

## John Stoa's latest exhibition

I was delighted to be invited to the Lady in Red art exhibition at John Stoa's studio (17a Menzieshill Road in the West End) and Janet and I popped in yesterday.

There are superb paintings on the "Lady in Red" theme as well as John's Scottish landscape paintings as well as some still life studies.

The exhibition finishes today but is open from 11am until 5pm, so it is not too late to make a visit. Here's examples of the excellent exhibition :





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## Tests, the curriculum and learning

Yesterday I got involved in an important conversation on a doorstep about education.

I was told by a teacher that she felt strongly the present stretching curriculum backed up by regular testing was getting in the way of encouraging a love of learning in primary school children. She felt there was now too much emphasis on knowing facts and science, to the exclusion of wider education.

It is a difficult issue. I think you can make a case that too much emphasis on requiring mental recall of a fixed body of knowledge with testing to try to ensure pupils have memorised it can put some pupils off. It may inculcate an attitude of learning for the test and not bothering about anything that is not needed to pass the test. On the other hand if you go too far the other way and do not insist on mastery of the basics of number and words children can arrive at Secondary school ill equipped to carry out the more complex tasks there.

I remember at my own primary there was a strong emphasis on learning tables, spelling well, writing neatly, and being able to respond quickly to mental arithmetic challenges. There was a lot of rote learning and endless classroom tests to see if you had put in the work to memorise what was needed. The more creative work took place through projects, where you were encouraged to use your own initiative and time at home to flesh out a folder on the appointed topic. This mixture worked for some of us well. Today we now have the welcome

development of smaller classes which should mean we can do better.

I would be interested in your thoughts on what is the right balance and the best approach. I agreed with the teacher that it is best if the system used does develop in a child a wish to know more, and a spirit of enquiry which will lead them to learn more through their own initiatives. If education is just a process of learning by rote and repeating for a test it will miss some of the most important features of personal development, but in the schools I have visited there is usually a balance in these matters which the national curriculum does not prevent. What are your thoughts.

Promoted by Fraser Mc Farland on behalf of John Redwood, both at 30 Rose Street Wokingham RG40 1XU

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## [Казнь Сергея Острикова в Беларуси](#)

Another execution has taken place in Belarus: that of Siarhei Vostrykau. The European Union again reaffirms its strong opposition to capital punishment in all circumstances.

The continued application of the death penalty goes counter to Belarus' stated willingness to engage with the international community, including the European Union, on the matter and to consider the introduction of a moratorium on the use of the death penalty.

The European Union urges Belarus, the only country in Europe still applying capital punishment, to commute the remaining death sentences and to introduce without delay a moratorium on the death penalty as a first step towards its abolition.

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## [Green Party promises "walking and cycling revolution"](#)



6 May 2017

The Green Party has pledged to invest £2bn in renovating and creating safe cycling and walking routes. The funding will be drawn from a cancellation of the Government's new roads programme which was expected to cost £1.2bn and from environmental taxes which will be used to fight climate

change.

The party argues that Government's walking and cycling investment strategy [1] does not go far enough. The Greens would make a proper commitment to enabling walking and cycling, while redesigning dangerous junctions and roundabouts.

The party's announcement, its second major announcement on environmental legislation, comes after a plan for cleaning up Britain's air [2] was launched yesterday (May 5).

Amelia Womack, Green Party deputy leader, announced the policy at an event in Totnes today, where she also launched the South Devon Green Party's election campaign.

Womack said:

"While the Government dithers around with half measures and evasion, the Green Party is promising to invest in the solutions we know will clean up our air. We want a walking and cycling revolution to replace the diesel fuelled congestion that's choking Britain.

"The air quality crisis in the UK is now a public health emergency, costing the NHS billions of pounds. But the Green Party has clear policy solutions which will transform our transport system to take us away from diesel, make polluting companies pay, and rapidly roll out renewables.

"It's a time to be bold and hopeful – yesterday in the local elections we saw the absolute collapse of UKIP while the Green Party won seats up and down the country. People are ready for something new and only the Greens will build the confident and caring country we need to be."

The party's general election candidates are Kathryn Driscoll, Andy Williamson, Win Scutt and Jacqi Hodgson, who was also elected as a councillor in yesterday's local elections.

