces six years in state prison for voluntary manslaughter when he's sentenced March 30 in the gruesome slaying, the Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office said. He was originally charged with first-degree murder, which carries 26 years to life in prison.

LIMA, PERU (SBS) — Flash floods take dramatic toll in Lima and northern Peru. The death toll from flash flooding and mudslides stands at 72 people after weeks of heavy rains swept the coastal areas of Peru and Lima. Flash floods and landslides hit parts of Lima, leaving some communities cut off from roads Saturday, as others in Peru fled rising rivers, and millions fretted that they won't have drinking water. The tremendously steep mountains combine with many rocky and sandy areas that lack the topsoil found in more temperate places, meaning fewer trees are there to stop mudslides. After weeks of heavy rain swept toward the coast late this week, many riverbeds in coastal areas went from empty to overflowing in no time. In Lima, some residents on the outskirts of the capital of 10 million awoke Friday to realise their bedrooms were filling with water. On Thursday and Friday, 10 people died in a landslide in the northern town of Otuzco. Seven of them were in trucks crushed by the huge flow of earth.

CASIMIRO DE ABREU, BRAZIL (AP) — This small city in the state of Rio de Janeiro is on high alert after authorities confirmed the death of one man by yellow fever and said they were investigating several other possible cases. Health authorities this week confirmed that 38-year-old Wtila Santos died from the illness on March 11. A neighbour of Santos, Alessandro Valenca Couto, was infected and sent for treatment to a hospital in the city of Rio de Janeiro, where he is recovering. Authorities are investigating possible cases involving four relatives of Santos, including a 13-year-old and a 9-year-old. In the city centre and rural areas of Casimiro de Abreu, about 93 miles (150 kilometres) from Rio de Janeiro, a large tent has been set up to vaccinate people. Authorities say around 30,000 of the city's 42,000 people have been vaccinated in recent days.

BALTIMORE, MARYLAND, U.S. (Reuters) — Top NSA official ridicules allegation Britain spied on Trump. Allegations from the United States that British spy agency GCHQ snooped on Donald Trump during his election campaign are "arrant nonsense", the deputy head of the U.S. National Security Agency (NSA) said in an interview on Saturday. President Trump has stood by unproven claims that the Obama administration tapped his phones during the 2016 White House race. On Thursday his spokesman cited a media report that Britain's GCHQ was behind the surveillance. Richard Ledgett, deputy director of the NSA, told BBC News the idea that Britain had a hand in spying on Trump was "just crazy". "It belies a complete lack of understanding of how the relationship works between the intel community agencies, it completely ignores the political reality of 'would the UK government agree to do that?'," Ledgett said.

LONDON, UK (The Hindu) — Indian physio's petition highlights costs of Britain's toughening immigration policy. Anand Kumar, an Indian physiotherapist who has lived in the U.K. for the past eight years launched a petition on the British parliament website this week calling for the government to exempt staff from a requirement introduced last year that means that non-E.U. workers must earn at least £35,000 pounds a year in order to gain permanent residency in the U.K. His petition and situation highlight the impact that Britain's toughening immigration stance has had on Indian workers in the U.K., and particularly in the public sector, where pay levels remain subdued.

ORLY, FRANCE (BBC) — Man killed after seizing soldier's gun. French security forces have shot dead a gunman as he attacked a patrol at Orly airport south of Paris. Ziyed Ben Belgacem was killed after putting a gun to a female soldier's head saying he wanted to "die for Allah", officials say. Earlier on Saturday the 39-year-old had been involved in a shooting and then a carjacking in the Paris area. Belgacem had been reported as radicalised in the past, and was on a police watch-list. His criminal record included convictions for armed robbery and drugs offences, Paris prosecutor Francois Molins told reporters. He fell under the influence of Islamist radicals while serving prison time. The attack comes at a sensitive time. France has presidential elections starting next month and remains under a state of emergency.

ROME, ITALY (AP) — Catania airport has reopened in eastern Sicily after a thick, volcanic ash cloud from nearby Mount Etna had made takeoffs and landings impossible. The airport said flights were resuming, some after delays, early Saturday afternoon. Flights had been diverted to Palermo and Comiso airports on the island after the airport closed Friday evening. Earlier in the week, fiery-hot lava belching from Mount Etna caused an explosion when making contact with snow on the mountain-side, injuring 10 people. Etna's eruptions, often visible from far away, are reminders to those living or hiking on its slopes that the volcano is quite active.

BADEN-BADEN, GERMANY (BBC) — G20 finance ministers drop anti-protectionist pledge. Finance ministers from world's biggest economies have dropped an anti-protectionist commitment after opposition from the US. G20 ministers left the two-day meeting without renewing their long-standing pledge to bolster free trade. Last year, the group of the world's 20 largest economies vowed to "resist all forms of protectionism". But since then, President Donald Trump has taken office, and is aggressively pursuing an "America First" policy. His policies include penalties for companies which manufacture their products abroad.

BERLIN, GERMANY (AP) — Pope Francis says the church must study whether it's possible to ordain married men to minister in remote communities facing priest shortages. In an interview published Thursday with Germany's *Die Zeit*, Francis stressed that removing the celibacy rule is not the answer to the Catholic Church's priest shortage. But he expressed an openness to studying whether so-called "viri probati" — or married men of proven faith — could be ordained. "We must consider if viri probati is a possibility. Then we must determine what tasks they can perform, for example, in remote communities," he was quoted as saying.

JIHLAVA, CZECH REPUBLIC (Washington Post) — Three young boys kick and stone a flamingo to death at Czech zoo. The boys, ages 5, 6 and 8, broke into the zoo and scaled a fence to reach the indoor flamingo exhibit. Then they attacked the 60-bird flock, throwing rocks and sticks at them. "First, they pelted them with stones and then one of them kicked it," resident zoologist Jan Vašák told the *Prague Morning*. One of the birds, the 16-year-old father of eight, bled to death after suffering a broken leg bone and severed arteries. Another bird is recovering from serious but not life-threatening injuries, according to a zoo statement obtained by *The Washington Post*.

CRIMEA, UKRAINE (Reuters) — Russia-backed Crimea chief says Putin should be president for life. The Russian-backed prime minister of Crimea said on Saturday that Vladimir Putin should be made president of Russia for life and that the Soviet Union would never have collapsed had Putin been in charge. Sergei Aksyonov, marking the third anniversary of the day he signed off on Russia's annexation of the Ukrainian peninsula, said Russia needed continuous strong leadership to contend with multiple external threats. "If our president Vladimir Vladimirovich (Putin) was in charge of things when the Soviet Union existed, the Soviet Union would not have fallen apart," said Aksyonov, who said a few days ago that Russia needed a monarchic style of government. "Vladimir Vladimirovich must be president for life," Aksyonov told the *Rossiya 24* channel.

ISLAMABAD, PAKISTAN (AP) — Blasphemy charges create climate of fear for Pakistani media. Analysts say the blasphemy law is a powerful tool to muzzle critics. Some say it is being used by extremists to silence moderates at a time when Pakistanis are increasingly speaking out against violence and extremism, and voicing support for a crackdown on Islamic militants. In Pakistan, even the suggestion of blasphemy can be tantamount to a death sentence. The government heightened concerns earlier this week when it said it had asked Facebook and Twitter to ferret out Pakistanis posting religiously offensive material, promising to seek their extradition if they are out of the country and prosecute them on blasphemy charges. In one high-profile case six years ago, Punjab Gov. Salman Taseer was gunned down by one of his guards, who accused him of blasphemy because he criticized the law and defended a Christian woman sentenced to death for allegedly insulting Islam's Prophet Muhammad.

CAIRO, EGYPT (AP) — Archaeologists in Egypt discovered a massive statue in a Cairo slum that may be of Ramses II, one of the country's most famous and longest ruling ancient pharaohs. The colossus, a large portion of whose head was pulled from mud and groundwater by a bulldozer and seen by *The Associated Press* on Friday, is around eight meters (26 feet) high and was discovered by a German-Egyptian archaeological team. "We used the bulldozer to lift it out. We took some precautions, although somewhat primitive, but the part that we retrieved was not harmed," said Khaled Mohamed Abuelela, manager of antiquities at Ain Shams University. Egyptologist Khaled Nabil Osman said the statue was an "impressive find" and the area in the working class neighbourhood of Matariya in eastern Cairo is likely full of other buried antiquities.

