

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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A Liberal Democrat History Group Fringe Meeting

Why didn't the Liberal Party die?

**The first Liberal revival, 1959–66; with William Wallace. Chair: Sir Russell Johnston MP.
8.00pm, Friday 7 March (Cardiff); for full details see back page.**

1959-74: Years of Liberal Revolution?

Mark Egan introduces this Newsletter special issue on the Liberal postwar revival.

In the period between 1959 and 1974 Britain underwent a massive social change. The nation's moral climate changed as the austerity of wartime was finally laid to rest. Popular culture exploded into the national consciousness. Educational opportunities were dramatically expanded and many working class children found that they could reach university for the first time. Britain shed the last vestiges of its Empire and at last oriented itself with the rest of Europe. The postwar political consensus began to fray at the edges as the political strength of the trade union movement emerged as the key issue of its generation. Looking back from the 1970s, Britain in the 1950s really did look like another world entirely, so great was the pace of change during the intervening decade and a half.

It might have been expected that this era of massive change would have sounded the final death knell for the Liberal Party. After all, the Liberals were the party of temperance, chapel and free trade; of Welsh smallholders, provincial shopkeepers and mill-owning Yorkshiremen. Suburbanisation, television and increased social mobility ended the localised political culture on which the Liberals had thrived prior to 1918. The Liberal Party's demise was frequently predicted during the 1950s, especially after the party's disastrous performance in the 1950 general election. In both 1951 and 1955 barely 100 Liberal candidates contested the general elections. Yet, the Liberal Party did not just survive the 1959-74 period, it prospered. Rapid social and political change provided the conditions in which the Liberal revival commenced.

The scale of the Liberal Party's advance during the 1959-74 period was dramatic. The party received almost four times as many votes in the February 1974 general election as it did in 1959. Fourteen Liberal MPs were elected in February 1974, the largest number to sit in the House of Commons since the war years. Only 23 Liberal candidates forfeited their deposit in February 1974, the smallest number since 1931.

More importantly, in both 1974 elections the Liberals managed to field over 550 candidates, and in October 1974 almost every mainland seat was contested by the party. This was unprecedented. In 1959 the party could field only 216 candidates and there were around 150 constituencies in which there was no Liberal organisation and which, in many cases, had not been contested by a Liberal since the 1920s. In 1974 the Liberals could claim for the first time in fifty

years that they were a national party, able to fight every seat at every election.

Between 1959 and 1974 there was a marked drop in the commitment of voters to the two major parties. Not only did the two parties' share of the vote at general elections fall from 93.2% to 75.0%, but byelections and opinion polls showed a greater than ever degree of electoral volatility in between elections. The Liberal Party was quick to offer itself as a home to voters who wished to register a protest against the government of the day. By 1974 the Liberals' byelection circus was a well established feature of the political landscape. Byelection campaigns brought the party publicity. Voters could again believe that, in certain circumstances, the Liberals were winners. Byelections also brought together party activists from all over the country to pool their campaigning ideas. Many of today's Liberal Democrat activists first learned how to prepare a Focus leaflet from Trevor Jones and the Liberal byelection team during the early 1970s.

The weakening of voter loyalties towards the two major parties can also be detected at local government level. In 1959 there were still vast areas of the nation in which Liberals never stood at local elections, either because it was argued that there was no place for party politics in local government or because the effort of fighting and losing local elections seemed wasted. In the mid 1950s there were only around 400 Liberal councillors in the whole country, and most of them were either elderly aldermen or were sustained in their seats by localised pacts with the Tory or Labour parties. By 1959 Liberals were becoming more involved in local government. In boroughs like Orpington (discussed elsewhere in this Newsletter), Southend, Finchley and Maidenhead the Liberal Associations committed themselves regularly to fighting local elections, building up panels of local election candidates, formulating joint election manifestos and issuing ward newsletters. These efforts began to pay off and the Liberal Party Organisation (LPO) encouraged other Liberal Associations to follow suit. 1962 was a vintage year for the Liberal Party, with sweeping local government successes occurring within weeks of the Orpington byelection triumph.

These gains were not built upon, partly because the Liberals failed to make major gains in the 1964 general election and partly because the party was not then geared up towards supporting local government candidates and councillors. The Association of Liberal Councillors was

formed in 1967 and this organisation was crucial in advising Liberal Associations on how to fight and win local government elections. During the early 1970s there was another surge in Liberal local election success, in areas such as Liverpool, Sutton (see page 13), Richmond and Pendle, where Liberal Democrats still do well today.

Liberal activists increasingly turned to local government during the 1959–74 period because of the difficulty of getting a Liberal into Parliament. It was easier to compete organisationally with the opposition parties in one or two wards than to do so across an entire constituency. By placing a new emphasis on local government Liberals were able to penetrate many urban and suburban areas which had lacked a serious Liberal presence for a generation or more. The ease with which Wallace Lawler won the 1969 Birmingham Ladywood byelection and the spectacular success of the Liverpool Liberals in the 1973 local elections suggested that the Liberals could inspire a political realignment which would strike at the heart of Labour's inner-city power base. More significant, in the long run, was the manner in which the Liberals swept away the Labour Party in suburban areas of the south of England and took on the mantle of main challengers to the Tories, both in local and national government. This process, as evident today as it was 25 years ago, posed even then a political conundrum which the Liberal Party never fully solved.

Jo Grimond committed the Liberal Party to replacing the Labour Party, in a process of political realignment, and fighting the Tories as Britain's main left-wing party. Yet, at the grass roots, the Liberals found Tory territory the easiest to attack. This was especially the case when the Tories were in power, between 1959 and 1964 and between 1970 and 1974. Labour voters tended to be more deeply connected, through their communities, to Labour than Tory voters to the Conservative Party, so Liberal inroads into Labour territory were few and far between. Even in places like Liverpool the Liberals' initial success came from eliminating the Tories and fighting Labour from the right, not the left.

Liberals grappled with this dilemma right through the 1959–74 period and beyond. During the 1960s the philosophical basis of Liberalism was re-examined for the first time since Lloyd George embraced Keynes' economic ideas in the late 1920s. The Young Liberals explored the relationship between Liberalism, the state and the concept of the community, and, although they sometimes inspired revulsion amongst older Liberal activists, their ideas spread. In particular, community politics entered the Liberal lexicon after the 1970 Assembly. Many older Liberals were to complain that they had always been community politicians, but at last the party had adopted a bold philosophical statement which linked Liberalism to everyday concerns.

From the outside it would appear that the most notable difference between the Liberal Party of 1959 and that of

1974 was that by the 1970s the party did seem a relevant actor in British politics. When the Liberals launched a coalition campaign in June 1974 they spoke out on an issue which was then central to British politics – the governability of Britain, given the strength of the trade unions and the weakness of the economy. During the 1970s issues which had seemed marginal in past decades – devolution, the EEC, proportional representation and the reform of government – were at the forefront of political debate. On each issue the Liberal Party had a unique and original point to make. All this was a far cry from the 1950s when the debates on free trade and land taxation at Liberal assemblies seemed arcane to the general public.

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A Liberal Party member during this period would have noticed a more subtle change in the nature of the party. In 1959 the Liberal Party was still dominated by its MPs, former MPs and its grandees. The Bonham Carters and their relatives virtually ran the party. Sir Arthur Comyns Carr, Graham White, Sir Felix Brunner and others could be guaranteed prominent party positions decades after they had lost their parliamentary seats. Shadowy figures such as Sir Andrew Murray, Lord Grantchester and Lord Moynihan received party treasurerships in return for substantial financial contributions.

By the 1970s the Liberal Party was no longer led by a nepotistic patrician elite. All of the changes discussed above – the new philosophical directions, Liberal local government success, the growth of urban and suburban Liberalism – and more besides, were developed not by the party hierarchy but by Liberal activists throughout the land. The party hierarchy absorbed these new activists and the foundation of new Liberal organisations, such as the Association of Liberal Councillors, further strengthened the grip local activists had developed on the party. Cyril Carr became chairman of LPO in 1972 and Trevor Jones followed him as President of the party in 1973. In 1976 a former Edinburgh council candidate defeated a former Finchley borough councillor in the first members' ballot ever to decide the leadership of a political party in this country. The Liberal revolution had occurred, but within the party, as the party's leadership was claimed by its own membership.