#### **Notes:**

1. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/cycling-and-walking-investment-strategy>
2. <https://www.greenparty.org.uk/news/2017/05/05/greens-release-air-pollution-challenge-as-government-unveils-plan/>

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# Jeremy Corbyn speech

**Jeremy Corbyn, Leader of the Labour Party**, speaking at a rally in Leicester today, said:

**\*\*\*Check against delivery\*\*\***

There's no doubt that Thursday's local election results were disappointing for our party. We had welcome victories in Manchester, Liverpool, Wales, Doncaster and elsewhere but too many fantastic councillors, who work tirelessly for their communities, lost their seats.

We face a huge challenge in the next five weeks.

But this General Election campaign is also a great opportunity. A chance to break free, to create a society in which people are no longer held back by a system that is rigged for the rich. A chance to rebuild Britain for the many not the few.

There is also a huge danger – that the Tories' fearmongering and spin machine will make some people settle for less than they should. Resign themselves to things the way they are – underestimating just how many more burdens the Tories could impose if their mission to rig the system for the rich isn't halted.

The stakes are high. We know from yesterday's election results that the gap between us and the Tories is not as great as the pundits have been saying.

But we still have many people to convince. We have four weeks to do that. Are we up to the challenge?

Millions are still sceptical and undecided, not sure which way to turn.

And who can blame them.

Andy Burnham – who had a brilliant victory to become the new Mayor of Greater Manchester yesterday – spoke last week of how alienated people are from the political system.

He said we can't just carry on doing what we are doing;

the time has come to do something different.

He's right. Our Westminster system is broken and our economy is rigged. Both are run in the interests of the few.

Things can and must be different.

Labour is under attack because we are standing up to the elites who are determined to hijack Brexit to pay even less tax and take even more of the wealth we all create.

Labour is under attack because we are standing up to the corporate interests plundering our NHS – £13 billion of the NHS budget is already privatised – how much more will be if the Tories get another five years?

That's why Labour is under attack. We're drawing a line. Three decades of privatisation – from energy and rail to health and social care – has made some people very rich but it has not delivered richer lives for the vast majority.

In this election, we will be outlining a plan to transform Britain – an upgraded economy run for the many not the few.

It will mean standing up to powerful vested interests. But we are ready for the challenge.

The Conservatives only stand up when taking orders from their billionaire friends, who hoard our country's wealth for themselves in tax havens.

Theresa May thinks she can win the General Election by claiming she cares about working people.

She talks about building a fair society. Does she think people will forget what the Tories have done to this country, how they've actually treated working people?

This Tory leader sat alongside David Cameron in government for six years.

She was in the cabinet room when they introduced the bedroom tax. So were the Liberal

Democrats as part of Cameron's coalition. What was fair about that?

And what was fair about racking up tuition fees?

Or about taking benefits away from people with disabilities?

Or about closing Sure Start Centres? Or starving schools of cash? Or opening up the NHS to be plundered by profiteers?

And what was fair about giving big business and the richest in society tax giveaways worth tens of billions of pounds – while the rest of us were told to tighten our belts, to accept a big dose of austerity?

The Tories are hoping everyone has short memories.

But if that fails, they have another card they are playing. That this election is about Brexit and who can play at being toughest with Brussels.

But Labour will not allow the Tories to put their party interests ahead of the real national interest. The interests of the British people.

This election isn't about Brexit itself. That issue has been settled. The question now is what sort of Brexit do we want – and what sort of country do we want Britain to be after Brexit?

And who can really be trusted to put working people first?

Labour wants a jobs Brexit, a Brexit that safeguards the future of Britain's vital industries, a Brexit that paves the way to a genuinely fairer society and to an upgraded economy.

Labour's plan to transform Britain will mean:

- investing in infrastructure and new industries,

- rebuilding our NHS and

social care services,

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giving our children and young people a chance to fulfil their potential.

We won't be paying lip-service to working people.

We will introduce a comprehensive programme to strengthen rights at work, make sure new jobs are good jobs, and end the race to the bottom in pay, conditions and job security.

Low pay and insecurity have spread like an epidemic under the Tories.

Labour will invest in skills and jobs, and take action to enforce a floor under employment standards across the board – so that all jobs are decent jobs, so that all workers – the true wealth creators – can play their part in transforming Britain and benefit fully from it.