MOGADISHU, SOMALIA (Al Jazeera) — Celebrity social media push to help Somalia goes viral. Campaign to raise \$1m to deliver humanitarian aid to country on the brink of famine gets massive public support. A social media campaign aiming at delivering humanitarian aid Somalia, a country on the brink of famine, through a Turkish Airlines flight has gone viral with backing from celebrities and people across the world. After being initiated with a tweet by Jerome Jarre, the French social media celebrity, on Wednesday, the Twitter hashtags #TurkishAirlinesHelpSomalia and #LoveArmyForSomalia have taken on a snowballing effect with support from a group of celebrities. Actor Ben Stiller, social media personality Juanpa Zurita and YouTube personality and filmmaker Casey Neistat, American football player Colin Kaepernick and many others swiftly backed the campaign. All of them have widespread social media reach across various platforms.

PYONGYANG, NORTH KOREA (ITV) — North Korea tests new 'epoch-making' rocket engine. North Korea's state media says the country's military has tested a new high-performance rocket engine. Leader Kim Jong Un said the test was "a new birth" for the North's rocket industry, state news agency KCNA said. He said the engine will help North Korea achieve world-class satellite launch capability, it added. The move comes as US Secretary of State Rex Tillerson is visiting China, which is Pyongyang's biggest ally and supporter. After personally monitoring the test, Mr Kim apparently "emphasized that the world will soon witness the great significance of the epoch-making victory we achieved today," KCNA added.

GLOBAL HEADLINE - MOSUL, IRAQ (Reuters) — Thousands flee Iraq's Mosul as battle edges into Old City. Thousands of Iraqis surged out of western Mosul on Saturday during a lull in heavy fighting in districts around the densely populated Old City where Iraqi forces are facing fierce resistance from Islamic State militants. Five months into the battle to take Islamic State's last bastion in Iraq, government forces have cleared the east and half of western Mosul, and are now focused on controlling the Old City as well as the strategic al-Nuri Mosque. As fighting has entered into the narrow alleyways and densely populated parts of the west, more residents are fleeing liberated areas where food and water are scarce, security fragile and where homes are often caught in shelling. "We have been trapped for 25 days. No water, no food, everyone will die and they will have to pull us from the rubble," said one resident of Bab Jdid district, not giving his name because relatives remained inside Mosul. Families with elderly relatives and children marched through western Mosul's muddy streets, past buildings pock-marked by bullet and bombs. Some said they had hardly eaten in weeks, scrambling for supplies handed out by a local aid agency. "It is terrible, Islamic State have destroyed us. There is no food, no bread. There is absolutely nothing," said another resident.

APIA, SAMOA (RadioNZ) — Samoa launches new hydro development. The Governments of New Zealand and Samoa, the Asian Development Bank and the European Union are combining to further develop hydro-electric power in Samoa. A ceremony today turned the first sod for the construction of the Fulusou hydropower plant which has a preliminary capacity of 0.68 megawatts. One of the project's targets is to save about 3.6 million litres of diesel per year, with clean power replacing diesel generated power.

Welcome back for 4 more pages of Art is the WORD!

These pages are still edited by WILD WORDS - the North West based art collective of Chris Bainbridge, Emma Lea, Eve Nortley and Gordon Zola. In each edition of The Word we focus on a levathan from the world of poetry and activism and today's literary limelight is on that famous son of the soil, Robert Burns.

We are also featuring articles on the literary gem that is our Public Library system here in the UK - under threat from Govt. cuts but fighting back. Please join us in the fight to keep Britain's public libraries great!

Coming next issue Maya Angelou.....her written legacy. Tell us what your favourite piece of her work is and why.

Health benefits of reading

Mental workout: Reading exercises your brain in a different way from watching TV or listening to the radio. Parts of the brain that have evolved for other functions—such as vision, language, and associative learning—connect in a specific neural circuit for reading, which is very challenging to the brain. The habit spurs your brain to think and concentrate.

Physical Workout: Books are also good company during a workout at the gym. A gripping plot can keep you on an exercise machine longer to finish a captivating chapter. In order to avoid neck or shoulder pain, readers should use the machine's book ledge and try not to round their shoulders while working out.

Reading can take years off your mind: According to a recent study from Rush University Medical Centre, adults who spent their downtime doing creative or intellectual activities (like reading) had a 32 percent slower rate of cognitive decline later in life than those who did not. "Brainy pursuits make the brain more efficient by changing its structure to continue functioning properly in spite of age-related neuropathologies," says lead researcher Dr R. S. Wilson. Another recent study found that older adults who regularly read or play mentally challenging games like chess or puzzles are two and a half times less likely to develop Alzheimer's disease. (Psychology Today Jan 2017)

Reading reduces stress: In a British study, participants engaged in an anxiety-provoking activity and then either read for a few minutes, listened to music, or played video games. The stress levels of those who read dropped 68%, which was a more significant dip than that of the other groups. (Lewis 2009)

Books expand your mental dictionary: Researchers estimate

that we learn five to 15 percent of all the words we know through reading, according to a Scholastic report. This is particularly important for children, whose vocabulary size is directly and dramatically related to the books they read

Stories provide life-changing perspective: York University researchers have identified that getting wrapped up in the lives of characters strengthens your ability to understand others' feelings.

Reading gives you vicarious experiences: Researchers at Ohio University found that reading about someone who overcame obstacles may motivate you to overcome obstacles in your own life. The more you identify with a character and experience events as if they were happening to you, the more likely you'll be to take action.

Reading enhances your sense of social inclusion: When you identify with characters in a book, you experience a kind of real-life relationship that can enhance your sense of community inclusion and improve your mental health. This is finding by psychologists at the University of Buffalo.

Reading improves your mood. A happy ending can lift your spirits, but novels may create positive feelings in more subtle ways too. Even minor events in the narrative may unearth warm memories. Does the lead character attend a picnic? Then you will relive happy memories of picnics you have attended and feel positive.

Reading is good for your financial health. The average novel costs between £3 (e-book) and £6 (paperback) and takes about six hours to read, compare that to going to see 3 films at the cinema, spending a day at an amusement park, or eating 2 meals out—reading is a much more cost-effective spend on your entertainment budget. Your local library lending is free.



A public library is a library that is accessible by the general public and is generally funded from public sources, such as taxes.

It is operated by librarians and library professionals.

There are five fundamental characteristics shared by public libraries.

1. They are generally supported by taxes (usually local, though any level of government can and may contribute).
2. They are governed by a board to serve the public interest.
3. They are open to all, and every community member can access the collection.
4. They are entirely voluntary in that no one is ever forced to use the services provided.
5. They provide basic services without charge

Public libraries exist across the world and are often considered an essential part of having an educated and literate population.

Public libraries are distinct from research libraries, school libraries, and other special libraries in that their mandate is to serve the general public's information needs rather than the needs of a particular school, institution, or research population

A very brief history of Public Libraries in the UK

The UK has a proud heritage of providing public libraries for the health and wellbeing of its populace and it is that heritage for which we should be fighting today.

Amongst the earliest early libraries recorded as allowing access to the public was that of the Kalendarers or Kalendaries, a brotherhood of clergy and laity who were attached to the Church of All-Hallowen or All

Saints in Bristol, England. Records show that in 1464, provision was made for a library to be erected in the house of the Kalendarers, and reference is made to a deed of that date by which it was "appointed that all who wish to enter for the sake of instruction shall have 'free access and recess' at certain times.

Yet wasn't until the 1600's, in the midst of class conflict and economic terror that the public library movement swept through Britain, as the nation's progressive elite recognized that the light of cultural and intellectual energy was lacking in the lives of working people.

In the early years of the 17th century, many famous collegiate and town libraries were founded in England. Norwich City library was established in 1608 (six years after Thomas Bodley founded the Bodleian Library, which was open to the "whole republic of the learned") and Chetham's Library in Manchester, which claims to be the oldest public library in the English-speaking world, opened in 1653

Public libraries began to appear in large numbers in Britain in the mid-19th Century, in the aftermath of the Public Libraries Act 1850. The Free Library Movement was one of the many groups in the mid-Victorian period working for the "improvement of the public" through education.