Mark Egan is a Ph.D student at University College, Oxford, and a member of the Liberal Democrat History Group committee. He served as guest editor for this issue of the Newsletter.

Remembering Beveridge

George Watson remembers William Beveridge, social scientist and Liberal, whose ideas shaped British postwar politics.

I first met William Beveridge (1879–1963) as a neighbour in north Oxford, shortly after he had retired there in 1954.

He was a peppy little man in his mid-seventies, with a formidable Scottish wife called Jessy whom he had married in his sixties. Young as I was, I found both of them slightly alarming, especially Lord Beveridge, and believe I would do so still. He was already a figure in history because of the Beveridge Report, which he would refer to unselfconsciously as ‘Beveridge’; she was blunt and resolute, ruled his private life and brooked no contradiction, whether in private or in public. A widow of his cousin, she had married him in December 1942 after a long period as his secretary, and in the very month his *Social Insurance and Allied Services* appeared. When he was elected Liberal MP for Berwick-on-Tweed in 1944, she is reputed to have told an eve-of-poll meeting: ‘You have your chance of Willum. Take it. When I had my chance of Willum I never hesitated for a moment.’ It was easy to imagine her saying it, and the natural eagerness of the Oxford University Liberal Club of those days to invite him to speak, it may now be revealed, was tempered by the consideration that he might send his wife instead.

His return to Oxford in old age, after nearly twenty years as Director of the London School of Economics and, after 1937, a time as Master of University College, Oxford, was partly dictated by climate. When Attlee sent him to the Lords in 1946, after losing Berwick, he offered him a post directing a new town in Northumberland. ‘I believe in new towns,’ I remember his saying in highly characteristic vein, since right conduct was always a matter of duty rather than inclination; so he went. There followed retirement to Edinburgh, out of deference, he implied, to his wife’s wishes. But he found both places oppressively cold – not surprisingly, perhaps, since he had spent the first five years of his life in Bengal, where his father was a judge. So he asked the Oxford college he had once headed to find him a flat, and they found him one that happened to be near mine.

To visit him there was to listen. I had nothing to say that would have interested him, in any case, and knew it, while he had a lifetime of achievement to talk about and few enough audiences to tell it to. His reputation for vanity was not wholly undeserved, but it was amusing rather than offensive and far too innocent, in any case, to offend. Besides, he had a lot to be vain about. He was the prime instance, with Maynard Keynes, of a truth which he was fond of enunciating and which became the title of his autobiography: that influence can count for more than power, and that

Liberals can decisively change the course of history without a seat in the cabinet room. He effected more from outside parliament, he would often say, than in it.

He did not welcome the title of the founder of the welfare state, which in any case was founded by Asquith in 1908, with state pensions, before he was thirty. Though a brother-in-law of R. H. Tawney and a friend of Sidney Webb, who had offered him the directorship of the LSE in 1919, he always rejected socialism, distrusted trade union power – it was a distrust the unions ardently returned after his attempts to discipline them during the first world war – and hated the dominance of class. I seldom heard him speak of foreign affairs, but gather that, unlike many socialists and conservatives between the wars, he had opposed the appeasement of Hitler, at least after the remilitarisation of the Rhineland in 1936. Like Keynes, he unhesitatingly took the Liberal Whip in the House of Lords. ‘That is partly because I am, and have always been, a Liberal,’ I recall his saying, ‘and partly because only the Liberals, as a party, accepted my plans for a national health service in 1942–43.’

That is a point that needs enlarging, and it is a pity that Beveridge himself, in his autobiography *Power and Influence* (1953), did not enlarge on it. The opposition of the Labour leaders to a national health service is something he spoke of at length in his later years, and it is worth more than the sentence or two he gives it in his memoir. Nor did Michael Foot, who has spoken of it with some bitterness in public interviews, dare tell the story in his life of Aneurin Bevan. Bevan is said to have complained in later life about the hostility of cabinet colleagues to the NHS in 1947–48, but his biographer has not quoted the terms in which they objected. No doubt the myth that Labour always supported public welfare is now too crucial a fabrication to be publicly unmasked.

The doubts of the Labour leaders about the Beveridge Report in 1942–43, which were talked down by their own backbenchers and by the House of Commons itself, were individual and various. Ernest Bevin wanted the unions at the heart of any health provision; Herbert Morrison, it is said, wanted local government to be there. But behind it all, Beveridge felt, lay a profound fear of humanising capitalism. To humanise capitalism, after all, is to risk preserving it, and the Labour leaders wanted to abolish it. Events suggest that their fears were not misplaced. Much of the western industrial world was humanised, in that sense, after 1945; and though Beveridge did not live to see it,

even the communist world had come to realise by the 1980s that it takes a free market to generate the wealth needed to maintain an ever costlier programme of public welfare. So welfare needs competition and competition needs welfare. An old American Trotskyite who had worked for Franklin D. Roosevelt in the 1930s remarked grimly, after the war: 'I guess we saved capitalism'. Socialists in that remote era had thought they were fooling the liberals. In fact it was the other way around. When I worked at the Council of Europe in Strasbourg in the 1950s, I recall the amazement and consternation with which Labour MPs discovered that our continental neighbours, without socialist governments, already offered greater welfare provision than Britain after six years of Labour; and when the two Germanies united in 1990, the welfare provision of the capitalist West was more than twice that of the socialist East. The contrast between mainland China and Taiwan is even greater. Socialism has been a stingy provider of welfare, on a long view, and those who assume a connection between socialism and social welfare should think again.

It was the link between welfare and free enterprise that fascinated me in Beveridge's talk in his last years. He rejected all socialist suspicion of a voluntary contribution; he resented the exclusion, in 1948, of friendly societies from the newly created health service; and in letters he sent me while I was editing *The Unservile State* (1957) – letters which I wish I had preserved – he insisted he had always sought a welfare society rather than a welfare state. There is no presumption, in his view, that the state is always the best provider – an argument little heeded while he lived, but now back at the very centre of domestic policy. Odd that he should now be celebrated as one of the founders of the welfare state. In his own view, in age, he was a sceptic of statism, and I believe it was in *The Unservile State* that the phrase he was proud to have coined, the 'Welfare Society', first saw print.

Beveridge's warmth and humour have often been doubted, and his memory, though respected, is to a marked degree unloved. That is not to be wondered at. Nobody, you felt when you were with him, ever better deserved the title of a social scientist. His zest was all for factual detail. Indeed he saw himself, after an arts training at Charterhouse and Balliol, followed by reading for the Bar, as something of a scientist *manqué*, and I should guess that he inherited from his Scottish ancestors a healthy distrust of easy emotion. I never heard him mention painting, fiction or music. But he was not altogether cold, and not altogether without a sense of fun.

I recall two exceptional incidents. One, when he stood admiringly in front of a well-stocked, glass-fronted bookcase in his sitting room in Oxford, packed with volumes dating from the seventeenth century, and proclaimed: 'All these books were written by members of my family.' The other was at my eve-of-poll meeting at Cheltenham town hall in October 1959, where out of great kindness he spoke for me at the age of 80. Perhaps it was the only joke I ever heard him utter, which makes it the more memorable. 'I hope,' he told a large audience, 'that I am the only person in this room who is not voting Liberal tomorrow.' There was a short, dramatic silence while the audience gasped and the platform shuddered. But the speaker had not forgotten his heritage of faith or blown his lines. 'That,' he went on triumphantly, 'is because I am a peer of the realm and do not have a vote.' It earned him a roar and a cheer, and it is good to record that Cheltenham, like his own Berwick-on-Tweed, is a Liberal seat again.

George Watson, who is a fellow of St John's College, Cambridge, was the editor of the Unservile State Group from 1952 to 1990 and is the author of The Idea of Liberalism (Macmillan, 1985).

Research in Progress

This column aims to assist the progress of research projects currently being undertaken, at graduate, postgraduate or similar level. If you think you can help any of the individuals listed below with their thesis – or if you know anyone who can – please get in touch with them to pass on details of sources, contacts, or any other helpful information. If you know of any other research project in progress for inclusion in this column, please send details to Duncan Brack at the address on the back page.

The Liberal Party and foreign and defence policy, 1922–88.

Book and articles; of particular interest is the 1920s and '30s; and also the possibility of interviewing anyone involved in formulating the foreign and defence policies of the Liberal Party. Dr R. S. Grayson, 8 Millway Close, Oxford OX2 8BJ.

