

News story: Animal medicines seizure: R & J Smith, Valley Veterinary Centre

R & J Smith, Valley Veterinary Centre, Galston, Ayrshire. The following products were seized as they are not authorised in the UK:

This is an offence under Regulation 26 (Possession of an unauthorised veterinary medicinal product) of the Veterinary Medicines Regulations 2013.

Speech: High Commissioner's speech at the 2017 Queen's Baton Relay opening event, Lusaka

We are today celebrating the arrival of the Queen's Baton to Zambia. The 2018 Queen's Baton Relay was launched on 13 March at Buckingham Palace by Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II as part of Commonwealth Day celebrations. This happy event marked the start of its 388-day journey through all Commonwealth countries and territories before it ends its journey in Australia for the Gold Coast 2018 Commonwealth Games next year.

The baton last came to Zambia in 2014, when the then British High Commission, James Thornton, joined its journey through this country. I am pleased to be part of today's event. The Queen's Baton is a powerful symbol of the unity and diversity of the 52 Commonwealth nations. It carries a special message from the Head of the Commonwealth, Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II. The message will be read out on completion of the baton's epic journey at the Commonwealth games in Australia's Gold Coast in April, 2018. No one knows what the message says until then.

Since the beginning of the Commonwealth Games back in 1930, I understand that Zambia has participated in all the games from 1974, and won some medals. Zambia should be proud of having produced medal winners, such as the late Lotti Mwale, who won the first gold medal in 1974 in Christchurch, New Zealand.

I have enjoyed watching previous Commonwealth Games and the athletes in action. What I find striking is that the Commonwealth Games bring together able-bodied and Paralympic sport. They are a true reflection of the Commonwealth's values of inclusiveness and diversity. One of the outcomes of London 2012 Olympics was how it not only brought the nation together, but how it inspired and changed attitudes on diversity, inclusion and disability.

Sport has a unique power to promote teamwork, fairness, respect and a sense of achievement, apart from the well intended rivalry and competition. Sport can be a unifying force; it is apt that this year's Commonwealth theme is of a Peace-Building Commonwealth. I hope this relay will help encourage Zambians to feel a sense of togetherness as the baton passes through the streets of Lusaka, sharing a taste of the excitement and opportunities of the Gold Coast 2018 Commonwealth Games.

I believe the Gold Coast Games 2018 will be equally as successful as Glasgow 2014. I look forward to watching the sporting rivalry, particularly between the UK and Zambia, but let the best team win, and may Zambia bring back many medals.

Thank you

Speech: High Commissioner's speech at the Queen's Birthday Party, Brunei 2017

Yang Berhormat Dato Seri Setia Awang Haji Bahrin bin Abdullah, Minister of Development at the Prime Minister's Office and Yang Mulia Pengiran Datin Hajah Noorsiah binte Pengiran Hamdan

Pengiran Pengiran, Pehin Pehin, Dato Dato , Datin Datin: Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen.

It gives me great pleasure to welcome you all to the United Kingdom's 2017 celebration of Her Majesty The Queen's Birthday.

In February this year, Her Majesty The Queen became the first British Monarch to commemorate a Sapphire Jubilee, after 65 years on the throne. Later this year, His Majesty The Sultan and Yang Di Pertuan will commemorate His Golden Jubilee. Together they are now the two longest reigning sovereigns in the world. In celebrating these signal achievements we warmly acknowledge the lifetime of dedication and service Their Majesties have given to Their respective Peoples.

This evening, in celebrating Her Majesty's 91st Birthday, the theme of our Reception is the Forest and how this links the United Kingdom and Brunei Darussalam, as well as to the wider Commonwealth. Appropriately enough, we are holding this event during Earth Week.

In 2015, at the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in Malta, The Queen's Commonwealth Canopy initiative was launched, to mark The Queen's Service to the Commonwealth. The aim is to involve all 52 countries of the

Commonwealth and to help protect one of the world's most important natural habitats – forests.

A selection of photographs of Brunei's dedications to the QCC

We are delighted that Brunei has agreed to commit three separate forest reserves to the Queen's Commonwealth Canopy:

- Berakas Forest Recreation Park, Berakas Forest Reserve;
- Ulu Temburong National Park, Batu Apoi Forest Reserve; and
- Pulau Selirong Forest Recreation Park, Pulau Selirong Forest Reserve.

