



Liberal Democrat History Group

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The Liberal Democrat History Group aims to promote the discussion and research of historical topics, particularly those relating to the histories of the Liberal Party and the SDP.

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The Liberal Party and the Great War

The last wholly Liberal government of Britain came to an end on 19 May 1915, when, in the face of widespread discontent with the progress of the war, a broad-based coalition government was formed with the Unionist (Conservative) Party. A year and a half later, the Prime Minister, Asquith, resigned after further dissatisfaction with the conduct of the war, being replaced by



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Lloyd George at the head of a primarily Unionist government. The Liberal Party split, and fought the post-war election in 1918 in two opposing camps. Reunification took a further five years, and by the time it came Lloyd George has been ejected from the premiership and the Labour Party had overtaken the Liberals to become the main opposition to the right. Subsequent collapse to minor third-party status was swift.

The Great War is clearly crucial to the story of the decline of the Liberal Party, and it therefore seemed an appropriate focus for this first 'themed' issue of the Liberal Democrat History Group Newsletter. I hope you enjoy and are stimulated by the eight articles and book reviews which follow.

We hope to repeat the innovation of a themed issue about once a year; suggestions for future themes are of course most welcome.

Duncan Brack (Editor)