The Act followed a period of campaigning led by the Liberal MPs William Ewart and Joseph Brotherton, and the Chartist Edward Edwards - a former bricklayer who had educated himself in the libraries of the Mechanics' Institute.

However, despite a long history of public libraries in Europe, the Movement was widely opposed in Parliament by the Conservatives, who were alarmed by the cost impli-

cations of the scheme, and the social transformation it might effect.

In order to get the Bill through Parliament, William Ewart was forced to make a number of compromises: only boroughs with populations of more than 10,000 would be allowed to open libraries; local referendums would be required, with the support of two thirds of ratepayers needed to approve plans; and local rates could be increased by no more than half a penny in the pound to pay for the service - and this money could not be used to buy books. The first free public library was opened in Campfield, Manchester in 1852, and the Act's scope was extended to Scotland and Ireland in 1853.

The rate that boroughs could charge for libraries was increased to one penny in 1855, but since it was not enough for councils to fund new libraries, the growth of libraries was heavily dependent on the donations of philanthropists, such as John Passmore Edwards, Henry Tate and Andrew Carnegie. By 1900, there were 295 public libraries across Britain.

The Public Libraries Act 1919 reformed the old system, taking responsibility for libraries away from the boroughs and giving it to county councils, which would now have the power to establish libraries without a referendum. This, and the abolition of the penny rate under the Act paved the way for the library service to become a truly national service.

The service was put in jeopardy in the 1970s, when many writers threatened to withdraw their works from library collections, in protest at the lack of a satisfactory compensation scheme. The Government responded by passing the Public Lending Right Act



1979, which provided for a centrally-funded scheme to pay writers and artists. This was provided in 2003-2004 by £7.4 million from the Government.

The current public library service in the UK is delivered via thousands of local branches, mobile libraries, and other institutions such as old people's homes and youth centres. In two-tier local government areas, the library service is the responsibility of the upper tier (the county council).

However, many fear that the library service across the UK is now in serious decline, due to Government funding cuts to local authorities. Between 1993 and 2000, 203 libraries and 29 mobile libraries were closed, with lack of local authority funding cited as the reason. In 2003/04 there were 4622 public libraries still open in the UK but by 2016 it was down to 3850. These cuts continue and have grown exponentially - with one town council in Greater Manchester (Bury) aiming to close 11 libraries this year.

As early as 2000, the Library Association were warning that only 15 libraries in the whole country were open for 60 or more hours per week, and that cuts in library opening times have meant many libraries are now closed in the popular evening and weekend periods - the very times the majority of working people, who are paying for the right to visit their local library through their taxes, could visit public libraries.

It is widely acknowledged by local government, that library services have been historically underfunded. Library services are funded out of Revenue Support Grant - that is, local authorities' main general funding stream and many argue that without ring-fenced

funding, libraries will almost always lose out to the "big" spending departments.

In recent years, considerable effort has been expended to make libraries relevant and useful to more sections of the communities they serve, particularly through the use of Information and Communication Technology. It's startling to consider that in 1997 only 5% of libraries had internet access - and now they provide the majority of the UK's free access to the DWP's job search function.

The flagship libraries of today such as those in London, Liverpool and Manchester would be unrecognizable to Thomas Bodley, offering as they do the opportunity for quiet study alongside hosting a plethora of social events from local provision of children's Lego clubs, hosting writing groups and U3A events through to showcasing international speakers (see the British Libraries Events calendar). Offering safe and accessible live music for all in great public spaces - with tickets priced from free - £8, Get it Loud in Libraries have hosted such notaries as Florence and the Machine, the Vaccines and Noah and the Whale and attracted 28,000 new library users in recent years.

For anyone overcome by the recent romance of Valentine's day and prompted to pop the question.... you can even get married at the library.

Our public libraries are indeed a national treasure, offer truly great creative spaces and we need to fight for them....they are a huge part of what has made Britain Great.

The Word is offering a FREE copy of Love and Lust by Chris Bainbridge and Eve Nortley to the first 5 couples who contact them to say they are getting married in a library.

Larry Walker Interview

I first came across Larry Walker-Tonks last year when he entered one of my competitions and I instantly chose his work without asking my judges for input as I loved it. He's one of two artists who illustrated *The Fisherman and His Wife* for my *Eclectically Grimm* book. His work - as you can see - is stunning.

It was a shock to me how young he is. Perhaps it is evidence of my own bias, but looking at the quality of his work I assumed he would be older than he is, as, while I didn't ask, but looking at him would guess that he is in his twenties.

How do you describe my work?

My work is largely about telling a story, it always seems to be forming a commentary. It's about taking current topics, important issues, my interests and retelling the story to a different audience. There's been an eclectic array of topics that have fed into my work; the Costa Concordia disaster, the centenary of the Titanic sinking, LGBT issues at the 2014 Russian Winter Olympics, the Scottish Independence Referendum, Brexit and most recently our social media habits. The vast majority of my practice has centred around drawing, exploring paper qualities and furthering my drawing ability with additional mediums, for example I've used brush and bleach in drawings and even created my own photographic paper. I owe a lot of my success to drawing.

What role do you think an artist should have/does have in society?

I think the role of the artist is incredibly important in today's society; look at the current political climate in the era of "fake news" and "post-truth", there is always a fight to be fought somewhere, art has very few boundaries and transcends multiple platforms. Not every artist has to feel like they must tackle worldwide problems in their work but they have a real ability to make a difference - especially in today's world. We are saturated with imagery everyday from advertising to social media, art and the visual image has the ability to penetrate where the written or spoken word may not. I believe that the artist is going to play a huge role in our near future as people become disgruntled with politics and the world we live in they will turn to artists and the visual image for truth or for a brief escape. Art can also take us away from the real world, temporarily allowing us to forget our worries, as much as the artist allows us to see reality they must also provide us with an escape.

Who is your favourite artist



who I won't have heard of?

I hope I don't offend him by saying I don't think anyone has heard of him, especially as an internationally exhibited artist, but the answer to this question is always Phil Gurrey (http://www.philipgurrey.com/P_hilip_Gurrey/Menu_News.html). Phil is a fantastic painter and Glasgow School of Art alumni whose work I have admired for years. I was first made aware of him when he gave a visiting artist lecture at Teesside University, at this point he had been working on classical painting techniques in portrait painting, replicating and combining various differing painting styles and techniques into one portrait. The resulting images were similar to photos of early plastic surgery of WWI soldiers, a comparison that Gurrey made himself, yet there was a unfamiliar beauty to these faces - I was captivated. I had the chance to meet him again when he returned a couple of years later and I interviewed him as part of my dissertation. Here I was asking him all sorts of bizarre questions about painting and the unconscious and not once did I feel daft. He is very passionate about his practice and holds great insight into paint and its qualities. Of course by this point he had moved from portraiture to making work about the qualities of paint itself, he was now painting solid blocks of colour onto sheets or metal and copper and stripping away small areas of paint or deforming the "canvas" to see how the paint reacts. He is fantastically open about his practice and his work is stunning and humbling, it really is a must-see.

What are you working on at the moment?

At the moment my work has taken an unexpected departure from what I normally produce, its got much more autobiographical and has forced me out of my comfort zone. I'm looking at society's use of social media and messaging apps, their dependence on them and the habits of people who use

them. Everything has become instantaneous and permanently available, the world is becoming desensitised to violence and we are over-sexualised at every opportunity. I'm trying to highlight that there is nothing acceptable about unsolicited requests from strangers to "send nudes" or the hijacking or social networking apps by strangers with no profile picture pressuring you to get into bed with them. I've been influenced by the work of Robert Gober who was making work about loss at the height of the AIDS crisis, it staggers me that with all of the hard work done to promote safe sex that there are people out there in 2017 who will pressure and shame potential sexual partners into unsafe sex. This work has also seen a departure from my usual medium of drawing, I've been recreating screenshots of lewd messages, most of which are unsolicited messages I have received, and putting them into a gallery environment in the hope that it forces people to question 'is this normal?' the next time they receive something similar. To accentuate all that I've been busy making abstracted body sculptures from expanding foam, they have real hair and a sickly, high gloss finish to evoke a sense of body horror in the viewer and deter people from unsafe sex. It's an exciting project for me at the minute and its developing all the time, I've just recently had some condoms printed with some of my art on the packet.

