

Her Edit

HER ISSUE, HER VOICE



Issue Twenty
November/December 2016

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Revolution

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Front cover picture
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Welcome to Her Edit

Change can take time. For those of us of a certain age, just a generation ago, women's lives were very different. Our mothers may have entered the workforce, but were not guaranteed equal pay; they would have had no statutory maternity pay; rape within marriage was not considered a crime and they had no access to abortion.

Thankfully we are free of many of the archaic impediments to women's freedom, well-being and ability to be active and engaged politically, but there is still a long way to go before we enjoy true gender equality.

In this issue we celebrate revolution and the incomparable Beatrix Campbell shares her thoughts on the women's movement and the inequities we still battle with. Those hard-won freedoms mean women have been able to achieve many great things and we also feature three women who have started revolutions of a different kind in three very disparate areas.

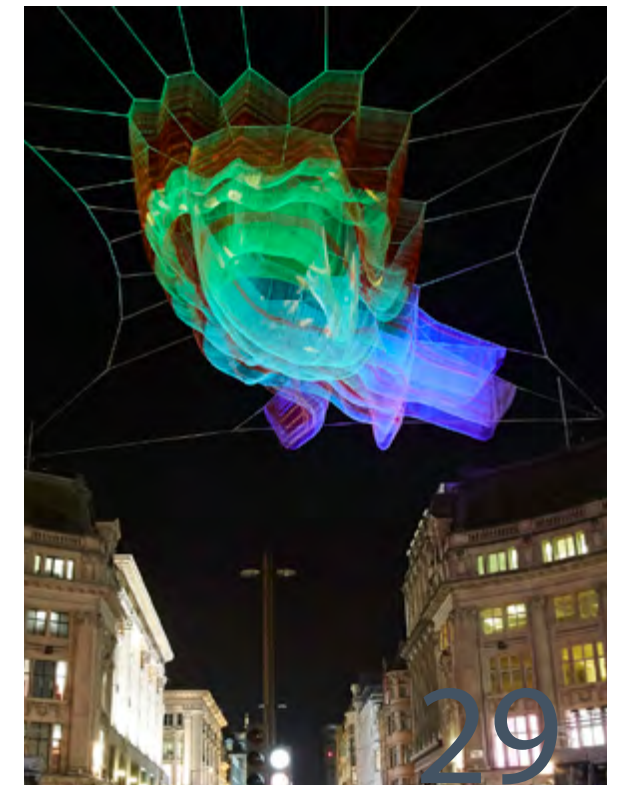
Kate Leeming embarks on remarkable expeditions on her bicycle to raise awareness of women's lives in developing countries; Helen Marriage manages extraordinary events to democratise theatre and art; Pauline McBride has deployed her own revolution in horticulture to create a unique and beautiful garden.

While the struggle which our mothers and grandmothers instigated continues, so many of us start our own revolution every day. I hope you find this issue as inspiring as I have and please share it and your thoughts on twitter @Her_Edit and our [facebook page](#).

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jayne', written in a cursive style.

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IMAGES

Left to right: Sussex Prairie Garden,
Dr Kate Leeming and Artichoke's Lumiere London event.



A burning question

A large bonfire of garden waste, including branches and leaves, is burning brightly in a field. The fire is the central focus, with intense orange and yellow flames rising from a pile of dark, charred material. In the background, a well-maintained hedge runs across the middle ground, and beyond that, a line of trees stands against a pale, overcast sky. The foreground shows a patch of green grass, partially obscured by the fire's glow.

From the wilds of Rajasthan, to the quiet beech wood valleys of Luxembourg, Paul and Pauline McBride have been creating gardens for over 30 years.

Inspired by their time working with Dutch garden designer Piet Oudolf they have created their beautiful Sussex Prairies Garden in the Wealden plains of West Sussex. Pauline spoke to Her Edit about her and Paul's revolutionary approach to horticulture.

'We vowed that together we would start a garden that would burn down the barricades - literally!'

It's probably not your average way of looking after a garden, but Pauline and Paul McBride have a had fire in their souls since they started burning down their prairie gardens 15 years ago. A circle of revolution and renewal begins again!