The Liberal Party 1945–56. Contact with members (or opponents) of the Radical Reform Group during the 1950s, and anyone with recollections of the leadership of Clement Davies, sought. Graham Lippiatt, 24 Balmoral Road, South Harrow, HA2 8TD.

The political and electoral strategy of the Liberal Party 1970–79.

Individual constituency papers from this period, and contact with individuals who were members of the Party's policy committees and/or the Party Council, particularly welcome. Ruth Fox, Flat 4, Sefton Court, 133 Otley Road, Headingley, Leeds, West Yorkshire LS6 3PX.

The grass roots organisation of the Liberal Party 1945–

64; the role of local activists in the late 1950s revival of the Liberal Party. Mark Egan, University College, Oxford OX1 4BH.

Jo Grimond's leadership of the Liberal Party

'The personification and the hope of postwar Liberalism.' **Geoffrey Sell** examines the record of Jo Grimond.

Jo Grimond's leadership of the Liberal Party from 1956–67 made a difference not just to the fortunes of his party but to British politics. Such was his impact on the former that he has been described as: 'the personification and the hope of postwar Liberalism.'¹ His idealism, his imagination, his ability to communicate, his freshness, were clearly of central importance to the postwar revival of the Liberal Party. As such, he contributed more than any other individual to the reestablishment of a three-party system in the United Kingdom. His leadership was notable, for he was the first Liberal leader to have a major national profile since Lloyd George. As such, it was quite impossible from the early 1960s onwards to think about the Liberal Party without thinking of him.

When he became Liberal leader, the party that had once seemed a natural vehicle of government was close to extinction, commanding the support of little more than two per cent of the electorate and securing the return of only three MPs to Westminster without benefit of local pacts. In only fifteen constituencies in Great Britain at the 1955 general election were Labour and Conservatives not the top two parties. The pattern of party competition was that of a stable and balanced duopoly. Just six Liberal MPs were returned in 1955, reduced to five in 1957 with the loss of Carmarthen to Labour. The parliamentary party was rumoured to hold its meetings in a telephone kiosk and Conservative MP Sir Gerald Nabarro dubbed them 'the shadow of a splinter.'

Although it still occupied the status of third party of the land, its claim to be a national party was hollow. For it did not exist in half the constituencies in Britain. Probably no more than fifty seats had active Liberal Associations. Its residual support rested almost entirely on what was loosely, if inaccurately, described as the Celtic fringe. It was in danger of becoming a curiosity, as anachronistic and irrelevant as Jacobitism in 1760. Under Grimond's leadership the party went through the process of rebirth, discarding shibboleths such as free trade and once again becoming relevant to contemporary politics.

His leadership was significant because he led the Liberal Party out of the political wilderness. In doing so, he rejected any thought that it should be satisfied with a role as a 'brains trust standing on the sidelines of politics shouting advice to

Tories and Socialists alike.' It would not survive if it was content merely to 'write in the margins of politics.'² Instead the party was given a long term aim, power, and the seemingly remorseless process of electoral decline was halted and reversed. At his first assembly as leader, Grimond proclaimed, 'in the next ten years it is a question of get on or get out'. Under his leadership the first Liberal revival since 1929 occurred, thus giving early indications that the previously hegemonic two-party system was showing signs of strain.

Grimond, like Paddy Ashdown, was genuinely interested in policy and ideas. He was the catalyst for a real renaissance in Liberal thinking. In his books *The Liberal Future* (1959) and *The Liberal Challenge* (1963), and in numerous pamphlets, he gave political liberalism a new direction and purpose. This was based on a reassertion of the traditional liberal insistence that ideas and principles were more important than interests, a rejection of class-based politics and of the lingering imperialism of the postwar era, and a belief in the possibility of a realignment in British politics to reflect the real division between progressives and conservatives.

On issues such as the abolition of Britain's independent nuclear deterrent it was principally due to his leadership that the party adopted this policy position. He set about making it a pacemaker for such ideas as entry into the European Common Market and non-socialist planning. He deserves credit for placing on the political agenda issues such as how Britain should handle her relative decline in the world and how government should be brought closer to the people. As late as 1988, Ashdown could say, 'We have lived for far too long off ... the intellectual capital of the Jo Grimond era.'³

Increasingly as he became a national figure and a popular television personality, Grimond came to embody the Liberal Party, and to set the tone and quality of the Liberal appeal. One of his greatest assets was an irreverent iconoclasm, which enabled him to deflate the establishment and the status quo. In the era of *That Was the Week that Was* and *Private Eye* this quality served him well. He was astute enough to articulate the prevailing anti-establishment, anti-deference mood found particularly amongst the young.

As well as providing a policy lead, Grimond gave the party a sense of political direction which it had previously

lacked. Realignment of the left, the uniting of Britain's progressive forces, was a central theme of his leadership. This required the Liberals to replace Labour as a major party. Yet the heart of the strategy contained a paradox. For success it required a systematic and sustained attempt to capture Labour's vote, but this was never really mounted. Where the Liberal Party did come a good second, it did so for the most part in Conservative seats in the south far away from Labour's industrial heartlands. Nonetheless, he sowed the seeds of realignment, the fruits of which were reaped at the 1983 general election when the Alliance polled 25%. Roy Jenkins generously paid tribute to Grimond, claiming that he was the father of the Alliance.

While the electoral fortunes of the Liberals improved in the years after Grimond's resignation, paradoxically the calibre of its leaders steadily declined. Certainly neither Thorpe nor Steel enjoyed the same rapport with party members that Grimond did. Liberal Democrat MP Sir Russell Johnston states of Grimond's leadership: 'Liberals are not natural leader-worshippers but we were captivated and proud.'⁴ The ability to motivate and install confidence is an essential quality of leadership. Hugo Young noted upon Grimond's retirement from the House of Commons in 1983 that he left one legacy: 'Most modern Liberals between the ages of 40 and 55 joined the Liberal Party when their similarly radical contemporaries were joining Labour. And the reason they did so was Jo Grimond. His vision, oratory and personal magnetism is what drew into Liberal politics many hard-headed people led by David Steel himself.'⁵

Although an inspiration to many Liberals, some of whom still call themselves Grimondites, there was a persistent criticism that a small third party needed a brasher touch from its leader. He was a politician dedicated to the decencies who played the political game according to the traditional rules. The Liberals' prospect of political advance was held back by the inhibitions that their approach to politics imposed upon their activities. His leadership was therefore flawed. As a promoter of ideas there were few better, for he gave the party a clear vision of the kind of society he wanted, but the strategy of how to achieve it was less clearly marked out. For Grimond's political persona was paradoxical. Although he was an extremely popular politician both within and outside his party, nevertheless



'THE NUTSHELL KING' *Daily Mirror*, 11 April 1959

his personality contained ingredients which help to reveal why it failed to make the electoral breakthrough. Instinctively radical in his impatience with the hierarchies of English life, he was himself a quintessentially establishment figure, (Eton, Oxford and the Bar) whose own career owed much to the network of influence. Shrapnel notes that although Grimond was in some respects radical, he did not look it or sound it. He 'had the air of a Whig grandee in modern dress.'⁶ As such it was a political stance unlikely either to fire the disaffected masses of the 20th century or to instil any overwhelming desire for office. Grimond lacked the pugilistic instincts of Ashdown or the ruthlessness of Steel.

Let us allow Grimond almost the final word. Asked to sum up his achievement he replied:

A leader who had grasped more firmly the 'schwerpunkt' of politics could perhaps have achieved more; a leader perhaps who had more confidence in his and the party's destiny ... The power of the leader is overestimated, yet in the short term the leader is preminent.⁷

Nevertheless, the Grimond decade will be remembered as a time when Liberals sowed for others to reap. He lit the blue touch paper of revived third-party politics. Consequently he made a unique contribution for, as David Steel commented: 'No single person has done more than Jo Grimond in the whole postwar era to keep alive the values and principles of Liberalism. Without the foundations

he laid, nothing in the years ahead could have been attempted.'⁸ That is his real achievement.

Graham Sell is a college lecturer and a member of the Liberal Democrat History Group committee. He has recently completed his Ph.D thesis on 'Liberal revival: British Liberalism and Jo Grimond 1956-67'.

