

The new

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Beneath the rule of men entirely great

The pen is mightier than the sword



GOING TO THE DOGS!

For those of us of a certain vintage, 'going to the dogs' may have a poignant meaning or even one of despair. It certainly does not mean having a night out at the local Greyhound track, that's for sure.

Many OAPs, along with this writer, will reiterate, at least in our collective mind, that 'this country is going to the dogs'. And we will not be too far off the mark. In fact its possible that the UK has already 'gone to the dogs'.

Whilst the present Prime Minister, David Cameron, extols the benefit the UK will glean from the billions of foreign aid he has assigned to the 'poor and third world countries,' he studiously deigns to acknowledge the increasing poverty, hardship and unnecessary deaths, which continues to increase in his own country.

It is not only Mr Cameron who is at fault, previous Governments (and Prime Ministers) were equally callous in their concern for vulnerable OAPs. Possibly one of the very worst was Tony Blair, whose chancellor on one occasion increased the OAP Pension by a massive 75p per week. I suppose taking in the sharp rises in inflation we have experienced over the decades into account, 75p would equate with the £4.46 (on average) a week increase we OAPs have recently been awarded.

Read any national news paper and the statistics they quote makes grim reading. Take for instance the figure for OAP deaths due to **cold** since 1997 to 2010, some 300,000 people have passed away during that period, most of these deaths were preventable. For the moment I am unable to ascertain the death figures for OAPs who have died unnecessarily over the extremely cold winter not long passed, but it will make grim reading, when it becomes public property.

The UK Government, under Prime Minister David Cameron, is set to donate £1.49bn to a multi-billion-pound international initiative over the next few years. Immunisation and vaccination for children is unquestionably a very worthy cause and worth supporting, but only within the UK means. If that means that our own vulnerable members of society should be favourably treated, instead of being left to die of cold and hunger, then so be it. Charity should begin at home.

Perhaps that's what the Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni believed when he spent £30m on a private jet after the UK gave his poverty ridden country a donation of £70m. That was however during the Labour reign, but never the less the gravy train is still spilling its load as it rocks along on its apparently never ending rails.

International Development Secretary Andrew Mitchell wants the UK to be branded a 'development superpower.' His associates are backing a proposal that aid spending should be increased by 34% to £12bn whilst here at home we are all facing austere conditions. Lets not ignore facts, austere conditions include the unnecessary deaths of tens of thousands of UK citizens among the older generation in the forthcoming winter.

What we pensioners really need is a decent basic state pension of not less than £150 a week. This would provide some degree of relief from poverty, be it fuel or food. But there again perhaps the Government is content with the present rate of deaths among the elderly, after all the more of us who 'go' the less the Government will have to find to keep us alive.

You know I can't quote from experience but apparently in days gone by, elderly aborigines were left behind in the outback by their peers when they became a burden on the family, and of course there would only be one outcome from such treatment. It's a thought, is it not that whilst we don't have an outback, they are still old folk being left behind. Ed.

OR SHOULD IT BE 'GOING TO THE BIRDS'?

Its almost like a scenario from the Great Fire of Rome, (AD 64) as misinformed generations have believed Emperor Nero fiddled while the great city was ravaged by the inferno.

As this country falters due to different circumstances we read about thousands of 'Twitchers' flocking to Murcar Links in Aberdeenshire, to view a very rare visitor the 'White Winged Scoter'. These birds normally breed in north-west Canada but winter on the Great Lakes, so this one could be several thousand miles off course.

Almost as bad off course as our Prime Minister David Cameron. The Independent Highlander has not established whether the PM is a Twitcher, but he certainly is well off course and apparently not able to rectify our very unbalanced society.

Here at Seacrest however we have our very own rare bird.

Only last week friend Ian Ross from the Royal and Ancient Burgh of Tain discovered an albino Black-bird hopping about one of the flowerbeds in the Seacrest garden.

For several days the fledgling stayed mostly out of sight but this past two days it has appeared at intervals, so it would appear, to me at least, this bird has its priorities correct, unlike someone whom I don't need to name again.



A star is fledged ©

Isn't it grand that the wonders of nature can distract, at least some members of our unequal society, from their every day trials and tribulations?

In the past days of strife there used to be a word for such a scenario, I believe it was called propaganda. Now-a-days I think its called spin doctoring and used by politicians to mislead voters.

CRACKING THE WHIP

For many years I have often wondered why the RSPCA have turned a blind eye to the trashing of race horses by jockeys?

You or I could not whip, say our dogs, in private or public, without facing the wrath of courts in the UK. However public opinion is turning on the racing fraternity and it is only time before the carrying of a whip will be banned on all racecourses.

Its gratifying to read that ace jockey Frankie Dettori has been suspended at Royal Ascot for excessive use of the whip, a nine day riding ban should just be the tip of the punishments handed out to heavy handed jockeys in the future. And owners who permit or even encourage jockeys to trash their horse, in the name of winning should also be banned from entering future races.

But we come back to the almighty green backs, money is everything in this unequal and unbalanced society in the place once referred to as Great Britain.

Ed.

Scottfab-Osprey Publishing 'Seacrest', Barbaraville West, Delny, Ross & Cromarty, Scotland. IV18 0NA.

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