

One swallow does not a summer make

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By-elections are fickle things. No one should over emphasise the impact of any one of them. No government party has gained a seat in a by-election since 1982 in the UK. So the [fact that Labour retained Oldham East and Saddleworth](#) should not, of itself, be a surprise. That said, the margin of victory was good, the circumstances suggested Labour should have a difficult time, and the psychological impact will be significant. So it is true, one swallow does not a summer make, but I'm still quietly pleased.