Notes

- 1 I. Bradley, *The Strange Rebirth of Liberal Britain* (Chatto & Windus, London, 1985), p. 2.
- 2 *Liberal News*, 27 September 1957, p. 1.
- 3 *Ibid.*, 19 February 1988.
- 4 *The House Magazine*, 8 November 1993, p. 20.
- 5 *Sunday Times*, 6 March 1983, p. 11.
- 6 N. Shrapnel, *The Performers – Politics as Theatre* (Constable, London, 1978) p. 201.
- 7 J. Grimond, *Memoirs* (Heinemann, London, 1979) p. 205.
- 8 *Liberal News*, 23 November 1982.

Fighting Orpington

The stunning byelection victory of Orpington in 1962 was the high point of the first Liberal revival. Eric Lubbock (now Lord Avebury) was the candidate.

I joined the Liberal Party in 1960, soon after we came back to Orpington, where we shared my mother's house. The constituency party was small, and I very soon found myself on the executive, which used to meet at the 'Oven Door' in Green Street Green. From there it was a small step to fighting the council ward of Downe in the Orpington Urban District Council election of 1961. It had about 750 voters on the roll and it was not difficult to canvass them almost 100%. We had the advantage that my family had lived in Downe for several generations, and although the village had always returned a Tory, we took 75% of the vote.

In September 1961, the sitting Member, Donald Sumner, was appointed a County Court judge, to make way for Peter Goldman, Ian Macleod's bright young protégé at Tory Central Office, for whom Orpington seemed a natural constituency. It had returned a Tory member since time immemorial, and everyone remembered crusty old Sir Waldron Smithers, Sumner's predecessor, who was held in great affection by everyone. He used to play the organ at constituents' weddings, was seldom quite sober, and kept his mouth shut in the House.

The Liberal candidate was Jack Galloway (no relation of George, to the best of my knowledge), a Scottish engineer who travelled extensively and spoke authoritatively on Britain's policy on Thailand or Peru at every meeting of the executive. He had done respectably at the 1959 general election, beating Labour into third place by a whisker, although Sumner's majority had still been nearly 15,000. Jack had an attractive girlfriend, whose name I think was Faye, and she was seen frequently at Liberal events. They were married in the summer of 1961.

Shortly after Sumner had resigned the seat, the Liberal executive met to plan the campaign. It was at this point that Jack revealed a slight problem. He had not understood the technical terms nisi and absolute, and had married Faye before his first marriage had been properly dissolved. The judge had contented himself with a reprimand, but the first wife was threatening to attend every meeting during the campaign, and denounce Jack as a bigamist. Everybody agreed that Jack was not to blame, but there was extensive discussion about the effect of the vindictive woman heckling Jack right up to the eve of poll. It was agreed, with reluctance, that he should be asked to resign.

The government could have moved the writ at any moment, and we had to move fast. While the officers were meeting in the house of the agent, Christine Parker, she

telephoned the Chief Whip, Donald Wade, and explained the situation. She asked whether the party could suggest a well-known personality to fight the election – Mark Bonham Carter for instance, who had won Torrington at a byelection in 1958, only to lose it again at the following general election. Donald told her that an outsider would have no time to become established with the voters, and he thought that we should pick somebody local – a councillor, perhaps.

Christine's telephone was in the hall, and she and her husband John used to write telephone numbers all the way up the wall next to it. She returned to the living room of the semi-detached house in Glentrammon Road, and reported the conversation. Her eye travelled round the room until it rested on me. 'Why don't you do it, Eric?' she demanded. I explained that my employers had been fairly tolerant of my council activities, but that I was sure they wouldn't be pleased if I took weeks off for the byelection. Then others chipped in, and I was persuaded to ask the boss.

The next morning I marched in on the managing director of the Charterhouse Group, Bill Warnock, and put it to him. 'What were the figures last time?' he asked. 'Twenty-five thousand Conservative, nine and a half thousand Liberal, nine thousand Labour,' I replied. He thought for just a moment then graciously said I could have three weeks off with pay!

The weeks passed, and the writ was not moved as autumn turned to winter. We moved into the old cinema as our byelection headquarters. One Saturday night the building mysteriously burned down, and we suspected that Pratap Chitnis, who had been drafted in to run the campaign, had thrown a cigarette end into the bulging wastepaper basket. Others had different theories. 'I never thought the Tories would descend to these depths,' a passer-by told me on the High Street. We retrieved some charred Tory posters from the ruins, removed from various places by the Young Liberals the previous night. Jeremy Thorpe removed the evidence in the boot of his car, and had a bonfire a safe distance outside the constituency.

Meanwhile, Peter Goldman, the whizz-kid Tory candidate, was busy making enemies and alienating the faithful. He made it plain that he didn't intend to live in Orpington, and that he was doing the inhabitants a great favour by agreeing to become their MP. January and February were bitterly cold, and he travelled round in a well-heated caravan, in which he gave audiences to those

who could be tempted out of their houses by the Tory canvassers.

The government of Harold Macmillan was beginning to lose its way. Iain Macleod, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, announced the first ever pay pause, and the nurses as usual were the victims. They had a claim at the point of settlement when the guillotine fell, and got nothing.

As polling day approached, everybody could feel something in the air. The journalists who visited the constituency mostly sat in the 'Maxwell', a dingy pub just down the road from the station, but they couldn't help seeing that Orpington was a sea of green posters. (The change to orange happened later.) Yet only one journalist, Jeremy Hornsby of the *Daily Express*, predicted that the Tories were going to lose.

At the count, the piles of ballot papers soon made the result fairly plain long before it was announced, as the TV cameras showed. Mr Goldman's face began to show the misery of unexpected defeat, while outside the Civic Hall an excited crowd was growing. We all thought we were going to win – our canvass returns said so, and we had unswerving confidence in their accuracy – but the size of the landslide exceeded our wildest dreams. A Tory majority of 15,000 had turned into a Liberal majority of nearly 8,000,

the biggest swing in recorded history since universal adult franchise.

To many, it seemed that overnight we were on the point of recovering all the ground lost by the Party since the last Liberal government of 1915. Hopes were only slightly dampened when we narrowly missed capturing West Derbyshire a few weeks later, and Emlyn Hooson's victory

in Montgomeryshire seemed to confirm the trend. *Punch* made a Liberal cabinet out of six MPs. In practical terms, the result was a powerful demonstration of the effectiveness of tactical voting. 'Brothers, we're on our way,' George Brown told Labour voters in Orpington, but most of them realised then, and since, that the only way of defeating the Tories was for Labour and Liberal voters to support the strongest challenger. The British political system may treat any discussion of agreements between parties as unfit for polite conversation, but the lesson of Orpington may be that the people know better how to achieve the results they want.



Jo Grimond, Liberal leader at the time of the Orpington byelection.

Lord Avebury was MP for Orpington from 1962 to 1970, serving as Chief Whip from 1963. He has chaired the British Parliamentary Human Rights Group since 1976.

A Liberal Democrat History Group seminar

Liberal-Tory Pacts

– Partnership of principle or struggle for survival? –

Speaker: Dr Michael Kandiah Chair: Peter Thurnham MP

Michael Kandiah, Senior Fellow at the Institute of Contemporary British History, will speak on Liberal-Conservative relations in the 1940s and '50s.

He will look at both the national negotiations which concluded in the offer of a cabinet post to Clement Davies by Churchill in 1951, and at the local pacts in Huddersfield and Bolton, which put Liberal MPs in Parliament.

Dr Kandiah is in the process of writing a biography of Lord Woolton.

David Lloyd George Room, National Liberal Club,

1 Whitehall Place, London SW1

7.00 pm, Monday 24 March

The Lessons of Orpington

Mark Egan analyses the importance of the byelection result for the Liberal Party.

In the article above, Lord Avebury presents his personal reflections on his triumph at the 1962 Orpington byelection. The result was staggering, more so than in an era when byelection upsets were relatively infrequent. A Conservative majority of 14,760 was transformed into a resounding Liberal advantage of 7,855 votes. It was only the second Liberal byelection gain since 1929. More importantly, Orpington could not conceivably be considered as traditional Liberal territory. The Orpington byelection represented a completely new phenomenon in Liberal politics.

Immediately following the byelection, its message seemed clear. No Tory seat in the country could be considered safe from the resurgent Liberals; the political landscape was about to be destroyed by an electoral earthquake. In the light of Orpington, all subsequent byelections during that parliament and the 1964 general election were disappointments. Political realignment failed to occur. The Liberal Party failed to make the sweeping gains Orpington suggested were possible. After 1964, Liberal activists resigned themselves to the realisation that lasting political success could not be achieved overnight, if at all.