What's your background outside art?

This is the point where I have to ask myself, "what is it that I actually do?". Well (embarrassingly) I'm an avid railway enthusiast, I love the history, I love the engines, I love the politics - I even have a model railway. I'm also one of those awful people that wanders the streets playing Pokemon Go in some desperate attempt to relive my youth!

What moves you most in life?

I have to say I am humbled by my friends and family, I'm surrounded by people who I owe so much to and without them I certainly wouldn't have got as far as I have. It's their kindness, their generosity, their belief and their support that has moved me the most. Deciding to try and make a career in the creative sector is not easy, its a huge leap to take and there is no safety net. I am in a very humbled position to have this close circle of support, each piece I make or each piece that is published or exhibited is done for them.

You can find the full interview at readingroomcafeproject.com

GET IT **LOUD** IN LIBRARIES

Saturday 25th March	She Drew the Gun	Liverpool Library
Saturday 1st April	Haley Bonar	Liverpool Library
Saturday 6th May	Honey Blood	Museum of Wigan Life
Sunday 21st May	Cherry Glazerr	Liverpool Library

A Manc's A Man Fer All That

*Around our way by night or day
Down cobbled crofts an' all that,
On chavenues or scallyways
We dare to roam fer all that,
You're ten men an' big chat,
But you know nowt fer all that,
So close yer mouth an' use yer 'ead
A Manc's a man fer all that.*

*We like our chips, not fancy dips
Or posh cuisine an' all that
We eat our scran from normal plates,
Not roofin' slates or all that,
Them fat cats ain't all that,
Just showin' off fer all that,
What matters is what beats inside,
As good as kings fer all that.*

*See all them snobs that pose about
And give it gob an' all that,
Some stupid sheeple fall in line
Do what they're told an' all that,
Their media is all crap,
Just bosses' lies an' all that,
We help and care for humankind
And look and laugh at all that.*

*From overspill or tower-block
Or tented camp or all that
This army of the poor oppressed
Is sorted, sound an' all that,
You mean, mighty millionaires,
Our love's worth more than all that
We with sod-all still hear the call,
The future's ours fer all that.*

Me and Robert Burns

by Eve Nortley

*My love is like a blood red rose,
With poison on it's tips
And yet I long to touch her skin
And taste her deadly lips.*

*Her beauty sings a sirens song,
And drowns me in her deep
And yet I rush to perish
And conjoin her in eternal sleep,*

*In the darkest corner of Hades
Our love will shine ere bright
She is my eternal sun
And I her guiding light.*

*This earthbound life is not meant to hold
A beauty that's so manifold
A spirit sent from God above
To transport me to heaven to lie in her love.*

The Book Corner....

Last edition we featured Tom Bingham's book - Rule of Law and this week we offer you a complete contrast....

Criminal Genius - A portrait of high IQ offenders

by James C. Oleson University of California Press
(review by Alan K. Stead)

This book is a study into the criminal activity of people with high IQs. Whilst some were serial killers such as Albert De Salvo and Rodney Alcala and others such as Jimmy Saville were child molesters, the crime of choice for most 130+ IQ criminals is fraud.

The book explains several surveys conducted in Britain and the USA where participants were asked

to complete anonymous questionnaires regarding their past criminal conduct - where criminal conduct meant anything from violence to lying under oath, being drunk and disorderly or having sex in public. Whilst it seems surprising that so many were willing to reveal their minor infringements - some questionnaires were not returned making it appear likely that more serious offences were not being divulged. Oleson goes on to study the part played by high IQ criminals in fiction such as Blofeld, Dr Fu Manchu, Professor Moriarty and others.

Altogether a fascinating and informative read which comes highly recommended.

“BOOKS ARE LIKE A MOVIE PLAYING IN YOUR HEAD!”

An interview with
Zara Hussain, aged 10.

Zara Hussain lives with her mum Saiyra, dad Imran and her little sister Zoya (7) and brother Ayaan (4), in Radcliffe, Greater Manchester. Zara is a year six pupil at Chapelfield Primary School and is due to move to a local high school in September of this year.

Zara - along with everyone else in her family and many local residents - has been alarmed by Bury Council's proposal to close most of the libraries in the borough, in an attempt to cut its expenditure.

If these plans are carried through only three libraries will remain in the borough, to serve a total population of nearly 200,000.

Zara was so upset at the news that she wrote a letter the Council. Teachers at her school were so impressed with the points Zara made (and the eloquent way she composed her letter) that they gave her letter their full endorsement, forwarding it on official school letter-headed paper.

I was delighted to have the opportunity to meet Zara and her family and was able to put a number of questions to her about why she feels so strongly about local li-

brary closures.

How often do you visit the libraries in Radcliffe?

We all go in a group with school at least once a month - that's to the main library in Radcliffe town centre. I also go to the local one (around the corner on Dumers Lane) every weekend, and at other times to print my homework off.

What do you do at the libraries?

We use the computers and printers, we borrow books and DVDs. With school we often have stories read to groups of us - that happened on World Book Day, it was very enjoyable. We all get li-

Interview with Ms Maggie Howarth Primary School in Radcliffe, the school

Ms Howarth very kindly took time out of her busy morning to speak to us at The Word. We asked her exactly the same questions we had asked Zara - we hope you will find her responses equally illuminating...

How often do you visit the libraries in Radcliffe?

I don't really get the chance to go, now that I am a Headteacher, it was different last year when I was teaching a Year 5 class. Basically our staff can go as often as they want with groups of children. In addition I would say that about 20% of children here attend the library as individuals at least once a week. We also sometimes have library staff coming into school to present sessions here.

What do you do at the library?

Children swap books. We encourage the children to find books on the particular topics they may be working on in their class. We en-

courage them to use information technology as well as the more traditional methods and formats; children are also encouraged to work in pairs or groups, which increases their social skills and enhances their learning techniques.

We also get children to carry out homework tasks in the library setting. They generally have 6 specific tasks per term, and we try to encourage them to work on their own initiative and discover things through their own research. This can be vital in helping to promote independence and will stand them in good stead for future studies.

It's worth bearing in mind that some children simply don't have a quiet place within their own homes where they can do homework. What will happen to them if the libraries close down?

Who is your current favourite writer?

Swedish author Stieg Larsson - his Millennium Trilogy is wonderful. I also like the Japanese writer Haruki Murakami.

What is your favourite book?

Life Of Pi (written by Yann Martel in 2001).

If you were writing a book, what would it be about?

Adventure, anything to do with overseas exploration.

What is your favourite letter of the alphabet, and why?

"M", because it's the initial of my first name I suppose.

What is your favourite word, and why?

"Unique". I like the fact that it is what it describes. Also, I like words that represent difference - we like doing things differently here at Chapelfield, and finding inventive solutions!

If you could talk to the Prime Minister what would you say the her about your library?



brary cards. I have had one since I was at Nursery - I still remember how very special I felt!

Do you have a favourite writer?

Yes - J.K. Rowling! I love all the Harry Potter books. She also wrote Fantastic Beasts. Her books are amazing, magical. She paints a picture in your mind - it's like a movie playing in your head!

What is your favourite book?

I like all the Harry Potter books equally really. They each have something I love. I like the character of Harry. He is not a typical hero, with his scar and his big, round glasses. I like the way the friend-

ships grow through each of the stories - they are all very loyal and trust each other.

If you were writing a book what would it be about?

I would try to follow the example of J.K. Rowling. I would like to write something other-worldly, with the good ones battling against the evil characters. I did already write a "100 Word" story which featured an imaginary creature. It is going to be part of an anthology from our school called "Crazy Creatures".

What is your favourite letter of the alphabet, and why?

Z! Because it begins my name -

and it's special, as it is the very last letter in the alphabet. I like that.

What is your favourite word, and why?

"Ludicrous"! I just like the sound of it.

If you could talk to the Prime Minister what would you say to her about your libraries?

Our libraries are very helpful with out homework tasks. They give us a lot of information. There are always plenty of computers, so we don't usually have to wait for one to become free. The books are really good too, and the clubs that are based there are very interesting and helpful to all of us - not just school-children, but the whole community.