We have on display a series of striking images of flora and fauna taken in these three reserves. I am pleased that two of the photographers – Bud Chapman and Dilshan Mahdi Hussainmiya – are able to be with us this evening.

Brunei's unique rainforest has inspired British artists over the years.

Boyd and Evans painting of Brunei's rainforest from HSBC Brunei

In 1991, Fionnuala Boyd and Les Evans, a husband-and-wife team, were invited, as artists-in-residence at the Royal Geographical Society, to join the Universiti Brunei Darussalam's Brunei Rainforest Expedition. During the expedition, they produced a series of paintings to celebrate the subjective experience of the forest, to accompany the scientific data that was also being collected. They spent two months at the Kuala Belalong Field Studies Centre in Temburong. I am pleased to say that, courtesy of HSBC, we have one of their large canvases on display this evening. Their work can be found in UK Museums such as Tate Britain.

But in recent decades artists have also been keen to see their works displayed in less traditional public spaces. Last December, a painting inspired by Brunei's jungle was posted across King's Cross London Underground Station. The painting was produced by a young British artist, Jake Grewal, based in South London, who won the "Art for the Underground" competition, a project to help young artists promote their work. Jake painted this work following a trip to Brunei. The image shown on the London Underground is here this evening, as well as one of his original canvases loaned to us by Jake's cousin, Julia Morel. I like to think that the vibrant colours in the Underground poster will have lifted the spirits of weary London commuters on a winter's day and perhaps even encouraged some to visit Brunei.

Paintings of Brunei's rainforest by a young British artist, Jake Grewal, based in South London, who won the "Art for the Underground" competition

As well as inspiring British artists, the Brunei Rainforest has been an important area of study for British scientists working alongside Bruneian scientists, over many decades, to research this country's rich biodiversity. We congratulate schools and other local organisations for the work they do in encouraging young people in Brunei to understand and value their pristine forests. We admire Brunei's participation in and commitment to the Heart of Borneo initiative. We will continue to follow with great interest developments in Temburong – often described as the Green Jewel of Brunei –

which offer a wonderful opportunity to showcase Brunei's commitment to sustainable and green development.

Last year, Royal Brunei Armed Forces celebrated its 55th anniversary. The British Armed Forces are proud to have served continuously alongside RBAF for those 55 years. They regularly train and exercise together and conduct defence engagement tasks in the Asia Pacific region. Brunei's forests also serve as an important training location. On display in this room is a large photograph of 12 soldiers from the Household Cavalry – more often associated in people's minds with their plumed helmets and ceremonial uniforms on occasions such as Changing of the Guard – but in the picture they are heavily camouflaged in the Brunei jungle. If you can't spot all 12 you can find the solution on our High Commission Facebook Page. More seriously, the Garrison has a permanent Jungle Training School. Last month, the UK and Brunei jointly hosted a Jungle Training Symposium. That was one of the events highlighted when His Majesty The Sultan graced the Garrison with a visit in March to mark the upcoming departure of the 1st Battalion The Royal Gurkha Rifles as they shortly end their current tour of duty. Pictures from these events will be shown on the screens behind me.

For this evening's Queen's Birthday Party, I want to thank the Empire Hotel and my own staff for their unstinting efforts in organising this evening's programme. My warm thanks also go to our generous sponsors Ben Foods, which supplies excellent British produce to Supa Save, as well as to the individuals and organisations responsible for the visual displays. I would like to thank the two choirs – from Maktab Duli and the Military Wives in Brunei – for singing the two anthems and to the two Gurkha ceremonial pipers. Also my grateful appreciation to the Garrison for their work in creating such an atmospheric display at the entrance to this room.

Finally, my thanks once again to Yang Behormat Dato and to Pengiran Datin for gracing this occasion as our Guests of Honour. Sadly for me, this will be the last time I have the privilege to host the Queen's Birthday Party in Brunei. As for all of us who have the pleasure to spend time in the Abode of Peace my fond memories will certainly include the green, pristine Brunei Darussalam captured in the imagery around us.