The real lessons of the Orpington byelection were set out immediately after the byelection by Donald Newby, in his excellent pamphlet *The Orpington Story*. Most commentators at the time of Orpington failed to spot the true nature of the Liberals' success. Both the Conservative and Liberal Parties commissioned surveys to try and explain the result. Jo Grimond was astute enough to note that the byelection was won because of 'seven years' hard work in the constituency'. This was the main lesson of Orpington. Determined hard work to build up a constituency organisation which could match the Tories' efforts, allied to consistent local government success, finally led to a Parliamentary breakthrough which was sustained through three different election campaigns.

Prior to 1955, Orpington Liberal Association was typical of dozens of Liberal organisations across the south of England. The Liberal Association survived because a hard core of committed Liberals felt it was worthwhile to keep meeting to hear Liberal speakers and to raise money for the occasional general election contest. Politically, the Conservatives dominated every aspect of the town's life. The Orpington Conservative Association could count on 10,000 members; the Liberals could boast less than 200. The Labour Party were satisfied with their ability to win a couple of council wards and hold a respectable second place in general elections. Everyone knew that Labour could never challenge the Tory hegemony in Orpington, or indeed in

dozens of similar constituencies across the south of England. But how could the desperately weak Liberals hope to take on the Tory establishment?

The first steps towards Liberal victory were taken in 1956, when the Liberal Association decided to form ward committees and contest local elections. This would seem an obvious step to the modern day Liberal Democrat, but in the 1950s many Liberals argued that party politics should be kept out of local government. Whatever the merits of this argument, the Liberal involvement in Orpington's council elections had a number of beneficial effects on the strength of the Liberal cause in the town. First, the Liberal intervention attracted a great deal of local publicity. The Liberals produced a manifesto for Orpington Urban District which was dissected in the local press. Liberal candidates were forced to respond to the attacks of their political opponents. For the first time in years the town was moved by political debate.

Secondly, the Liberal Association was forced to find new sources of income in order to fund the council candidates' campaigns. Regular Liberal socials were commenced. These efforts brought new members into the Liberal Association and this in turn helped the ward committees find new election helpers. Thirdly, the Liberals needed to adopt an electoral strategy which would maximise their chances of success. Financially unable to fight all of the wards in the district, the Liberals targeted the wards in which their most prominent activists lived and worked, and fought under a slogan of 'Labour can't win!'. Labour were unable to win any wards outside their two citadels – Poverest and St. Mary Cray. The Liberals exploited this weakness mercilessly and by 1962 Labour were unable to win even in these areas.

The Liberals in Orpington discovered that hard work bred success and that success bred further success. The Liberals won their first council seats in 1959. In 1961 the Liberals outpolled the Tories for the first time in local elections – a full ten months before the byelection. After the byelection, at the 1962 local elections, the Liberals won control of Orpington Urban District Council. Each election triumph strengthened the ward organisations, brought new members into the Liberal Association, and enhanced the party's electoral credibility. All of these factors were to prove crucial at the 1962 byelection.

Another factor often overlooked was the importance of prominent local politicians in pushing Liberal organisations forward. Men like Cyril Carr in Liverpool, John Sargent in Southend and George Suggett in Newbury were crucial in their localities. They instigated the reorganisation of their Liberal associations; they publicised

Liberal policies and ideals in their towns; they stood for election and attracted like-minded acquaintances into the Liberal Party. Orpington Liberal Association was blessed with a number of excellent local politicians who were a credit to the party. Donald Newby, chair of the Orpington Liberal Association in the late 1950s, was a brilliant innovator responsible for instigating the association's social programme. He later went on to edit the 'Penny Liberal' and the Liberal magazine *New Outlook*. Alfred Howard stood as Liberal candidate in Orpington at the 1955 general election and stood for the council for four successive years before gaining a seat in 1959. He later became vice-chairman of the council. Christine Parker acted for two years as an unpaid, full-time agent and was credited by Newby with inventing the shuttleworth knocking-up system in Orpington two years before other Liberal associations adopted it. Without these activists, and others beside, the Orpington byelection would have had a different outcome.

It was not by chance that the revival of Liberalism in Orpington coincided both with Jo Grimond's election as Liberal Party leader and with the Suez crisis. Newby mentions both events in his account of the byelection victory. Grimond's qualities are also assessed elsewhere in this newsletter and it would be foolish to suggest that national factors did not influence the result. The Tory government was tired and discredited; the Tory candidate was ill-suited to the rigours of the byelection circus; Liberal workers poured into the constituency, as they had done at many byelections since the mid-1950s.

Grimond's role was crucial in being able to attract into the Liberal Party a substantial body of intellectual and practical politicians. Grimond oversaw the reinvention of Liberal policy. In 1962 the party published eight reports into Liberal policy, each report written by experts in their field, including Michael Fogarty, Brian Keith-Lucas and Richard Lamb. The party benefited from the positive media coverage generated by this renewal and this helped to bring more members and activists into the party. Grimond was also able to attract key electioneers into the Liberal fold. Two in particular, Pratap Chitnis and Dominic le Foe, were heavily involved in the Orpington byelection. However, if the reinvigoration of the Liberal Party is over-emphasised one must explain why it failed to win more byelections during the 1959-64 parliament and why it failed to win more seats at the 1964 election. The Orpington byelection was not an illustration of how much Grimond had changed the Liberal Party but of how well Liberal activists could change the party themselves, by working over a period of years to overcome the party's weaknesses and challenge the Tory dominance of a particular locality.

The Orpington byelection bequeathed a substantial legacy to the Liberal Party. First, it was assumed that the Liberals were now able to appeal to a particular stratum of society – the 'new' middle class. The myth of 'Orpington man', the young professional newly established in an emerging industry,

dogged the Liberal Party throughout the 1960s. The 1964 election campaign was fought on the premise that this new, young group would swing to the Liberal Party, delivering gains in several suburban constituencies. This did not happen. Rather, the Liberals' gains in 1964 and 1966 were primarily in the Scottish Highlands.

Secondly, the importance of byelections to the Liberals' electoral strategy also became firmly entrenched in the party's psyche. Byelections brought media attention and allowed the Liberals to compete on a level playing field with the other parties. However, the Liberals gained just two more seats at byelections during the 1960s – Roxburghshire in 1965 and Birmingham Ladywood in 1969. The former was an area of traditional Liberal strength and had been represented by a Liberal MP as recently as 1951. Local government success provided the firm basis for victory in the latter. It was not fully understood for several years that byelections themselves did not necessarily benefit the party. What counted for more was the slow, steady build-up of local party strength, allied to local government success. By the 1970s the Liberals' byelection team was as effective as any political organisation in the country. Even so, the Liberal Party won only six byelections during the decade.

The question remains, if Orpington showed that local government success can be translated into parliamentary success, why did so few areas with strong Liberal associations and Liberal councils return Liberal MPs? It was often reported that where Liberal candidates did well in local elections, voters told them that they would vote Liberal locally but not nationally. This suggests that the Liberal Party struggled to overcome its lack of electoral credibility under the first past the post system. Liberal parliamentary candidates faced two obstacles which local Liberal candidates could normally avoid. Effective leaflet delivery and canvassing requires a far more extensive political organisation across a constituency than across a ward. In parliamentary constituencies it was common for some wards to experience an intensive Liberal campaign effort, but for other wards to receive nothing but an election address. Secondly, in general elections voters help to select a government. After 1945 it was usual for too few Liberal candidates to stand to enable a Liberal government to be formed, even if all of them were to be elected. Furthermore, the Liberals' modest poll ratings and their existing number of MPs suggested that even when a full slate of candidates was adopted the Liberals had no chance. The 'wasted vote' argument is thus far more effective at a national than a local level, where it is relatively easy to field a full slate of candidates and where the issue at stake – control of the council – is perceived by the electorate to be less vital.

Orpington was a watershed in the Liberal Party's history because, as Newby noted at the time, local activists had it within their power gradually to build up their own strength again and start winning elections. The road from Orpington has been littered with disappointment, but the lessons of the byelection are still relevant today.

Abortion Reform 1967

Sir David Steel remembers the battles over one of the key pieces of social reform legislation of the 1960s.

