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A terminal fiasco: BAA owner Rafael del Pino

A Londoner's Diary



Julia Stephenson on serving the World's End winos, and waiting for Robert Kennedy and Alex Michaelis



And so once more to the stump. I have been selected as the Green Party candidate for Chelsea and Westminster in the forthcoming Assembly elections. I say selected, but if I'm honest, no one else wanted to do it. Like Amy Winehouse, I said, 'No, no, no,' but the thought of green-minded burghers trotting to the polling booth on 1 May to find no green candidate to vote for was too guilt-making, so in a triumph of hope over experience (this is my fifth election and I've lost every one of them), here I am again.

I must confess I'm not an ideal candidate as I'm rubbish at canvassing. I simply can't face launching myself at strangers (I leave that to the chuggers in the King's Road - hot tip if you want to get rid of them, just say, 'Not in the street, thank you!') and they will set upon someone else). But at least I'm not as bad as a fellow candidate, who, when asked by a reporter, 'What are the issues on the doorstep?' replied, 'I haven't a clue, the only doorstep I've been on is my own.'

Previous elections have seen me campaigning far more energetically. During the 2001 election, fellow candidate Hugo Charlton and I set up a stall outside Chelsea Town Hall from which we dispensed leaflets and green cocktails made from chartreuse and champagne, garnished with a sprig of organic mint from my roof terrace.

Unfortunately we were soon crushed by a stampede of winos who tottered down from World's End on the rumour of free booze. In the melee a fight broke out, causing our trestle table to collapse while the pavement became a sea of green liquid, soggy leaflets and smashed glass. Insisting we were a hazard to the public, a town clerk moved us on.

I'm not sure if it's really worth canvassing in Chelsea anyway. Hardly anyone is entitled to vote as the streets are full of non-voting non-doms and tweedy Euro-toffs raiding Partridges for exotic foodstuffs. My neighbours are very supportive of green issues, though; indeed, only this morning the Croatian wife of a stonkingly rich billionaire who lives next door told me she was so keen on organic food she had just instructed her pilot to fly their private jet back for a small bag of potatoes from their Croatian garden. She explained that at least this will guarantee they are truly organic and super fresh.

Finally my website is up and running with helpful information about all the marvellous things I would do for the people of Chelsea should I, by some miracle, be elected. It was set up by the same team who designed environmental lawyer Robert Kennedy's site. I must confess my interest in Kennedy is not purely environmental - he has all the Kennedy oomph and charm and

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makes fist-wavingly thrilling speeches. 'I will see you at the barricades!' he cried memorably at Live Earth as a million female lips trembled.

I once flew to Toronto (no letters please, this was in June 2005, before it became environmentally incorrect to fly) to see him in the flesh. I paid \$30 to attend a private reception, along with a bunch of Canadian transvestites, various Kennedy fanatics and one enormous nun. When it came to my turn to shake his hand, my knees buckled and I was quite unable to speak. My carefully rehearsed chat about the plight of North America pigs was quite wasted. It wouldn't have done any good anyway as he was soon transfixed by a sexy girl with the

deepest gravelliest voice I've ever heard. She had legs like milk bottles but it was scant consolation.

I shall be relieved when the elections are over for then I can crack on with my eco renovations. I have planning permission for three experimental wind turbines (eat your heart out, David Cameron), solar panels and the UK's first waterless urinal, masterminded by ecotect to the stars Alex Michaelis. But Alex is in such demand he can't fit me in for two months. We'll all be underwater by then if Leonardo DiCaprio's gripping eco-doom movie, *The 11th Hour*, is to be believed.

Dispiritingly, Alex's client list is a Who's Who of the good, the glamorous and the sought-after. Jemima Khan and Richard Branson are just two of them so you get the picture. I'm suffering from terrible status envy just thinking about it all.

People say I should be in no rush to get the builders in but the trouble is I already have. My boyfriend is doing the renovations (something everyone has reservations about but I am convinced it will bring us closer together - besides he's cheap and permanently in situ), leaving a trail of crisp packets, fantasy football leaflets and free DVDs culled from newspapers that I am forbidden to throw away. After three years of indoctrination he is now impressively green, installing a wood-burning stove, fuelling his van with biodiesel made from old chip fat, even peeing on the compost heap - it aids decomposition, since you ask. Ladies, don't try this at home; our pee is too acidic.

I'm currently making a green documentary for CNBC and I persuaded him to be filmed performing this very useful task. Not even Robert Kennedy would do that for the planet I'm sure. Anyway I've added the footage to my website (www.juliastephenon.net). I'm sure he'll see the funny side quite soon.

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