Thank you.

“THERE WILL BE NO DEALS WITH THE SNP” – CORBYN

"THERE WILL BE NO DEALS WITH THE SNP" – CORBYN

UK Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn today said there will be 'no deals' between a Labour government and the SNP.

Speaking at a General Election campaign event alongside Scottish Labour leader Kezia Dugdale in Dunfermline, Fife, Mr Corbyn said: "If you want progressive policies that deliver social justice, fairness and equality, then you should vote for the Labour Party and no other party."

He said the SNP has 'failed in Government in all policy areas as they systematically forget the day job and obsess about the constitution'.

The text of Jeremy Corbyn's speech follows in full:

Jeremy Corbyn speech

Scottish Labour General Election campaign event

Monday, April 24, 2017

"Friends it is fantastic to be here having my first campaign rally in Dunfermline, in Fife and alongside Kez and Cara Hilton.

Cara was a brilliant MSP and I know our party is proud of people like her, who have the commitment, talent and energy and with a vision for a better society and a better country.

Friends this election is about the establishment versus the people.

The establishment wants to tell you that everything is OK ... just keep things as they are ... the rich get richer and everyone else getting worse off ...

It is the people all across Britain who built our country up ... and it is they who now deserve their share of the cake.

We must stop our wealth being taken from us ... and handed out to millionaires, tax-dodgers and city executives.

Only a Labour government will end this robbery of the British people... and use our huge wealth to invest in people's lives in every single community across our country.

So friends it's pretty clear that Scots and people across the UK are facing a massive choice in this election:

Do they want to vote for a Tory party trying to negotiate a Brexit deal that will result in a low tax bargain basement economy serving the needs only of the rich and wealthy?

Or do they want a Labour Government committed to negotiating a Brexit that will protect the many gains won for workers and the environment via the EU.

Do people want a Tory Party that has punished people across this country with an unprecedented attack on them and their living standards, their pensions and their public services with their unprecedented austerity driven policy agenda?

The Tories have cut, cut and cut again and in doing so they have made people

poorer and compromised the very public services that civilise us as a society

They have increased poverty and created a heartless, callous welfare system that has created far, far too many Daniel Blakes.

But friends a reminder let us not forget their coalition collaborators: the Lib Dems.

They are as culpable as the Tories, they legitimised their attacks on working people and we should never ever forget their role in an austerity agenda that penalised the people of this country rather than the spivs and speculators who crashed and burned the economy in the first place.

In Scotland I know there is another dimension. So I ask people do they want to vote for the SNP who want to fight for another unwanted and unnecessary independence referendum but who have failed abysmally in the fight against poverty and inequality?

An SNP who have failed in Government in all policy areas as they systematically forget the day job and obsess about the constitution...

...instead of making life better for college students, school pupils, the low paid, the elderly languishing in hospital in the absence of a social care package to allow them out, the sick waiting way beyond the treatment time guarantee.

Or do they want for a Labour Party who will retain Scotland in the UK but in a UK that is a far fairer, a more just and equal version than what the Tories offer.

Scandalously, in Scotland 260,000 children, 40,000 more than last year, are living in poverty, health inequalities stubbornly persist, educational attainment differences are worsening and the numbers of people working but still considered to be living in poverty are at their worse point since devolution.

These statistics are people. They are people whose opportunities to lead contented and fulfilling lives have been reduced as a result of political decisions. Political decisions made by Tories in Westminster and the SNP at Holyrood.

Many Scots rightly expect the Scottish Parliament to protect them from the vicious Tories. It is a disgrace that the SNP have not fought for these people and against poverty and inequality in the same way they have fought for independence ...

The truth is that the Tories and SNP are obsessed with fighting against Brussels and Westminster and winning back political power but neither of them want to take economic power back from multi-nationals and big business.

Neither of them wants to change and transform our economy in a way that ensures no-one and no community is left behind.

Friends let me make it clear the only Progressive Alliance today, just as it always has been, is the Labour and Trade Union movement.

If you want progressive policies that deliver social justice, fairness and equality then you should vote for the Labour Party and no other Party.

Let me be clear: there will be no deals with the SNP or anyone else.