Before 1967 there had been six attempts to reform the abortion law in the House of Commons and two in the House of Lords. Since the Termination of Pregnancy Bill, which I sponsored, was enacted, there has been one amendment, which I supported.

Abortion and homosexuality were the subject of two great social reforms which had yet to be passed by the 1960s. Both had been piloted through the Lords and required champions in the Commons. My third place in the ballot for Private Members' Bills at the start of the long session of 1966 allowed me to sponsor one of them. I decided, after much thought and consultation, to take on abortion.

The 1965 Church of England report, *Abortion: an ethical discussion*, was a seminal publication and it remains a powerful and positive Christian force opposed to the absolutist position under the previous law. The report was a major influence, not only on the choice of issue to take on in 1966, but also on the direction the Bill would take through its legislative stages. The conclusions of the report stated that it was: 'the feeling that the interest of the mother is least well served by the existing law, and a humane anxiety for her, that lends most strength to the movement for reform of the law in this country today'. The report highlighted some of the anomalies which had surrounded abortion, mainly in the various religious denominations. For example, the report challenged head on the view of the Catholic Church that all abortion is murder, a view which was reiterated by the Catholic Bishops at the time of the passage of the Bill: 'All destruction of life in the womb is immoral'. The report argued that: 'there has developed a casuistry to match the new medical possibilities,' and illustrated the point by showing that even a Catholic gynaecologist would be permitted by his Church to terminate an anencephalic pregnancy (one in which the foetus has no brain); consequently, it could not be said that the defence of the inviolability of the foetus, even in Catholic tradition, was absolute.

The Bill was framed, with the assistance of my co-sponsors: neighbouring MP Alex Eadie (Lab) and Lord Lambton (Con), and with the support of the Abortion Law Reform Association. The British Medical Association (BMA) and the General Practitioners were also supportive, mainly owing to the numbers of women who went through the trauma of illegal back street abortion – estimated at between 40,000 and 200,000 a year before the Bill was passed. Indeed, the former Secretary General of the BMA, Dr John Marks,

said on his retirement: 'Looking back over these forty years it seems to me that the event which has had the most beneficial effect on the public health during that period was the passage of David Steel's Abortion Bill'.

The passage of the Bill itself was far from easy, with fierce and organised opposition from anti-abortionists inside and outside Parliament, but perhaps the greatest problem was parliamentary time. Because of the controversial nature of the Bill the passage was long and protracted. The Committee stage alone took twelve weeks, and the Report Stage was reached a year after the initial publication. Because of the filibustering of the opponents extra time was needed and the support of the Labour government of the time was vital.

Throughout this time there was a furious public debate with rallies, radio and television broadcasts, and my mail bag was huge. The Bill was also a focus for a new development in political practices. The organised campaigns by both sides were a marvel to behold; much of the lobbying practices today, I feel, are in the mould of those started in 1967.

The high levels of discussion and thoroughness of the arguments rehearsed then have not changed substantially today, and in the recent examples of pressure for reform in Northern Ireland and the Channel Isles the strongly anti-abortionist wing paraded many of the tactics they used thirty years ago.

With the support of the government for parliamentary time – a further two sittings for the Bill were allowed – it passed the third reading in the early morning of 14 July. The Bill finally received Royal Assent on 27 October 1967.

In my whole experience of debate on the subject I have always envied those who are able to adopt positions of moral certainty such as 'to kill life in the womb is always wrong' or 'it is a woman's right to choose.' My Bill was based on neither of these assumptions, but on the more difficult one of conflicts of rights. I sought to create a positive state of law where medical practitioners could lawfully balance the rights and conditions of the mother against the assumption of the right to develop the full life of the foetus. I do not believe, with all of the controversy surrounding the issue, that the underlining principle has altered or the merits for it diminished.

Rt Hon Sir David Steel MP has been MP for Roxburgh, Selkirk and Peebles (now Tweeddale, Ettrick and Lauderdale) since 1965. He was Leader of the Liberal Party 1976–88, and Joint Leader of the Social & Liberal Democrats, 1988.

The Sutton and Cheam Byelection

The Sutton and Cheam byelection was won for the Liberal Party in December 1972.

Jennifer Tankard interviews the victor, Graham (now Lord) Tope.

When and why did you join the Young Liberals ?

I joined the Sutton and Cheam Young Liberals in 1967, at the age of 23. At the time I lived in Coulsdon and was going out with a girlfriend who lived in Epsom, so the Cheam village pub that the Young Liberals met in was about half way between.

The main reason I joined was because in the mid sixties the 'Red Guards' were taking the Liberals by storm and appeared to many young people as radical and exciting. Jo Grimond, then party leader, was also influential. Grimond was admired by many young people who thought his views were different and more interesting than the other party leaders. The Young Liberals were attractive because they were far more radical than the Conservatives and far less controlled than the very centralised Labour Party. The Young Liberals were achieving key changes at Liberal Party conferences, which discussed highly emotive issues for young people such as nuclear weapons and the Vietnam war.

When was your first party conference, and what are your recollections of conferences in the sixties and seventies?

My first conference was in Edinburgh in 1968. I attended on behalf of the Sutton and Cheam Liberal Party, who contributed £10.00 towards my expenses. The Young Liberals ran an alternative fringe conference at Edinburgh which explored new ideas about developing liberalism and the Liberal Party. In the sixties, large numbers of Young Liberals attended conferences and we could get hundreds of votes together on key issues.

The 1970 Conference at Eastbourne was a key event in developing the Liberal Party. Following the bad Liberal results at the previous general election, there was considerable pressure for the party to develop a new strategy. The Young Liberals moved a resolution calling for community politics to become a key plank of Liberalism, which was adopted, although widely misunderstood by many of the party's senior politicians. Jeremy Thorpe always equated it with being a good constituency MP, rather than with a radical platform for change. But many others welcomed community politics with great enthusiasm as a new way forward for Liberalism and the party.

I had already made my name in the party by 1970. At the 1969 party conference in Brighton, I arrived on the second or third day having been freshly released from prison in Czechoslovakia. I had been arrested and detained for

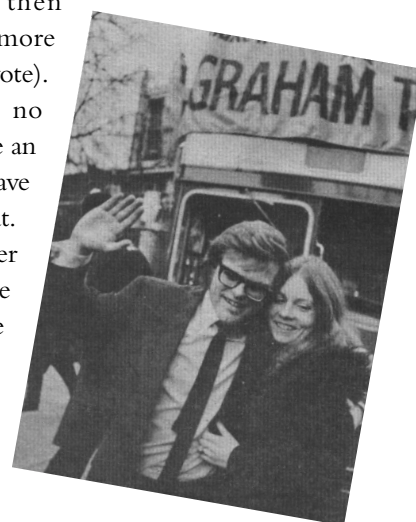
three weeks after being caught up in demonstrations to mark the anniversary of the invasion by Russia. These events received national coverage, with even national broadsheets such as the *Daily Telegraph* publishing articles in support of my release, and when I arrived in Brighton, I was hailed as a young liberating hero.

Had you always wanted to be an MP; and how were you selected for the Sutton and Cheam seat?

I had never planned a route to parliament, and became an MP by accident rather than design. I worked my way up through the Young Liberal hierarchy, becoming chair of the South Eastern Young Liberal Federation, the largest federation in the National League of Young Liberals (NLYL). I was regarded as something of a pain by the national party, and caused Jeremy Thorpe to write to Tony Greaves demanding that the NLYL get rid of me – Greaves was apparently regarded as a moderating influence on young radicals in those days! I then became Organising Vice Chairman of the NLYL; Gordon Lishman was secretary.

I always retained my involvement with the Sutton and Cheam local party. In 1970 I fought the Greater London Council (GLC) elections, managing to gain 6% of the vote, having spent most of the campaign delivering our election address. In May–June 1972, I went through a selection process and was chosen as prospective parliamentary candidate (PPC) for the Sutton and Cheam seat. I was asked to apply, and was one of several candidates. But given that in the 1970 election, Liberals in Sutton and Cheam won only 14% of the vote, the prime task of the candidate was regarded as retaining the deposit (which then required winning more than 12.5% of the vote). At the time I had no particular wish to be an MP and would not have fought any other seat.

Two months after being chosen as the PPC we knew there would be a by-election. As I had previously been selected I was the obvious choice to



fight this battle. The byelection was caused by the sitting Conservative MP being appointed as Governor to Bermuda.¹ The Conservatives assumed with such a safe seat (they had a 12,564 vote majority), there need be no concerns about holding it.

