

Too Late to Know

‘With each passing month,’ David Runciman writes, ‘there are slightly more old people in the UK voting population, not fewer’ (LRB, 10 May). Until recently this was true. However, in the first four months of 2018 some 20,215 more people died than died during the same period in the previous five years across England and Wales. As a consequence, with each passing month this year, there have been slightly fewer old people in the UK voting population. Most of the additional people who died this year were already old and would probably have been middle class and in their middle age: it is middle-class people who mostly get to live into their late seventies and eighties. A majority of them may well have voted for Margaret Thatcher in 1979, but it is too late to know. We also remain unsure whether their deaths have been brought forward by austerity in general, or by the cuts to health and social care budgets in particular.

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