

Friday 17 April 2015



Fri 68°C 49°C	
---------------------------	--

Sat 61°C 43°C	
---------------------------	--

Sun 2°C -17°C	
---------------------------	--

Canterbury Gazette

Consistently outselling the Canterbury Herald - "For the best you can get, you choose the Gazette"

- News
- Election
- Sport
- What's On
- Lifestyle
- Sausages
- Jobs
- Travel
- Money
- TV Guide

Thanet >> Candidates >> Green Party

Who Is John Dove?

Is Stella Herbert's charismatic sidekick the real genius behind her audacious bid for a Commons seat – or a scandal waiting to happen?

by Paul D. Arthur Wun for Canterbury Gazette Online

Feted in literary circles but little known to most South Thanet voters, poet John Dove is a man of many talents whose recent racy volume is unlikely – to the relief of English teachers up and down the land – to make it onto the A-level syllabus.

Dove is a formidable orator whose words, delivered in his silky and resonant voice, take on the quality of liquid honey. Many have fallen under his spell, and if rumours are to be believed, his bedchamber exploits make Russell Brand look like Mother Teresa. If he and Stella Herbert cannot keep the closet door firmly bolted, the skeletons are likely to come tumbling out.

Dove's association with Herbert began in the corridors of academia but has now burst onto the streets of East Kent, where the novice Green candidate is aiming to stop Nicholas Formio becoming the British Independence Party's first UK MP.

In 2013 Dove took up a guest lectureship in Herbert's philosophy department. From the beginning, his passionate engagement with – and descriptions of – the sufferings of the common man chimed well with her teachings on eighteenth-century ethics. Both share a vision, inspired by the Enlightenment, of a unified humanity that transcends social, political and geographical divisions.

Dove and Herbert have a mountain to climb in South Thanet. Their intellectualism, however passionate and well intentioned, is unlikely to gain much traction against the beery "no more nonsense" blokieness that Nicholas Formio has trademarked. Herbert's discursions on the economic philosophy of Hume and Smith may inspire voters to do little more than take a nap.



Dove: deeply attractive, but will he prove an asset or a liability?

"The country is full." Formio's clear and simple message has obvious appeal for voters in South Thanet, where unemployment tops 12%, housing is scarce and primary schools are oversubscribed. Herbert counters that "peace in Europe is an extraordinary achievement, a humane and enlightened project. What the BIP calls 'low-level immigrants' are European citizens and fellow human beings who share our rights."

Dove's latest collection, *Twilit Minglings* (Burning Eye, 2014 – available from the Canterbury Gazette Bookshop for £8.99) is an extended meditation on people joining and conjoining. The few moral and political poems aside, it is a book of very erotic verse, full of sucks and slurps and squelches. Especially popular among female readers looking for their next Christian Grey, the book's sales figures have outstripped those of all Dove's previous books combined.

On 7 May Stella Herbert will be one of the few women in Britain hoping that she and John Dove do not come to a sticky end.