Their revolutionary way of tackling their garden's cyclical demise has both wowed and horrified the official gardening world, and sets the two of them apart from the traditional gardening fraternity.

A call to revolution

Pauline met Paul in France in 1989 whilst she was working for the Commonwealth War Graves Commission.

Coinciding with the 200th anniversary of the French Revolution, their first date was spent in the Champs Elysee in Paris, surrounded by a crowd numbering hundreds of thousands with

the French Air Force streaming overhead with smoking flares.

She says her life changed forever at that point.

'We vowed that together we would start a garden which would burn down the barricades – literally! Instead of being one passionate person, I had found my perfect visionary mate to start a whirlwind of revolution in the garden world. The power of two made the dream possible.'

Pauline and Paul designed their Sussex Prairie Garden in 2007 and planted it in 2008 employing their own guerilla gardening style. Aply assisted by 'a motley and fabulously enthusiastic crew of friends and family', they planted over 30,000 plants in what was a grazed field on Pauline's family farm.

The plot is surrounded by a framework of splendid mature oak trees and settles neatly into the heart of the Sussex Weald. This was always going to be a dynamic and very visually beautiful landscape garden.



IMAGES

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Two men in my life

Pauline and Paul were very inspired by their time working with international Dutch landscape designer Piet Oudolf during a spell in Luxembourg. Oudolf has been described as the most influential garden designer of the past 25 years and has a reputation as the rock star of gardeners.

In creations like Pottersfield in London and the New York High Line, Oudolf is renowned for his use of swathes of perennials, around 70% chosen for their structure and the remainder for their flower.

The result is that as the seasons change, the seed heads or bare stems of the structural plants are touched by frost or peep through snow and the garden takes on a new beauty through the winter time.

Pauline says,

‘It took one person like him to provide the spark for what was to be the ride of a lifetime for both of us.’

Her and Paul’s Sussex Prairie Garden reaches its zenith in summer and autumn. Vast swathes of colour and texture are provided

by the generous drifts of flowering perennials, punctuated by bolder blocks of ornamental grasses.

As winter approaches, the most amateur gardeners among us will be familiar with the ritual of cutting back dead foliage and clearing away the previous year’s growth. However, when you have over eight acres of garden, the task of ‘putting the garden to bed’ requires more than an afternoon with the secateurs or strimmer.

Flashpoint

Pauline and Paul’s solution is unorthodox, but the act of burning the site easily addresses the problem posed by scale and how to dispose of the vast quantity of material. Not only that, but it seems to have become a kind of ritual which they share with their friends and neighbours.

Pauline describes vividly the palpable excitement that builds in the garden as winter progresses.

‘It took one person like him to provide the spark for what was to be the ride of a lifetime for both of us.’

‘Having stood all winter long the garden is in a state of exciting desiccation. Stalks and stems have been burnished by the winter winds and frosts, and winter’s hand grips my soul. The garden stands firm and tall with architectural and dramatic poise. The arching stems and stalks of grasses criss cross and tumble across the beds, and leaves curl and crisp up against the shrivelled seed heads.

‘Paul and I are on tenterhooks waiting for the right weather window to arrive. We are looking for a week of dry weather before we start the burning. We need the plants to be at a point where the merest spark can start a firestorm.

‘Strong winds from the southwest hail the start of a perfect fire, which will rip through the dry plant material with fervour, consuming all in its wake. With embers in my hair, singed eyebrows, and a pyromaniac’s fever in my soul, I can feel alive again!’

Fire stirs some of our most primeval compulsions and its association with renewal and as a symbol of resurrection, seems apposite for a creative project intrinsically linked to

seasonal death and rebirth. Looking ahead to the spring, Pauline says,

‘So starts the circle of new plant life and new plant energy again. The thrill of the first shoots poking their heads through the charred ashes hails the new phoenix rising!’

Pauline’s passion and commitment to the project is awe-inspiring and this is clearly about more than just growing flowers.

‘There is no getting off the helter-skelter of creation once you are on it. I couldn’t have made this garden without my soul mate Paul. The garden is so intrinsically linked by the combination of our creative forces, that it has become greater than the sum of itself.