If you were the chairperson of Bury Council, what would you do to get the money to keep libraries open?

I would organise sponsored runs and lots of other events, like baking cakes and selling them, like they do to raise money for cancer research and other charities.

What would you do if the libraries closed?

It wouldn't be the same! We do so much there that it would affect our lives a lot. I don't want them to close.

Is there anything else you would like people to know about libraries?

The staff are very helpful and kind - they are not snobby in any way, they are very approachable.

Libraries are more than just buildings with books and computers in them, the people who work there make a big difference.

Chris Bainbridge, Wild Words Collective, March 2017

n, the Headteacher at Chapelfield School attended by Zara Hussain

In an overcrowded school like ours (we currently teach 305 children in a school with a capacity of 270) - and there are many others of course - using outside resources like libraries becomes even more important. This valuable resource should not be taken away. Despite technological advances there is no substitute for sharing a book in a social setting. People getting together, talking about books, discussing homework, helps with social development and counteracts social deprivation and isolation.

If you were chairperson of Bury Council how would you get the money to keep your library open?

After assessing total expenditure, I would ask if we are keeping the most valuable resources and facilities...or if we are in fact holding onto anything that could be described as more of a luxury. Impor-

tantly, any money spent on libraries should be seen not as money "lost", but as an INVESTMENT in education overall...in our children's futures. I would make sure joint fundraising events and initiatives between local communities and their schools took place. We need to encourage local people to get much more involved - there have been examples of this in the past, with things like litter-picks and spring cleaning.

Is there anything else you would like people to know about libraries?

Libraries have a direct impact on our results as a school, especially for children in Year 6. SATS are still done on a paper page, so it's nonsense to claim that new technology has made physical books obsolete. We must bear in mind - the level of reading required for SATS is actually higher than the level most parents operate at.

We recently had eight or nine children who chose "Goodnight Mr Tom" (by Michelle Magorian) as their choice of prize - when asked why, they all said "Because it had been read to me!" Proof of the enduring power of books and reading, even - or perhaps especially - in a communal or social setting. Library closures would cause untold damage to this quite magical process.

Don't forget, Radcliffe doesn't even have its own high school any more - the town desperately needs to hold onto what few resources it has left in terms of community assets and education. I honestly believe you would get a similar response if you went into ANY school in Radcliffe and asked these questions - EVERY school would support libraries remaining open.

Chris Bainbridge, Wild Words Collective, March 2017

ROBERT BURNS working class hero?

Born 25 January 1759, Robert Burns was also known as Rabbie Burns, the Bard of Ayrshire, Ploughman Poet and various other names and epithets - Burn's is one of the most colourful characters in the world of poetry - living hard and dying young!

In an 18 month period 1776-1777 Burns made and spent his fortune - in true Rock star style!

Burns was a Scottish poet and lyricist, widely regarded as the national poet of Scotland he is celebrated worldwide. He is the best known of the poets who have written in the Scots language, although much of his writing is also in English and a light Scots dialect.

He also wrote in standard English, the majority of this writing being political or civil commentary.

Burns is generally classified as a proto-Romantic poet, and he is considered to have influenced William Wordsworth, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, and Percy Bysshe Shelley.

Although regarded as a pioneer of the Romantic movement, following his death he became a great source of inspiration to the founders of both liberalism and socialism, and a cultural icon in Scotland and among the Scottish diaspora around the world. Celebration of his life and work became almost a national charismatic cult during the 19th and 20th centuries, and his influence has long been strong on Scottish literature. In 2009 he was chosen as the greatest Scot by the Scottish public in a vote run by Scottish television channel STV - the runner up being William Wallace.

As well as making original compositions, Burns also collected many hundreds of folk songs from across Scotland, often revising or adapting them. His poem (and song) "Auld Lang Syne" is often sung at Hogmanay (the last day of the year), and "Scots Wha Hae" served for a long time as an unofficial national anthem of the country. Other poems and songs of Burns that remain well known across the world today include "A Red, Red Rose", "A Man's a Man for A' That", "To a Louse", "To a Mouse", "The Battle of Sherramuir", "Tam o' Shanter" and "Ae Fond Kiss".

His direct literary influences in the use of Scots in poetry were Allan Ramsay (and Robert Fergusson). Burns's poetry also drew upon a substantial familiarity and knowledge of Classical, Biblical, and English literature, as well as the Scottish Makar (court poet) tradition.

The major inspirations for Burns work, like a lot of male poets, appear to be women, wine and song, although Burn's also used his art to promote Republicanism (he was much affected by the French revolution), Radicalism,

Scottish patriotism, anticlericalism (Burns was unpopular with the established church because of his casual love affairs and dissolute lifestyle) and class inequalities. His work also comments on gender roles, poverty, sexuality, Scottish cultural identity and the beneficial aspects of socialising!

Burns's views on these themes in many ways parallel those of William Blake, but it is believed that, although contemporaries they were completely unaware of each other. Burns's works are less overtly mystical.

Burns wrote his first poem "o once I loved a bonnie lass" aged 15, to Nelly Kilpatrick whilst the pair laboured together as farm hands. His next two poems "now westling winds" and "I dreamed I lay" were inspired by Peggy Thompson who he met whilst completing his education the following year.

A Red, Red Rose Robert Burns

*O my Luve is like a red, red rose
That's newly sprung in June;
O my Luve is like the melody
That's sweetly played in tune.*

*So fair art thou, my bonnie lass,
So deep in luve am I;
And I will luve thee still, my dear,
Till a' the seas gang dry.*

*Till a' the seas gang dry, my dear,
And the rocks melt wi' the sun;
I will love thee still, my dear,
While the sands o' life shall run.*

*And fare thee weel, my only luve!
And fare thee weel awhile!
And I will come again, my luve,
Though it were ten thousand mile.*

His earliest letters date from 1779 and are correspondence with Alison Begbie for whom he wrote 4 poems and apparently wished to marry - she rejected his offer.

Burns died on 21st July 1796 in Dumfries aged 37 - on the same day his son Maxwell was born.

Although at the time Burns death was attributed by many to his dissolute lifestyle, in fact he had a long-standing rheumatic heart condition and his death was caused by bacterial endocarditis exacerbated by a streptococcal infection following a dental extraction in winter of 1795, it was no doubt also contributed to by the three months of famine Scotland experienced which culminated in the Dumfries Food Riots of March 1796.

Born in Poverty, living in poverty and killed by poverty yet producing such a rich literary heritage, Robert Burn's was in many ways a true working class hero!



Indonesia has the world's fourth largest population, after China, India, and the USA. Indonesia currently has a population of over 260 million people.

The first President, Sukarno, had spent ten years in Dutch prisons for advocating Independence. The Japanese released Sukarno and supported his pro Independence stance. The Netherlands recognised Indonesia's independence in 1949.

In 1957 Sukarno abolished parliamentary democracy and brought in "Guided Democracy". Sukarno successfully ended the instability and rebellions which were threatening the survival of the diverse and fractious country.

The early 1960s saw Sukarno veering Indonesia to the left providing support and protection to the Indonesian Communist Party (PKI) at the expense of the military and Islamists. He also embarked on a series of aggressive foreign policies under the rubric of anti-imperialism with aid from the Soviet Union and China.

General Suharto seized power in 1967. The army subsequently led an anti Communist purge in which over half a million people were killed. Many of them were assumed to be Communists because of their Chinese ethnicity.

As America's "strong man" American support for Suharto's presidency was strong throughout the 1970s and 1980s. From humble origins Suharto's family became one of the richest families in the world. According to Transparency International Suharto was the

most corrupt leader in modern history, having embezzled an alleged \$15-35 billion during his rule. Improved living standards, increased industrialisation, and an authoritarian state kept the lid on growing discontent.

By the 1990s Suharto's authoritarianism and widespread corruption were a source of discontent. In 1998 a severe financial crisis and widespread unrest led to Suharto's departure.

The United States State Department Human Rights Report for 2015 reports:

"Today Indonesia is a multiparty democracy. Domestic and international observers judged the 2014 legislative and presidential elections free and fair. Civilian authorities generally maintained effective control over security forces."