Can you tell me about the campaign and the key players and issues?

It was an extremely long campaign, lasting about 6 months. I went away on honeymoon in July 1972 and came back to find the byelection had been called to take place in December 1972.

Trevor Jones played an essential role in the campaign. He had started Focus in Liverpool, and used it to build up the party's local position and wanted an opportunity to demonstrate that his community politics techniques could be translated from Liverpool to other areas. Trevor approached me and asked if I would use his techniques and I decided that we had nothing to lose by doing so. Trevor was hugely influential in developing the campaign. The national party showed no interest at all in the byelection and in the Sutton and Cheam local party there were only about 20 activists that could be relied on to help. The Young Liberals were also extremely important and became actively involved in the campaign.

The Sutton and Cheam byelection was the first modern-style campaign run, and the first, outside Liverpool, widely to use Focus as the basis of the campaign. The first Focus went out while I was on honeymoon and was totally the work of Trevor Jones, as were all later editions of Focus until polling day. The campaign was driven by Trevor Jones, who produced all the leaflets and election material in Liverpool and then drove down on Saturdays to hand them over to the agent, Gerry Watkin. Leaflets were then delivered over the weekend. David Alton, a young Liverpool councillor, was one of the many regular weekend visitors who came to help in Sutton and Cheam.

Trevor Jones played an essential role in the campaign ... Trevor approached me and asked if I would use his techniques and I decided that we had nothing to lose by doing so.

Local issues were the central part of the campaign. The 'Fares Fair' concessionary travel scheme for the elderly was the main issue and proved very popular with local people. The famous 'Liverpool Mattress'² also featured in some of the many Focuses that went out.

One other local issue of importance was comprehensive education, although it became more of an issue whilst I was MP, rather than during the byelection itself. The Tory Council drew up proposals to 'go comprehensive'. The Liberals were strongly in favour of comprehensive education

and, in the polarised 'grammar versus comprehensive' debate, broadly supported the Council's proposals. But it split the local Tories totally (most of the Tory councillors responsible were subsequently deselected or 'retired'). The then Secretary of State for Education, Margaret Thatcher, made some amendments to the Council's proposals, which had the (intended) effect of wrecking them. The 1974 Council elections produced a new Tory Council whose principal platform was to 'save the grammar schools' and Sutton has them to this day, although now they are all grant-maintained.

At the time we were criticised for concentrating so much on local issues, but we did raise national issues and related them to local circumstances. Most of our Focus included part of the preamble to the Liberal Party's constitution or a quote from Jo Grimond. The byelection was also the first time a 'Grumble sheet' featured in Focus.

The one other important aspect of the campaign was my promotion as a young action hero of national fame, in contrast to the Conservative candidate – Mr Neil Macfarlane, a failed Tory candidate at the previous general election. Our campaign captured the imagination of local residents, who found it exciting and different. They responded by giving me a seven and a half thousand vote majority, which remained a record swing until the Christchurch byelection in 1994.

What role did the national Liberal Party play in the campaign?

For the majority of the six-month campaign the national Liberal Party remained totally disinterested in events in Sutton and Cheam. Partly because they were more interested in Cyril Smith's campaign in Rochdale and partly because they thought Sutton and Cheam was a no-hope seat, they left Trevor and the local party to get on with it.

About twenty people came to my agent's house most weekends, from all over the country. We'd wait for Trevor to arrive from Liverpool with his Triumph Stag stuffed full of unfolded Focus and then we'd spend the weekend getting the constituency delivered. It was great fun, but I think the greatest incentive was the superb catering provided by Gerry and particularly his wife, Pauline. They were great – and it lasted for about three months!

In November 1972, the *Sutton and Cheam Advertiser* conducted a straw poll of how people would vote. Their result was that the Liberals would win with a 1,500 majority, but their disbelief in this as a possibility led them to print the story in small print and to play it down. But this straw poll confirmed the gut feeling of the campaign team and so we managed to persuade Tim (Lord) Beaumont to pay for a private opinion poll. This again predicted we would win and finally persuaded the national party, about two weeks before election day, to take some interest in what we were doing. The first national party contingent arrived 10 days before polling day and transformed the campaign, making it better organised and more sophisticated, although by then



we had already clearly won. John Spiller was one of those sent by the national party who played a key role at the end of the campaign.

The first public meeting was held one week before polling day, on my 29th birthday.

By the end of the campaign we were getting 800–900 people coming to help in Sutton and Cheam every weekend. We'd had to move out of Gerry and Pauline's house by then, of course, and rented a large empty house awaiting redevelopment. It was full to bursting at weekends (the top floor was used for helpers who stayed for the whole weekend), but I've never known anywhere feel so empty as that building on the day after polling day! By a strange irony, years later, Gerry and Pauline bought one of the flats built on that site and that was where, sadly, Gerry died a year or so ago.

A large number of people in the Liberal Party were uncomfortable with the campaign style we adopted, feeling it was flashy and too avant garde. The campaign was later described as a 'community politics' campaign, as was the Rochdale campaign. But neither were. We won Rochdale because Cyril Smith was 'Mr Rochdale'. In Sutton and Cheam we won by running an excellent marketing exercise, one which we tried to make consistent with community politics. Actual community politics were left until after we had won the campaign.

Were there any national events or issues that influenced the campaign or the result?

The Uxbridge byelection took place on the same day as Sutton and Cheam and our candidate lost his deposit. Nationally the party was at 8% in the polls, so it was not a good time for Liberalism generally.

The opposition parties did virtually nothing in the way of campaigning. The local Conservatives were split over the choice of candidate. Tag Taylor had been the local council leader who had resigned his council leadership for the candidacy but failed to be selected. Instead Neil Macfarlane, a very unremarkable candidate, was chosen. Labour chose a candidate who lived in Wimbledon and was refused time off work for the campaign, so was hardly seen during the six month period.

The big national issue at the time was UK membership of the European Common Market which took effect three weeks after polling day. There were two specifically Anti-Common Market candidates (as well as Tory and Labour

candidates who were anti), but it never became a major issue in the byelection and they only got a handful of votes. People didn't care about Europe, or immigration, which was the other national issue of the time. After the byelection, the *Sunday Times* did a poll of former Tory voters which showed that the majority of them were not liberal and were anti-Europe and anti-immigration. At the time of the byelection Liberals had no seats on the local council; they had been the main opposition on the old Sutton and Cheam Council, but failed to win any since the London Borough was created in 1964.

So how did you win the Sutton and Cheam byelection?

Yes, how did a 29 year-old Young Liberal, who was openly pro-Europe, pro-comprehensive education and with very liberal views on immigration, win a suburban constituency, where those were certainly not the prevailing views? Moreover, how was it achieved with a record swing of 33% for a party on 8% in the opinion polls, on a day when that party was losing its deposit in another byelection in another London suburb only ten miles away?

In part, of course, it was anti-government. But it had to be more than that. I had succeeded in persuading local people that I was the local 'action man' who got things done. I was shaking the Tory complacency which had always dominated the area. Those who had always felt unrecognised and ignored believed they had found a champion. Quite simply, I had convinced them that the Liberal campaign slogan 'Graham Tope is on Your Side' was actually true!

None of this really had much to do with community politics. That came after the byelection. I realised we were getting there a few months after the byelection when a couple came to the surgery (another innovation for Sutton!) about a local problem and said: 'we know it's not your way to solve it for us; we want you to help us solve it for ourselves'. They didn't know it was called 'community politics', but they did know it was about politicians working with people, not just for them.³

Graham Tope was MP for Sutton and Cheam from 1972 to 1974. He has been Leader of Sutton Council since 1986, was created a life peer in 1994 and is the Liberal Democrat spokesperson in the Lords on education. Cllr Jennifer Tankard is Head of the Leadership Office of the London Borough of Sutton and a member of the Liberal Democrat History Group committee.

Notes:

- 1 The Conservative MP, Richard Sharples, had been Minister for State at the Home Office until he was appointed Governor of Bermuda. He was assassinated in Bermuda shortly after taking up his post.
- 2 A Liberal 'urban myth', an old mattress deliberately dumped in a street so that the local Focus team could pressure the council into removing it.
- 3 25 years after the byelection, in the Sutton and Cheam constituency there are now 24 Liberal Democrat councillors and only three Tories; Labour has not won a council seat since 1974. In the last council elections in 1994, the Liberal Democrats polled over 59% of the vote, compared to 53% in the 1972 byelection.