‘It is more than just a simple, beautiful garden. You can feel it in your soul and senses; it really has taken on a life of its own and the impact it has on those who visit has been a revelation to us both.’

Sussex Prairie Garden is open for a short window of wonder 1 June until 15 October 2017, everyday 1pm-5pm except Tuesdays.

For more information visit the Sussex Prairie Garden [website](#), telephone 01273 495902 or email morlandsfarm@btinternet.com



IMAGES

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From A to Bea and back again

Beatrix Campbell is an award-winning journalist, author, broadcaster, campaigner and playwright. Since her early days as a journalist on the Morning Star, Time Out and a founder member of Red Rag, she has received numerous literary awards including the Cheltenham Festival Literary Prize and the Fawcett Prize as the author of seminal books such as Wigan Pier Revisited (1984), Diana, Princess of Wales: How Sexual Politics Shook the Monarchy (1998) and most recently, End of Equality (2014).

A staunch republican, in 2009 she accepted an OBE for services to equality saying, 'the gesture affirms our necessity; the radicals - not the royalists - are the best of British'. Beatrix Campbell is one of our foremost commentators on equality and child abuse and we are immensely privileged that she spent some time to share her thoughts with Her Edit.

I have been a huge admirer of Beatrix Campbell and her work for many years; always delighted to hear her no-nonsense northern timbre counter many a simplistic analysis of a 'women's issue' on the Today programme.

Beatrix is from Carlisle, inheriting her Communist politics from her parents. A married woman in the late sixties, in the early seventies she 'fell in love with the women's movement and fell in love with women'.

As our parents form so much of our thinking in our formative years, I wondered how much Beatrix had been influenced by her mother. She describes her as a contradictory person who, after eight years working as an auxiliary nurse, trained and qualified as a State Enrolled Nurse, became a union organiser and a shop steward, but at home was 'in the shadows'.

'My school was across the fields from where she worked and I would go and see her at lunchtime. At work she was the person she wanted to be; in her uniform she was assured, strong, autonomous and proud of what she did. But my parents relationship was uncomfortable - not happy - and the household was profoundly patriarchal, so domestically, she was quite oppressed. She was passionately enthused by the Women's Liberation movement.'

For women of Beatrix's mother's generation, this is probably not untypical. It mystifies me why my own intelligent, capable mother who had so successfully negotiated being a single mum in the late sixties, seemed to bear singular responsibility for ironing my step-father's shirts a few years later.

Those of us of a younger generation reached our teens and twenties benefitting from many



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of the gains made by women in the sixties and seventies, so it's sobering to be reminded of how hard won they were.

In what was supposed to be an era of equality and liberation, Beatrix describes some disappointment and discomfort. While women were entering the labour market en masse and struggling for equal pay, the organisations women turned to for support were often resistant to the dramatic reforms needed.

'Women found their allies were their enemies, for example the trade unions - they were the only mass organisations notionally committed to equality, yet they were simultaneously patriarchal, and often implacable. Women experienced hostility in all organisations. They had to create their own room for manoeuvre.'

While the late sixties and early seventies saw seemingly huge shifts towards equality - the equal pay act, the transformation of women's sexual lives, gay liberation - the pace of change has seemed painfully slow to realise. The Equal Pay Act, precipitated by the Ford sewing machinists strike of 1968, depicted in the film *Made in Dagenham*, didn't come into force until 1975.

'There was some movement, then no significant shift for years. The Labour government of 1997 wouldn't sponsor any great new activism on equal pay.'

When we asked Baroness Shirley Williams what she thought had had the most positive impact

on women's lives, she said a greater equality of division of labour in the home. Does Beatrix agree?

'Men do more, but very little more. Women still do most of it, even where both parties are working. It compromises women's access to earnings; compare how much across a lifetime women earn compared to men. As men and women's position as workers is rendered more precarious, the paid work of care is diminished and therefore feminised.

'Paid care is precarious - 300,000 carers, mainly women, on zero hours contracts - and unpaid care performed by women who are also still in paid work. This is the current form of the sexual settlement - the state withdraws from shared responsibility for care, and women do what they've always done, take the responsibility.'

