

- DD: Come on then, Charlie, from the top ...
- CL: Have you seen the first polls?
- DD: I've learned to live with opinion polls. When they're good you quietly look smug. When they're bad you move on to the next thing. I've always taken them with a pinch of salt. All I will say is that this election will be very different because, a bit like 2017 but more extreme, there will be very different constituency results. It's going to be very difficult to take a national picture and shoehorn that into a local situation.
- CL: I'm shocked by the margin [*Guardian poll tracker, the gap between Conservative 39% and Labour 26%*] and also that since Boris became PM ... the growth is in that period.
- DD: But you always get a good glow for a new leader. It always happens. His problem is that the shine comes off him quicker than it does off others.
- CL: You mentioned national versus local. That margin looks challenging on a national level. But here locally I wouldn't have thought you faced the same thing.
- DD: I've fought every one of the elections previously, all seven of them, on the basis that you don't expect to win. When you win it's great, when you lose it's a dose of realism. The honest answer is that Stroud is very varied, different things will happen in different parts of the constituency, different attitudes, different age groups will come into play... that's what makes it interesting. The central party never seems very interested in us and I'm always happy when they leave us alone. We'll make up our own minds.
- CL: What are your challenges this time round?
- DD: Brexit is a very divisive issue, so if that is what drives the election, it isn't helpful to Labour because we've got a slightly more nuanced view. It's a more complicated view, which is get a new deal and then go back to the people. It's also December. People want Christmas. Now they've got a general election. I have to unite the left-of-centre votes to beat the Tories. It's confusing.
- CL: I left here after I came in on Monday with the clear message that you have to vote Labour if you want a Remain outcome down the line.
- DD: That's right. We – Labour - are fighting the Conservatives (*Siobhan Baillie*) here. OK, I've got George (*James, Liberal Democrat*) and Molly (*Scott Cato, Green Party*) who will say that they are credible candidates, but it's always a two-horse race here. It has been since WWII. If you don't want a Conservative, you have to vote for me.
- CL: One thing that was mentioned on Monday was the vociferous Leave correspondence that you've received.

DD: I'm fortunate because I don't get some of the threats and unpleasantness that other colleagues get. That's partly because we're in a Remain area. People in Stroud, dare I say it, are more tolerant. When you get stuff that attacks you personally it is quite hard. People aren't in politics, in the main, for self-aggrandisement – they try their best. So, when people accuse you of tyranny, treachery, everything under the sun, it's hard.

CL: And Jeremy?

DD: He is a different sort of leader. There are two things I would say about him. First, if he is elected Prime Minister, he will be a prime minister not a president, a dangerous drift since the Thatcher days. It's wrong. We are a parliamentary democracy. Second, I've always found him willing to listen. I don't always agree with him, despite being an old friend, but he listens. That's important in politics now. We can all shout, use rhetoric and make great speeches, but if you don't listen to people, how do you learn?

CL: Is he also a liability?

DD: He is inasmuch as the anti-Semitism issue has not been helpful. Some of the stuff about him looking weak. But if you listen and don't shout, you're accused of being weak. Politics shouldn't be about shouting, about ordering people to do things, about telling people to "man up". That is such unhelpful language. That's why Boris Johnson is doing so badly with women. It's all macho stuff. That's not Corbyn's approach.

CL: Going back to the polls, what is Labour's strategy to close that gap?

DD: The overall strategy is that Brexit is there and it's a toxic issue. But ... there's also climate change, the issue of our time. The NHS, our education system, care services, transport – all these things are what a General Election is about. It's not just about Brexit.

CL: OK, David, thank-you.

DD: Have you got enough? You can always come back in.