"Despite high-profile arrests and convictions, widespread corruption remained a problem, and some elements within the gov-

ernment, judiciary, and security forces obstructed corruption investigations and persecuted their accusers. The government failed to conduct transparent, public investigations into some allegations of unjustified killings, torture, and abuse by security forces. Elements within the government applied treason, blasphemy, defamation, and decency laws to limit freedom of expression and assembly."

"Police inaction, abuse of prisoners and detainees, harsh prison conditions, insufficient protections for religious and social minorities, trafficking in persons, child labor, and failure to enforce labor standards and worker rights continued as problems."

"On some occasions the government punished officials who committed abuses, but sentencing often was not commensurate with the severity of offenses, as was true in other types of crimes."

"During the year human rights

groups and the media reported that both military (TNI) and police personnel committed unjustified killings. Multiple reports from nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) and the media accused police and military personnel of using excessive force resulting in death during arrests, investigations, crowd control situations, and other operations. In these cases and other cases of alleged misconduct, the police and the military frequently did not disclose the findings of internal investigations to the public, or even confirm whether such investigations had taken place. Official statements related to these allegations sometimes contradicted witness accounts, making confirmation of the facts difficult. NGOs and the media reported that police tortured suspects during detention and interrogation, including torture that resulted in death."

"There were reports of killings by agents of private companies, sometimes with the complicity of government forces. For instance, NGOs and the media reported that on February 27, a security guard "Rapid Reaction Unit" (URC) working for Asia Pulp and Paper (APP) abducted and killed Indra Pelani, a local farmer and land rights activist in Jambi Province. After a confrontation with security guards at a company-run checkpoint, Pelani was found beaten to death, with his hands tied, mouth gagged, large bruises on his body, and a puncture wound on his neck. NGOs claimed that the URC killed Pelani because of his work investigating the intimidation of local farmers involved in

a land dispute with APP contractors. As of August the Jambi police had arrested seven members of the URC, and police internal affairs was investigating a former police officer involved in the case."

"In April 2014 officers from the Teenager, Children, and Women Sub-Directorate of the Jakarta Police General Crimes CID Unit arrested five contract custodial staff from Jakarta International School in connection with allegations of abuse made by a student at the school. The victims reported that during their interrogations, police officers covered their eyes with duct tape, beat them with fists and metal chairs, whipped them with a fire hose, applied spicy ointment to their genitals, burned them with cigarettes, and shocked them with electricity. One suspect died during questioning. The officers alleged he committed suicide by drinking floor cleaner while in detention in a supply closet. The four remaining suspects later retracted their confessions, but judges nevertheless allowed their confessions as evidence during their trial. Judges found all four, along with another female suspect, guilty and sentenced them to 10 years in prison. Investigations by NGOs and media, as well as expert testimony presented at trial, found no evidence that child abuse had taken place, and the Supreme Court overturned the conviction of two teachers at the school, citing a lack of evidence that abuse had occurred. The Supreme Court rejected the cleaners' appeal in August."



WHO ARE ASIAN DUB FOUNDATION?



By Chris Bainbridge, March 2017.

Asian Dub Foundation are an electronica/hip-hop/dance music group specialising in a broad mix of musical styles. The music offers up an infectious combination of rapcore, ragga, dancehall and dub, amongst others. The instrumentation reflects varied idioms and influences too, from traditional to modern - with powerful, often up-tempo Indo-dub bass and drum lines, overlaid with ambient sounds and sitar-influenced rock guitar. The vocals and lyrics are dominated by strong urban and political themes, using the insistent rhythms and irresistible dance melodies and hooks to convey powerful and thought-provoking messages.

The group started back in 1993 in Hackney, North East London, originally developing from a community education project being run by Aniruddha Das (aka Dr Das, on bass



and programming), with John Pandit (Pandit G, on decks), and Deeder Zaman. Steve Chandra Savale (Chandrasonic - guitar and programming) joined in 1994, followed by Sanjay Tailor (Sun-J - programmer and DJ). This initial line-up released the much-admired Rebel Warrior single, with the first album Facts And Fictions following later the same year. Largely ignored at the time in Britain, possibly due to the commercial and media predominance of the Brit-

pop genre, the band developed their expertise in Europe, building a large following in France in particular.

Rebel Warrior

Ami bidrohi! (The Rebel)

I will only rest

when the cries of the oppressed

No longer reach the sky

When the sword of the oppressor

No longer rings in battle

Hear my war-cry!

Asian Dub Foundation's first single release Rebel Warrior was based on a translation of a poem written in the 1920s by Bengali writer and freedom-fighter Kazi Nazrul. Nazrul went on to become a leading figure in the struggle for independence from the British Empire (eventually being imprisoned for his activities and beliefs), and an important advocate for unity between Muslims and Hindus. This piece of music set the pattern for one of the most important characteristics of ADF's work - that of bringing a message of political consciousness and an awareness of history to new audiences, in particular young people living in predominantly Western settings.

By the late 1990s, the band's profile had risen considerably, playing to huge audiences in Europe, and touring in Britain and elsewhere with Primal Scream. The band has been active throughout its 24 year history - which pre-

cludes analysis of their extensive discography and occasional changes in personnel within the context of this one article - but suffice to say they continue to exert a powerful influence to this day.

Among the band's many career highlights are: a nomination for a Mercury Prize in 1998 for the Rafi's Revenge album; a prestigious appearance at the Glastonbury Festival in 2000; an acclaimed live performance of a re-scoring of the film "La Haine" in 2001 - this so impressed David Bowie that he arranged for ADF to repeat the performance at his own South Bank festival the following year.

Also in 2002 Pandit G was awarded the MBE but he turned it down, saying he had "Never supported the honours system...if you want to acknowledge projects like Community Music...then fund them!"

The 2003 LP "Enemy Of The Enemy" became their best-seller and featured the single "Fortress Europe" (including memorable lines such as "Asylum is a right", "People get ready it's time to wake up", and "Keep banging on the doors of Fortress Europe!"); together with a collaborative piece with Sinead O'Connor "1000 Mirrors", tackling domestic abuse. In recent times there has been an interesting collaboration with Chuck-D, lead rapper of U.S. band Public Enemy. In 2015 ADF was joined by Brain Fairbairn, former drummer with

The Prodigy.

Raising awareness has been a constant theme throughout the band's career, and is one of the reasons they remain such an important voice in music. I will conclude by harking back briefly to their 1998 single "Naxalite", which is a reference to the Naxalite grassroots resistance movement in mainly rural India, active from the late 1960s. This movement arose from widespread dissatisfaction among peasant communities at the Indian government's failure to carry through promised land reforms, which would have given more rights to tribal groups and the poorest of landless workers. The movement has often been influenced by Maoist theories and has often involved armed struggle - in the form of assassinations, bombings and sabotage - and has ensued in much bloody violence from both sides.

I feel fairly safe to say many people outside India itself may never even have heard of Naxalites, yet the struggle has been a huge feature in recent decades.

The enduring message from Asian Dub Foundation is that you can dance and sing and have a good time AND raise your knowledge, become part of the process of enlightenment and resistance. I hope this is a message that readers of this paper in particular can wholeheartedly get on board with. If you haven't already, check them out!