The increasingly common experience of women caring for the generations both above and below them, is one Beatrix recognises. She's done it. Despite the mitigation of home help and professional care, meeting the care needs of parents and little ones is a challenge.

'I'm in my prime and my priority is not me or my work. It is exasperating. These are crucial issues and it's a gender and generational

crisis. Women need to be paid decently and we need to find ways to release their goodwill and imagination, otherwise that unpaid labour of love is impoverished. There has to be a new way to address the care crisis - the old sexual settlement is not sustainable.'

The beginnings of the Women's Liberation Movement seem like a long time ago and I suggest at times it seems like an impossible fight, but Beatrix points out that we are now in a world we never expected and could never have anticipated.

'Women found their allies were their enemies...notionally committed to equality, yet they were simultaneously patriarchal.'

'Who would have thought that in the 21st century, two, three, four countries would have been razed to rubble in the last 10 years as a result of neo-imperialist wars. The prevailing view was that it would get better, but for the first time in my

life I feel more helpless, more disconnected.

'We're up against new settlements and new platforms for sexism, but we are becoming very good at improvising political protest in those realms where we don't have power.'

Beatrix believes there is hope - that things are moving and the vast expansion in access to social media means that at least we know 'what they get up to'.

Women are more prominent in mainstream politics than ever before - the Green Party, Plaid Cymru, the SNP, the Democratic Unionist party in Northern Ireland - and of course we have a woman Prime Minister in Conservative leader Theresa May, but is there any reason to be optimistic about a shift in the political agenda to move towards gender equality?

'The sad thing is that women-only short lists produced a huge shift in the House of Commons; Tony Blair and New Labour were beneficiaries of that presence. May and the women around her have no political programme that will advance women.

'She (May) gets it about child abuse, sexual harassment, rape, but she can't connect that to an agenda about local government and resources. It's not remotely within her economic agenda to dramatically reduce the gender pay gap or increase social care. We should be afraid.'

Finally I offer Beatrix the magic policy wand to implement three acts to effect change. She is characteristically thoughtful and offers a deeper context to the question.

'Let's imagine what a feminist government would look like. Its foreign policy, environmental policy, justice, the relationship between gender and care. Let's imagine how a feminist government would address those things and what needs to happen to make them happen.'

Breaking the cycle



Dr Kate Leeming is an explorer and adventurer who has cycled the equivalent distance of twice around the world. Her expeditions include a ten month, 22,040km journey across Africa, the 25,000km Great Australian Cycle Expedition and the Trans-Siberian Cycle from St Petersburg to Vladivostok to aid the 800,000 children of Chernobyl. She is the first woman to cross the Canning Stock Route on bicycle.

Kate is an author and a producer of the award-winning documentary Njinga. She is a Fellow of the Royal Geographic Society and a member of the Explorers Club in New York. Kate talks about what motivates her, the challenges she faces and what inspired her to get on her bike.





Her Edit

Growing up, I enjoyed cycling for fitness and dreamed of travelling, but never imagined what I could achieve on a bike until after I'd finished university and travelled to the UK, to play (field) hockey for the University of Western Australia.

After the tour I stayed in Europe and tried a short cycle excursion in Ireland. Over the next two years I pedalled a total of 15,000km through Europe on my personal journey, from Spain to Turkey, and finally to the Nord Kapp, Norway, the most northerly point of mainland Europe. This is where I discovered my passion for travelling by bike.

Bicycle travel gives you a close and personal connection with the people and the land and an incredible sense of place; a realistic perspective of how the world fits together. I love bringing a line on a map to life.

As I was planning my first major expedition, across Russia, I met British polar explorer Robert Swan OBE, the first person to have walked to

both the North and South poles. Robert inspired me to take it to another level. I learned from him that there was a lot more value to what I was doing than simply riding a bike.

Since then, in addition to the physical goals of the expedition, I have always created a higher mission to benefit the people I meet and places that I explore. The two purposes are always inextricably linked and equally fuel my motivation.

For the Breaking the Cycle in Africa expedition, the 22,000km route stretched through 20 countries between Africa's widest points. It was shaped by the mission – to explore the causes and effects of extreme poverty and specifically what is being done to give a 'leg up' rather than a 'hand out'.