Why vote for a poor imitation that has overseen an increase in child poverty and the biggest increase since devolution of those people classified as poor despite being at work, when you can have the real thing in the progressive Labour Party.

Remember this is not a referendum, it's a General Election and only Labour can form another Government and offer an alternative that will transform the lives of Scots.

Friends this election is not about me, Theresa May or Nicola Sturgeon ... and nor is it about the elites in Westminster or Brussels ... This election is about every single person here and every single person across our country.

The people of Scotland and the rest of Britain deserve more...and it is not much to ask.

We all deserve a well-funded NHS

... the best schools for our children

... well paid, secure jobs

... and real control over our own lives.

But why ... in the fifth richest nation on Earth ... why do we not have this?

... Why is there a housing crisis?

... Why is our NHS not cared for?

... Why are so many people not being paid properly for the work they do?

... Not able to get on

... Not able to provide for their families as much as they'd like to

... and not able to live their lives to the full.

It is because the Tories have rigged the system and they have rigged the economy.

And here in Scotland it's also because the SNP have passed on these Tory cuts without even a whimper.

If Labour is elected on 8th June ... we will form a government that gives the people back what they deserve ... because people deserve better.

We will redistribute the wealth in our society to ensure that people are paid at least a real living wage of £10 an hour

... transforming the lives of the near half a million Scots who currently earn less than the living wage ... wiping out at a stroke the concept of 'working poor'.

We will protect pensioner incomes ... by legislating to keep the Triple-Lock on state pensions ... protecting the pensions of over 1 million Scottish pensioners ... guaranteeing them a basic income necessary to live a dignified life in retirement.

Only Labour will protect pensions. The Tories will not and the SNP plans for independence will threaten your pensions.

We will make sure public spending will be used to force a change for good in working and environmental conditions, equal opportunities and fair pay.

We will put conditions on the massive public spending budget with private business ... to ensure no company wins a public contract if they avoid or evade taxes ... don't pay their local suppliers on time ... or don't recognise trade unions.

We will create a Scottish National Bank ... under Scottish control and backed by the National Investment Bank ... with £20bn of lending power to deliver the funds to local projects and Scotland's small businesses ... creating work and stimulating the economy.

We will aggressively take on the tax avoiders and evaders ... starting with having corporations publish their tax returns.

We will ban zero hours contracts ... giving new protections to the 60,000 Scottish workers currently with no guaranteed hours ... how can people plan or just pay the rent when they have no security of income?

Unlike others, we will set up inquiries into blacklisting and Orgreave ... and we would urge the Scottish Government to set up an inquiry into the actions of the Scottish police during the Miners' strike.

Friends no more will those at the top take from the pockets of those in the middle of society ... or those stuck on zero hours contracts or the minimum wage. No more will they hold you back ... and stop you having the opportunities in life which you deserve.

So on 8th June, you have a choice ...

Do you choose the Tories ... who will continue to feed their wealth to their friends and to the corporations ... Or the SNP who have forgotten the day job and the basic requirements to look after people when in Government to instead obsess over another unwanted referendum?

Or do you chose Labour ... who will redistribute wealth to those who made the wealth in the first place, yes that is the people of Britain, and who will

spend that wealth where it's needed most and transforming the lives of the people of this country...

This election is about the establishment versus the people ... Labour is the only party that is fighting to ensure that it is the people who win.

Scotland and Britain is being held back ... only by voting Labour on 8th June can we change our country to make it work for the many not the few."

Press release: Foreign Office response to US sanctions on individuals connected with the Asad regime's chemical weapons programme

The UK welcomes US action to sanction individuals connected to the use of chemical weapons in Syria. The abhorrent attack on Khan Sheikhoun is a stark reminder that the international community must work together to deter the future use of chemical weapons in any circumstances.

Sanctions send a clear signal that actions have consequences and seek to deter others from a similar acts of barbarism. We welcome the role sanctions play in increasing pressure on the Syrian regime to turn away from its military campaign.

We will continue our efforts to hold accountable those responsible for chemical attacks, including through the UN and EU, and to energise international support for the UN-led political process. Only a political settlement will bring an end to the war in Syria.