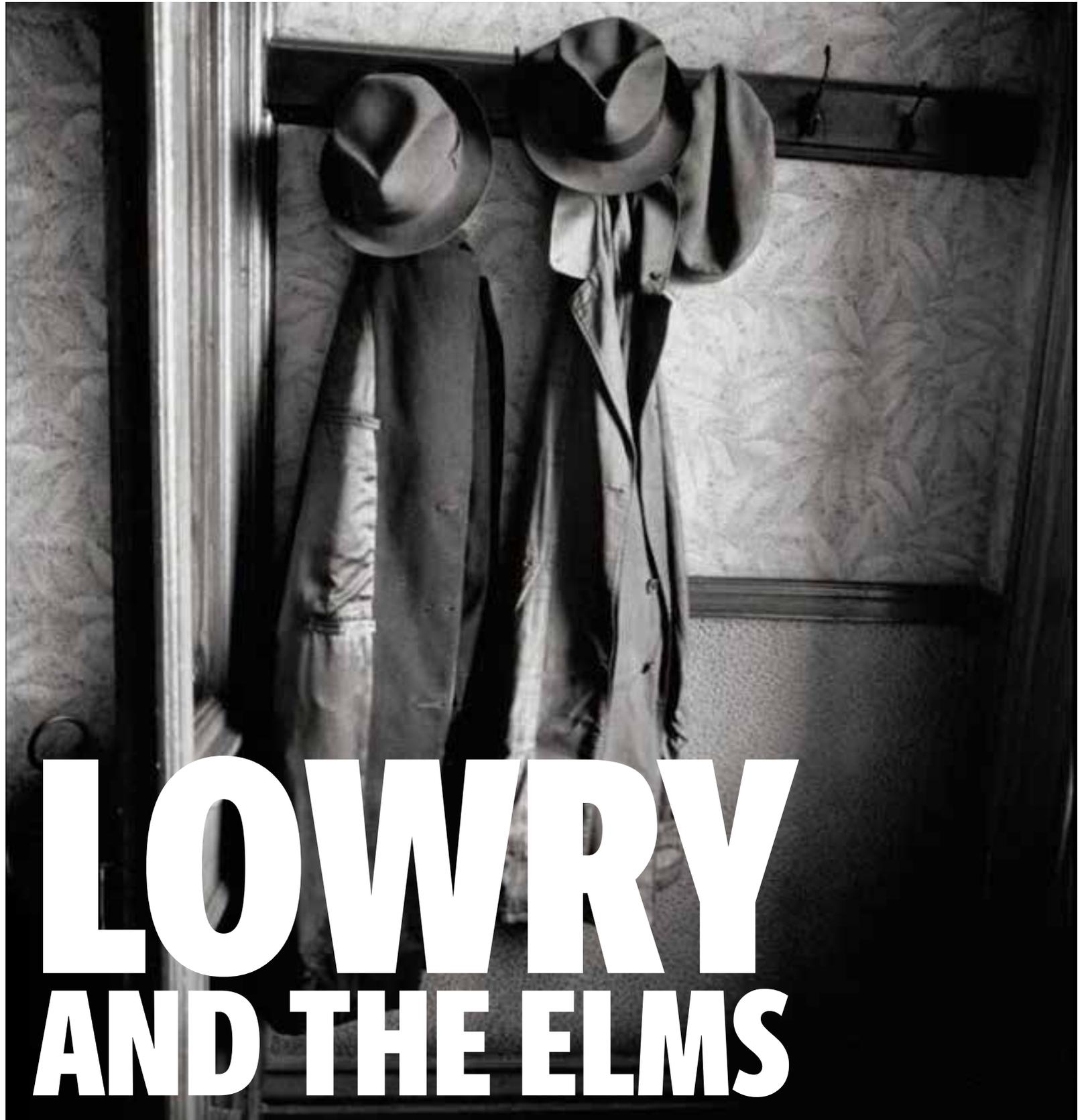


By Anthony Cosgrove

Laurence Stephen Lowry died aged 88 on the 23rd February 1976 at Woods Hospital in Glossop. The following morning, under instruction of the executors of the will, two removal vans arrived at his home, The Elms, in Mottram in Longdendale, Tameside. Overnight there had been a police presence at the property and by the morning the word had spread and local people were in the street gossiping and taking photos. Lowry was a famous artist and also known for living alone. The contents of the house would be worth a vast amount of money, indeed, the dealer, Andras Kalman said there could anything up to £500,000 worth of paintings scattered around inside. There would be no time to waste in making sure these items were removed for safety, then stored in a branch of the National Westminster Bank. A bank official, who helped to supervise the operation, said that they had to work fast and had called in a firm of valuers to record everything in the house. At that point the items were just being listed and no attempt was being made to value them specifically. "Our main concern is to get them out of the house before it is burgled" he said. "It is a gold mine: a sitting duck. We are placing the items where they can't be stolen".

Denis Thorpe was a photographer for The Guardian newspaper and had met Lowry on several occasions. On that very morning, the 24th February 1976, Denis, who had heard the news of Lowry's death, decided to pass by The Elms and pay his respects. He saw the vans and the men removing items from the property, the people stood around and other making lists. He quickly assessed the situation and noted that nobody seemed to be documenting the scene. "You're actually dismantling history", he told the officials soon after introducing himself. "Do you think you could stop and let me come in before you go any further?" Mercifully they agreed.

Denis entered The Elms and headed into the living room. He took out his camera and started to



LOWRY AND THE ELMS

capture the scene before him. Lowry's Lytham Yachts painting was still in the room, the portraits of his parents, of Ann, a Jacob Epstein bust and his mother's old clocks. There were gaps on the walls where

the removal men had already taken paintings away, the frame marks left behind made it obvious to see where they had been. Denis felt a great sense of urgency to take as many photographs as possible. His heart was pounding as he felt he could be told to stop at any moment and let the removal work continue.

Denis left the living room and stood in the hall beneath the stairs. His photographs show yet more clocks and the light that seemed to flood the space from above. One of Lowry's trilbies sat perched on the stair post.

Next he entered Lowry's studio, the workroom as it was known, where he took shots of the piles and piles of paintings dotted around. On the large easel were two small single figure paintings positioned side-by-side. His last works it seemed. Above the fireplace hung several pictures, including one by the Wigan artist, James Lawrence Isherwood; Lowry had shown sup-

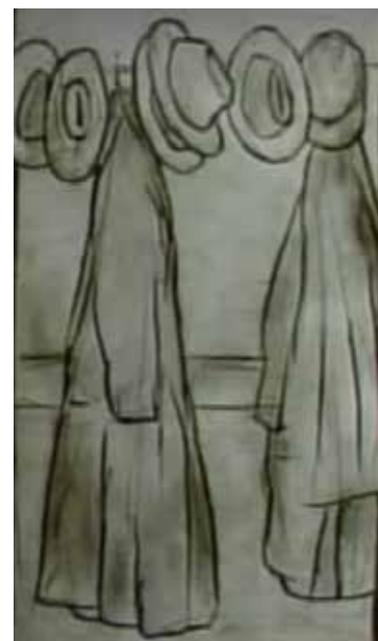
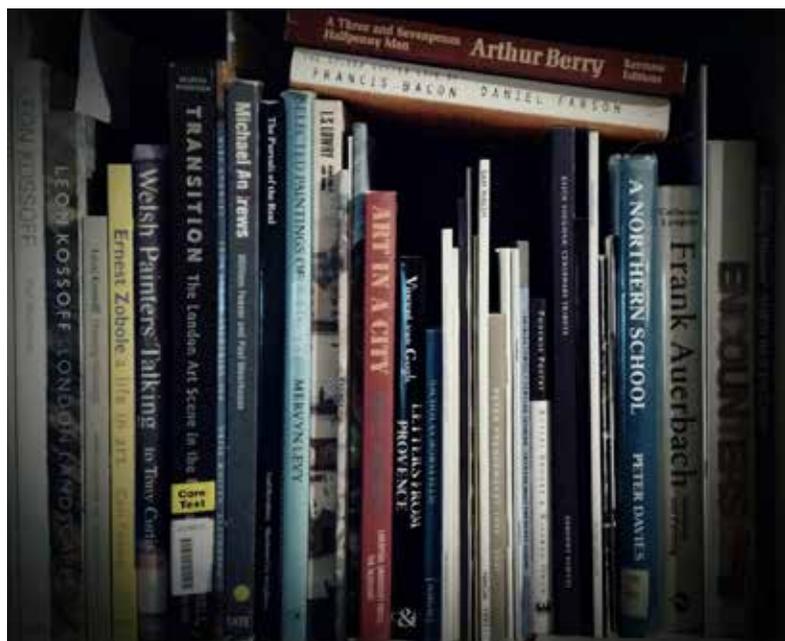
port to many northern artists in his life. On the mantelpiece sat another Jacob Epstein head sculpture as well as a painting of Ann.

Denis headed up the stairs and into Lowry's bedroom. It was here

that he got his biggest surprise. As he turned and looked up he saw that Lowry's Rossetti women drawings were hung around the bed. Mrs William Morris - c1870, Aspecta Medusa - 1867 and Alexa Wilding - 1866, all positioned on the wall behind the headboard. Another Rossetti, Reverie - 1868, the model for which was also William Morris's wife, Jane, was located next to the door. Lowry had deeply admired the work of the Pre-Raphaelites and was a huge fan of Rossetti as well as Ford Madox Brown.