It was designed to cover regions significantly afflicted by the complex web of issues relating to extreme poverty. I visited fifteen different initiatives and many communities in order to tell a real story of hope, with the kind of grounded perspective that can only be gained on a bicycle; pedalling an unbroken line from Senegal to Somalia.

TEXT

Dr Kate Leeming

IMAGES

Previous pages: Hurry Fjord, Northeast Greenland
Kate in the Tin Toumma Desert near Termit Range, Niger
Left: Nearing the Gabon, Congo

Images not credited courtesy of Dr Kate Leeming

My biggest mental challenge was about a quarter of the way through. I had done over 5000km, but still had about 17,000km and seven months to go.

I'd endured three severe gastros and was pushing into the Harmattan, powerful seasonal trade winds that whip sand and dust straight off the Sahara. The people of Niger call it the nose-picking season because it is synonymous with respiratory infections. I was struggling to breathe and could only manage 12km or 13km an hour.

To keep the pedals turning, I reminded myself of all the reasons I'd taken on the challenge. The only way to get through is to think of the positives, focus on the mindset, 'How do I get through?' rather than 'What will stop me?'.

I found it helpful to look at the big picture, that it was a privilege to do what I was doing and how amazing I would feel cycling across the Somali plains to the finish. I'd work back and break my journey into smaller, more manageable goals – to get to the end of the day, the session, each hour; reach the top of the next hill, the next landmark, a bush on the side of the road, even the next pothole.

To get through the toughest times, I've developed so many techniques I could write a psychology thesis, but I find consciously looking for the beauty in my surroundings is the best. Even in the direst of circumstances, there is beauty all around if you choose to see it.

Since Africa, Breaking the Cycle has become the brand I use to satisfy my sense of adventure and to drive positive change. For the last three and a half years I have been working towards Breaking the Cycle South Pole, which will result in the first bicycle crossing of the Antarctic continent via the South Pole.

Preparations have so far taken me and my expert teammates to Svalbard, Norway, and Northeast Greenland to trial the first all-wheel drive fatbike and other custom made equipment and clothing, learning how to cope with exercising intensely in the extreme cold.

I have a winter expedition across Yukon and Alaska and altitude training in the Indian Himalaya planned for 2017 in preparation for the final

journey across Antarctica, coast to coast, starting in December. To complement the expedition I am creating the Breaking the Cycle Foundation to promote what I do. It will focus on 'education for leadership' and support initiatives that help to break the cycle of poverty.

As an explorer, adventurer, educator, author and presenter, I love to share my experiences to inspire others and have become a role model for girls and women, which galvanises my sense of purpose.

Women tend to be under-represented in the world of adventure and exploration, just as they are in politics, boardrooms and professional sport. Yet we know that

communities thrive when gender equality is apparent; when more women are better educated, hold positions of leadership and have equal opportunities.

When women identify with other women as role models, it sends a strong message that they too can aim high to achieve their potential, that they

have the capability to make more of a difference, lead and raise expectations in their communities – particularly where there are social, cultural and religious barriers to gender equality, and women have little influence in decision making.

One of the most personally satisfying outcomes of my projects is when women of all ages are inspired to explore the world, push their own limits (not necessarily on a bicycle) and take action about issues that they are passionate about.

What started out as a dream to do a fun, but challenging, bike ride through Europe, has evolved into a passion and a rewarding career with a multi-faceted set of motivations that represent my convictions and serve to make the world a better place. Each journey is an exciting voyage of discovery that helps to shape a new vision.

So far on my major expeditions I have cycled a distance equivalent to twice around the world at the Equator – that's roughly 80,000km and approaching 20 million pedal revolutions! And so the revolution(s) continue(s).

'The only way to get through is to think of the positives, focus on the mindset, 'How do I get through?' rather than 'What will stop me?'

Follow Kate's adventures on her [website](#) or follow her on twitter [@Leeming_Kate](#)
As part of the [kickstarter](#) campaign to raise funds for her next major expedition, Kate has collaborated with Steve Christini who produces the 'fatbikes' which take her across the world. A percentage of the profits from sales of the bikes, t-shirts and cycle jerseys will fund the project.

