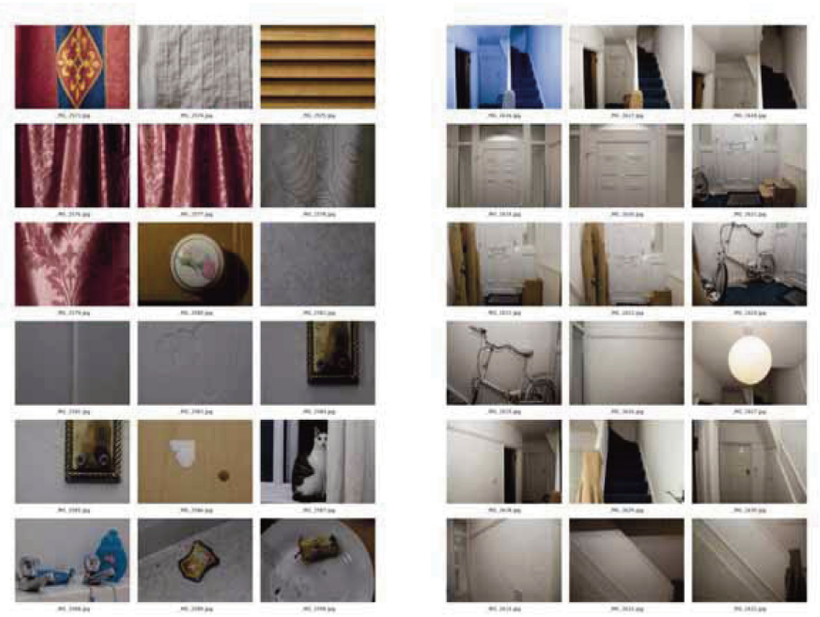

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PICTURE BOOK OF THE WEEK

A spread from *Control Order House* by Edmund Clark (Here Press, £45). The artist Clark, perhaps best known for his earlier monographs exploring representations of incarceration in prisons and at Guantanamo Bay, continues here in a similar vein with a collection of notes, photographs and official documents relating to control orders. In December 2011, Clark became the first artist to observe at close range the controversial anti-terrorism measure, when the Home Office granted him permission to stay and work in a house where a suspect, referred to here as "CE", had been placed under a control order. Included in the book is CE's diary. According to Clark, this house, located "in a faceless suburb", represents "the reaction of a government and society to the fear and chaos of terrorist attacks".

Ball suggests, "was heavily masculine in focus, excluded women from power and often from employment and placed the husband and father even more authoritatively in the centre of the picture than did the middle or upper classes. Trade union and Labour politics at local level were often tinged with misogyny and could seem aggressive and confrontational." Things are different today, of course.

Ball makes much of a distinctive Conservative ethos and set of beliefs but these seem to be mainly window dressing. The prime motivation seems to have been fear – of modernity, of the trade unions, of Bolshevism and of socialism, held in a Conservative poster to be an acronym for "State Ownership Confiscated Incomes All Liberty Imperilled Security Menaced".

The Conservatives appreciated that, in the words of Neville Chamberlain in 1928, "We are not strong enough to win alone. In fact, we are a minority of the country." They needed to appeal beyond their core vote. Fear was usually sufficient. Lord Salisbury, the Victorian prime minister, said that the Conservative Party had no more utility than the policeman and would be needed only so long as there were burglars.

Ball dresses up these instincts in a sophisticated and detailed psephological analysis. But perhaps we do not need sophisticated and detailed psephology. Perhaps the best explanation was given by the children's author Richmal Crompton, the creator of *Just William*, in her story "William, Prime Minister", published in 1930. William believed:

> There's four sorts of people tryin' to get to be rulers. They all want to make things better, but they want to make 'em better in different ways. There's Conservatives an' they want to make things better by keepin' 'em jus' like what they are now. An' there's Lib'rals an' they want to make things better by alterin' them jus' a bit, but not so's anyone'd notice, an' there's Socialists, an' they want to make things better by takin' everyone's money off 'em, an' there's Communists an' they want to make things better by killin' everyone but themselves.

Henry is the Socialist candidate and Douglas is the Liberal, promising presents to all those voting for him. But William, the Conservative, is elected unanimously.

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NS RECOMMENDS

Turning to Face the East: How Britain Can Prosper in the Asian Century
Liam Byrne

How will Britain fare in the Pacific century? Historically, we have focused our attention across the Channel to mainland Europe and across the Atlantic to the United States. If we are to thrive in the "Asian century", Liam Byrne argues, we need a new strategy for dealing with the blooming economies in the Far East. Drawing on six years of work and travel in China, the shadow secretary of state for work and pensions sketches the "three big win-wins" he sees as essential to securing a mutually successful future for Britain and China: first, sharing expertise in health care, law and finance to help build a workable social security system in China (and therefore leaving more disposable income for consumers); second, becoming partners in education, innovation and science; third, opening Britain up to Chinese investment, partaking of the $1trn-2trn forecast to flood out of the country as it seeks to diversify away from the US. China is the future, according to Byrne, and we are at risk of losing out.
Faber & Faber, 320pp, £12.99

Saint Augustine of Hippo: an Intellectual Biography
Miles Hollingworth

St Augustine was one of the first public intellectuals. He was also a well-known rhetorician, philosopher and randy dandy ("Grant me chastity and continence, but not yet"), whose mother, Monica, despised his adopted Manichaean religion and prayed for his conversion to Christianity. She could not have hoped for a better turn of events. Miles Hollingworth's new biography emphasises the importance of the African bishop's life experiences in shaping his views about sin, redemption and divine grace. Hollingworth, a research fellow in the history of ideas at Durham University, argues that the texts produced after Augustine's conversion (in particular, his *Confessions* and *City of God*) do not simply reflect a rampant ego straddled by dogma but are the product of a subtle and reflective mind despairing at the strangeness of human existence and the impossibility of locating truth.
Bloomsbury Continuum, 336pp, £20

Philip Maughan