Before leaving the house, Denis photographed Lowry's old macs and trilbies and a cloth cap that all hung in the small vestibule by the front door. He did not realise at the time that Lowry had made a small drawing of that exact same little scene in 1965.

These were the last photographs taken inside Lowry's house before the removal men headed back inside to complete their work.



WORD FROM THE PELOTON



By Tom Douglas

Pro cycling from a punter's perspective

Tour of Oman is one of three stage race events taking place this week, and is the first event of the season for last year's Tour runner up, Romain Bardet. Not many book-makers opened up yet, but he's going to be around 13/8 to take the outright win, and has made the podium here before. I expect Bardet to be giving it a good go again, and, although this won't be a priority for the young Frenchman, every rider likes to get that first win behind them. The event is usually settled on the stage to Green Mountain, and that's a proper climbing test which

has some top names among previous winners here. If the big guns are ready enough to go hard up this climb then only a climber can win, although historically there have been non climbers well within a minute of the stage winner. Also making his seasonal debut here is Astana's Fabio Aru, who will be keen to test his own form after a less than satisfactory 2016 season. At his best Aru would take all the beating, and he's sure to be among the market leaders. However, Aru is not usually seen at his best this early in the year, and perhaps Astana will look elsewhere for the win. Dimension Data's Merhawi Kudus was the only rider capable of following Nairo Quintana, when he attacked on the queen stage in "Va-

lenciana" just over a week ago, and he's going to be around 8/1. He's never shown form which matches the best of these, but at this early stage of the season a fitness edge for a rider in form can be a massive advantage, and I'd be surprised if he isn't to the fore on the climb. Katusha are here with Kristoff looking to win any sprint, and likewise Quick Step are here with Tom Boonen, already in sparkling form, and like Kristoff he's honing his skills for the spring classics campaign. Having looked at the race, and the various stages, some quite interesting in their own right, I agree with the layers that Bardet is a worthy favourite and will take all the beating. On all known form Aru is the only rider of a similar level here in this

contest, but it is the first outing of the year for these two young team leaders, and that will have some effect when it gets hard, and it will. Kudus, at around 10/1, might represent a realistic challenger, in that he is the climber proven to be in good form, but I think he ought to be at double those odds as a rider who doesn't have wins at this level. BMC's Ben Hermans was an improved climber last year, and is expected to advance again, but he's not expected to reach the level of the two favourites, so someone will need to underperform for him to stay close. He's a rider capable of picking up a difficult stage, and bonus seconds, but I think a lower podium spot is the best he can hope for. The climb up Green Mountain

is steep, and it's long enough to make a difference. If any of the real climbers, and there are only a few here, are in good enough form then the others will be left trailing. One such rider is Argentinian Daniel Diaz, on offer in places at 100/1, and as a former winner of Tour San Luis, and a multiple mountain stage winner in that same early season event, he's my idea of a value Each Way pick against the ring rusty young stars. Lachlan Morton might well be capable of doing better than his 150/1 odds suggest too, but Diaz is the rider with the form in the book, and although I'd be with Bardet if the mortgage depended upon it, it's the Argentinian I like at those odds.

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League One

By Stanley Acrimonious

This has to be the most irrelevant league in the world; all you can get is admission to the Championship, a league packed with clubs who were hardly ever anyone back in the day, or relegation to the most exciting league, where if you don't play properly you're OUT!!!

Port Vale 2 Shrewsbury 1

Vale pulled themselves to within two points of the Shrews; who's going down, then?

Jiggered if I care.

Bolton Wanderers 2 Northampton Town 1

Bolton, leapfrogging Fleetwood Town into the second automatic promotion place, are a team wearing the jerseys of more famous players of the past, like a little boy playing tennis but wearing a Fred Perry top.

Bristol Rovers 2 Chesterfield 1

Onward Bristol Rovers. They say nobody outside Bristol likes the Rovers; well I do.

Bradford City 2 Swindon Town 1

Bradford, trying to stay in the four play-off places to nowhere, met Swindon, trying to get out of the bottom four places to League Two, and it was goalless until fifteen minutes from the end. Some games come alive in the last little bit, and Swindon took the lead, only for Wyke to equalise and nab the winner very late on.

Games like this I think they should make them run round outside the stadium for an hour and a half till they're tired, then let them play fifteen minutes in front of a crowd paying a fifth the price to watch.

Fleetwood Town 0 AFC Wimbledon 0

In this case I'd make them run for two hours and just take part in a penalty shoot-out. Are these the 'real' Wimbledon or the made up ones? Not sure I care.

Millwall 0 Bury 0

Read the comments above. I wouldn't even let them do the penalty shoot-out. They could toss a coin and we'd all stay at home, or go down the pub and play darts.

Milton Keynes Dons 1 Coventry 0

Ah, the team that used to be Wimbledon versus the team that used to be Coventry. Past FA Cup winners, past top-flight teams; one goal after 51 minutes from "Georgia" O'Keefe.

Oxford United 2 Scunthorpe United 1

There's only one United, sing fans of the *Black Sox* who went to the Riverside today to make Middlesbrough cry. Without Ibrahimović or Pogba they discovered that others could score goals.

Sorry, I was supposed to be telling you about two different teams, now who were they?

Scunthorpe took the lead, and excitingly, Oxford had to wait until the second half to equalise and snatch a stoppage time winner. Games down in this league can be good

to watch; this one wasn't.

Peterborough 1 Oldham 1

I'm never ever going to refer to the home side as 'Posh' as they have nothing whatsoever to do with Mrs David Beckham, wife of an underwear model whose photo once suggested he was the only man with genitals weighing more than her. Oldham scored first but unluckily the scabby home side equalised second half.

Rochdale 4 Gillingham 1

Rochdale 4, Gillingham 1, and they had a player sent off. Hooray! A good match at last, and see who it was, yes! Rochdale!

Sheffield United 2 Charlton Athletic 1

From the names of the teams, you'd expect one play together rather well and the others run about a bit. The result suggests teamwork beats effort.

Southend United 3 Walsall 2

All the shrimps in one net, two goals for Walsall first half and three exciting ones for Southend, including an 84th minute winner in the second. At last a game to watch and go hoarse!

THE PARTY'S OVER

Arsenal, Arse, Arsene

"To misquote an old song "the party's over, it's time to call it a day, they've burst your title balloon and taken the moon away."

After Saturday's 3-1 defeat against West Bromwich Albion - when there were protests against him - Wenger revealed he has made a decision about his future after talks with the Arsenal board and would make it public "very soon" Even a fair minded Spurs fan (if that's not an oxymoron) must feel a twinge of sadness for the dying giant of North London. An ageing and once great predator now floundering as the vultures circle. How did it go so wrong for Wenger, and how did Alec Ferguson get it so right?

Wenger was appointed in 1996, it seems to be, and is to some, a life time ago now. He inherited the famous George Graham back line of Keown, Bold, Adams, Dixon and Wiinterburn. This became the nucleus of his first title winning team. How times have changed with Arsenal fans now clubbing together to find ways of publicly humiliating him.

Wenger masterminded the move from the "marbled halls" of Highbury

to a brand new stadium. He has led Arsenal to a top four finish in every season of his reign. Yet, whatever happens now, the tenure of Wenger remains tarnished by the new set of posh "footy" fans. These internet age keyboard warriors who fall over their own laptops in their eagerness to spread their troll like vitriol. The rich kids who no less about football than they do about designer beer give their unwanted and ill informed opinions. They are aided by Murdoch minions from the murderous Sun. If Wenger remains silent he is blamed for being aloof. If Wenger comments then they say he is arrogant. Arsenal have no more a God given right to win things than the Tory party have to rule over us. Think about that when your newly acquired team are post Wenger and in mid table? Think about that when you suddenly start supporting Chelsea?

Under Wenger Arsenal have won the following: FA Premier League: 1997-98, 2001-02, 2003-04

FA Cup (6): 1997-98, 2001-02,

2002-03, 2004-05, 2013-14, 2014-15

FA Community Shield (6): 1998, 1999, 2002, 2004, 2014, 2015.