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IMAGES

Left to right:

Spitsbergen, Norway ©PhilCoates

Meeting students at the Bright Light Primary School, Uganda

Sampling wild figs collected by a Koma woman
in Atlantika mountains, Cameroon

Crossing Savory Creek, Canning Stock



Step in to the light

Helen Marriage is the Director of the charitable trust Artichoke, which she founded with Nicky Webb in 2005. Her career includes seven years as Director of the Salisbury Festival and creating the first arts and events programme for Canary Wharf in London.

Believing that the arts shouldn't 'take place only behind the closed doors of theatres or art galleries', since 2006 Artichoke has produced several large-scale events in the UK from giant mechanical spiders in Liverpool to light festivals in London. Nearly all events are free to attend and attract thousands of people.

IMAGES

Previous page:

1.8 London, Janet Echelman, Studio Echelman, Lumiere London 2016. Produced by Artichoke supported by the Mayor of London. Photo by Matthew Andrews

Right:

Helen Marriage, London 1666 David Best London's Burning a festival of arts and ideas for Great Fire 350. Produced by Artichoke. Photo by Matthew Andrews



What were the origins of Artichoke and why did you decide to set up your own arts firm?

The Sultan's Elephant by Royal de Luxe. I had followed the company's work for years following an earlier show by them in London, which had been cancelled after two performances because of logistical and licensing issues.

I established Artichoke with co-founder Nicky Webb to bring the company back to London, and persuade the authorities to look afresh at the idea of disrupting the capital to use as a giant stage; working with artists to create a work of the imagination, rather than the usual ceremony or protest.

Artichoke productions offer an alternative way to use our cities and spaces. What's the most exciting difference for you in the interaction between people and the space they inhabit during your shows?

Artichoke's events are disrupting everyday life and transforming the city from somewhere people

go to work and shop into a playground. When you read this transformation in someone's face, you know you've got it right.

You produce events that re-imagine significant areas of major cities. How do you co-ordinate these and get more intractable people onside?

It's a huge team effort, with years of planning and negotiations and the involvement of a host of agencies. People say 'no' because they are worried that they will get blamed if something goes wrong.

They ask, why would we do something like this – close the roads, dig up traffic islands, re-route buses – I ask, why wouldn't you? It's about reassuring people, taking them by the hand and showing them that it will be ok.

This is project management on a big scale! What's the one skill or characteristic you possess which is most valuable to you in your job?

'People say 'no' because they are worried that they will get blamed if something goes wrong.'

The art of persuasion!

What frightens you the most (professionally)?
Boredom.

As more and more areas of London (and other cities) are owned and managed by corporations and private companies, does that help your projects in terms of leveraging funds or are they less flexible than the public sector?

We rely on both for funding and each funder will have a different set of deliverables. All our projects are partnerships built between the private and public sectors.

They're always a big ask and I hope that in the end the whole is bigger than the sum of its parts and that all those who've contributed can feel the impact of their involvement.

Your own projects aside, which piece of art or performance has most inspired you?

There have been many, but impact Theatre Co-operative's The Carrier Frequency, remains one of the most memorable.

Any space, one day, unlimited budget, what would you do?

I have so many ideas, so many things I want to do, but the process takes years, rather than a single day – and that's the bit I really enjoy, the slow painstaking stitching together of all the people who, as a team, will ultimately be responsible for delivering the idea.

What's next for you and Artichoke?

We always like to surprise people and keep them guessing. We're thrilled to be working on the fifth edition of the Lumiere light festival in Durham in November 2017, but the programme is under wraps for now. As for the other projects we're currently working on, watch this space!

Read more about this year's [Lumiere Festival](#) and visit Artichoke's [website](#) to find out more or make a donation.

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IMAGES
Left to right:

The Sultan's Elephant Royal de Luxe 2006. Produced by Artichoke in London. Photo by Sophie Laslett

London 1666 David Best London's Burning a festival of arts and ideas for Great Fire 350. Produced by Artichoke. Photo by Matthew Andrews

Les Luminéoles Port par le vent, Lumiere London 2016. Produced by Artichoke supported by the Mayor of London. Photo by Matthew Andrews

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