Transformation means that, instead of a country run for the rich, Britain will be a country in which people are not held back, in which everyone is able to lead a richer life.

And that's why we are fighting to win this election. Fighting to win, not because I yearn for the trappings of Downing Street office but because I want a better Britain

A country for the many not the few.

The local election results yesterday leave us in no doubt about the scale of our challenge.

We know this is no small task – it is a challenge on a historic scale. But we, the whole Labour movement and the British people, can't afford not to seize our moment.

We have five weeks to win the General Election so we can fundamentally transform Britain for the many not the few.

When we win, we form the NHS.

When we win, we introduce the Equal Pay Act.

When we win we establish a National Minimum Wage – one of my proudest days in politics.

When we win, the British people win. The nurse, the teacher, the small trader, the carer, the builder, the office worker win.

Labour is offering a real choice, a real alternative to the rigged system that is holding us back and the Conservatives who are running our country down in every way.

An alternative for the many not the few.

And we need to be that real alternative because too many people in our country worry that voting won't change anything, that all politicians are the same.

We are not all the same but people are frustrated that the system remains rigged for the few, that the lives of the many don't seem to be getting better.

They vote, nothing changes.

The economy is still rigged in favour of the rich and powerful.

We have to show that we are different, that we will transform Britain. That we are for the many not the few.

When Labour wins there will be a reckoning for those who thought they could get away with asset stripping our industry, crashing our economy through their greed and ripping off workers and consumers.

When did the Conservatives – Osborne, Cameron, May, Johnson – ever stand up to their financial backers and demand our money back?

Never and they never will.

Instead,  
they make our nurses, our carers, our soldiers, our disabled, our young  
people  
trying to get a home of their own, our elderly looking for dignity in  
retirement and those working hard to get on, foot the bill instead.

It makes  
me angry. It makes me really angry. And I know it makes the people of Britain  
angry too.

So today,  
I say to tax cheats, the rip off bosses, the greedy bankers.

Enough is enough.

The people of Britain are taking  
our money back.

We have  
always stood up for the many not the few.

And I will always stand up for our  
beliefs.

That can be lonely, I know.

I  
campaigned against privatisation, tax cuts for the rich, letting the banks  
become all powerful and the Iraq war when many politicians were pushing them  
through or not standing up against them.

We stood  
up for workers' pay, better public services, a fairer society, a more equal  
economy and for peace and justice.

Standing  
up for your beliefs in any circumstances, takes great determination. It can  
be  
frustrating. It takes its toll. It is far easier to compromise your beliefs  
and  
go along for the ride.

But  
strength is holding on to what you believe in. Standing up for the many  
against  
the few means a struggle against the odds.

Looking  
out for the few is easy; winning for the many is hard.

I have a  
message for Theresa May. If you feel the need to go on about what a great  
leader you are, then show it by debating with me in this election campaign.

We  
are for the many, you're for the few.

But this is about so much more  
than Theresa May and me.

This is a  
once in a lifetime opportunity for you, the people, to decide what sort of  
country you want to live in.

We are  
full of so much potential, which is being stifled and held back in favour of  
the few.

Together,  
we can transform Britain.

And we  
must transform Britain because now it is rigged for the few.

In this  
election, Labour is standing for decent jobs, investment for the future,  
shared  
wealth creation, security at work, affordable homes for all, a fully funded  
NHS  
and schools, training and skills, an end to rip-off privatisation, fair  
taxation and a fairer, more equal country.

As we set  
out our detailed plans for Britain, the scale of the change we are offering  
will become clear.

So let's  
turn our country around. Let's come together to transform Britain. Together,  
we  
can win for the many not the few.

Make sure  
you are registered to vote.

Please  
help others get registered to vote.

Make sure  
you use your vote.

Talk to  
your friends, family, neighbours and co-workers about this General Election.

It is so  
important.

This

election could be a great and proud moment in our national story.

Don't  
wake on up on 9 June to see celebrations from the tax cheats, the press  
barons,  
the greedy bankers, Philip Green, the Southern Rail directors and crooked  
bankers  
that take our wealth, who have got away with it because the party they own,  
the  
Conservative Party, has won.

We have  
five weeks to ruin their party. We have five weeks to have a chance to take  
our  
money back. We have five weeks to win so we can transform Britain for the  
many  
not the few.

We must  
seize it. Thank you.