Young Liberal Influence and its Effects, 1970-74

Young Liberals provided the Liberal Party with activists, candidates and radical ideas. Ruth Fox examines the YL record of the early 1970s.

The years 1970–74 were among the most successful and controversial in the history of the National League of Young Liberals (NLYL). Condemned as ‘Red Guards’ in the late 1960s, the YLs in these years, while maintaining their radical image, achieved a level of political potency unmatched by the youth section of a political party of any shade in the years both before and after. In these years, although they were at loggerheads with the party’s parliamentary leadership, they were still able to exercise considerable influence on the direction of the party, through the mediums of community politics, direct action campaigning, and byelection successes. In so far as there was a Liberal revival in 1972–73, the YLs were partially responsible for it.

The reasons for joining the NLYL were diverse. Some had been attracted by the ideas and integrity of Jo Grimond, others because of their disillusionment with the Labour Government of 1964–70. The Liberal activist visiting constituents on the doorstep also had an impact, while for others steeped in liberal tradition, the party was their natural home.¹ The ideological direction of the movement in these years lacked uniformity. Many described themselves as ‘libertarian socialists’ which was an amalgam of various strands of political thought: from socialism they took their egalitarianism and analysis of capitalism; from syndicalism their understanding of worker control; from anarchism their libertarian perspective and commitment to direct action campaigning; and from pacifism their commitment to non-violence.²

Direct Action

The Young Liberals were first catapulted on to the national stage in 1970 through their involvement in the ‘Stop the Seventy Tour’ of the South African cricket team. The prominent role played by YLs Peter Hain and Louis Eaks guaranteed considerable publicity for the movement. Radical direct action politics, as embodied in this campaign, heralded an innovative development in political activity: the building of political networks between single issue pressure groups and the Liberal Party. It was seen as an extension of the Grimond idea of the party as an ‘umbrella’ under whose shade such single issue groups would find a conducive environment in which to flourish, and which would enable

the Liberal Party to construct a wide political base for electoral success. The YLs cultivated links with the emergent pressure groups of the period, particularly non-partisan organisations such as the National Council for Civil Liberties, the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament and Friends of the Earth. Their campaigns were often run in conjunction with these groups, who provided factual information and resources to supplement YL efforts.

Radical direct action politics, as embodied in this campaign, heralded an innovative development in political activity: the building of political networks between single issue pressure groups and the Liberal Party.

Such direct action campaigns contributed to the split with the party leadership in these years, which went beyond the inevitable differences to be expected resulting from differing levels of political experience and age disparities. Following the disappointment of the 1970 general election result, the leadership argued that the notorious activities of the NLYL had alienated floating voters who might naturally have turned to the Liberals as an alternative. The YLs thus became an easy but unsatisfactory scapegoat for the failing of others. Jeremy Thorpe had denounced the YLs as hooligans for their sabotage of cricket grounds in January 1970, and relations did not improve following the election when YL leader Louis Eaks, rejecting the party’s traditional pro-Israeli stance, spoke in support of the Palestinian cause and accused the Israelis of practising Zionist apartheid.

The next few years were marred by the existence of the Terrell Report. The work of a three-man commission appointed by Thorpe in 1971, it was an assessment of the relationship between the YLs and the main party. Many theories abound as to why Thorpe established the Commission, the general consensus being that it was set up as a ‘lawyers’ cabal’ to try and remove both Eaks and Hain from their positions within the YL movement. Thorpe’s determination to prevent Hain becoming Chairman of the NLYL had been clear earlier in the year, when a covert operation run from his office was uncovered, revealing an

attempt to rig the leadership election in favour of Thorpe's preferred candidate, Chris Green, by organising an increase in affiliations from YL branches in North Devon, who would then be eligible to vote in the YL elections. A subsequent party enquiry discovered that some of these affiliations came from members' cats!

The Commission was initially welcomed by YLs angered by the leadership's smear tactics. They objected, however, to the Commission reporting to the leader rather than the National Executive, and were scathing of accusations suggesting that some of

their members were communists. They condemned the Commission as an illiberal McCarthyite witch hunt in which charges were made without corroborative evidence. Terrell's conclusions concerned how to bring the NLYL under greater control at the centre and how to bring individual YLs under greater control at the constituency level. The independence of the NLYL was guaranteed by the party's constitution, and any change required a two-

thirds majority vote at the assembly. Given the low turn-out at assemblies, and the high proportion of YLs who made up that attendance, it would have been difficult for the leadership to guarantee victory on such changes. Publication and distribution of the report was suppressed.

YLs and Community Politics

The election of Tony Greaves as the new chairman of the YLs to replace Eaks in 1970 assuaged some concerns among the party leadership, but it also signalled the beginning of new problems, for Greaves was one of the chief exponents of 'community politics.' While the YLs were not its sole architect, they were at the forefront of the fight to ensure it became the party's main strategic focus, and it was their amendment at the 1970 Assembly that committed the party to 'help organise people in communities to take and use power'. The YLs were represented on all the major organs of the party, but it was through the assembly that they exercised most influence. Throughout the 1970s they constituted the single largest voting block in the party,

numbering on average one in four delegates. Well organised, they caucused late into the night discussing strategy and preparing voting slates for the following day's events. This combination of numerical advantage, and superior tactics and organisation ensured they were well placed to push their agenda and get resolutions passed.

The NLYL amendment at the 1970 Assembly proposed a shift away from a concentration on parliamentary achievement in greater favour of municipal politics. Others in the party also favoured a change of direction, with John

Pardoe promoting the 'broad front strategy' of fighting every seat at the next election. While the YLs did want to fight every seat, they believed that Pardoe's idea represented a 'politics as usual' approach on a greater scale. They were proposing a much greater diversification in political activity.

In the early years the YLs and the party did have some success, although not all byelection victories between 1970 and 1974 were fought on a community politics

basis. One of the most striking results was achieved at Sutton and Cheam in December 1972 (see page 13). The new Liberal MP, Graham Tope, was a Young Liberal who fought the middle class Surrey seat with a community politics approach. Assisted by the increasingly experienced byelection bandwagon of Trevor Jones, and staffed by numerous YL activists, the campaign was remarkable both for its organisation and outcome, achieving a swing of over 30% away from the Conservatives in the Liberals' favour. When people began to speak of a new Liberal revival between 1972 and 1973, following five byelection successes, the YLs and community politics practitioners took substantial credit. At the local level, outstanding results were also achieved, especially in Liverpool, where the Liberals went from one councillor in 1970 to become the single largest party in 1973, overcoming the long-term socialist dominance of the city.

Ultimately, however, the YL strategy did not prove a credible political alternative for the party, as it did not establish solutions in the long term for the issues with which the electorate were most concerned, such as



Young Liberals as the press saw them; the cover of the Guardian report on the Liberal Assembly, 1966.

unemployment and poverty. A local approach was too piecemeal to achieve this. The 1975 Wainwright Report on the organisation of the party acknowledged that such an approach required a prolonged campaigning effort that the party was organisationally incapable of sustaining.³ Other difficulties were encountered as a result of the problems inherent in the strategy. The first dilemma lay in how adequately to define a 'community', and how to deal with the fact that communities are not automatically benign. The second obstacle was how to overcome political apathy if individuals were to play a constructive role in community decision-making. Such problems meant that the strategy was never fully implemented as the YLs would have liked.

Young Liberal Policy

In their policy-making role YLs proudly promoted themselves as far more radical than the party elders. In reality an examination of their policy programme shows that with only nine exceptions the YLs subscribed to the same ideas as the mainstream party. Only in the areas of disarmament and defence, Palestine, the abolition of head teachers, the 100-day limit on prosecutions, the free legal aid service, the Invest-as-you-Earn community fund, and trade union and incomes policy were there any differences in these years. A number of themes can also be discerned; the promotion of a participatory democracy and 'community' interests, an aversion to bureaucracy and limitations on individual freedoms, and the importance of ecological factors in all areas of life.

Their greatest assertion of influence within the party remained the mobilisation of the rank and file in support of their community politics strategy at the 1970 Assembly.

Their programme as a whole however lacked consistency and coherence. Avowedly internationalist, they displayed protectionist tendencies in their support of import controls to protect British jobs, and their commitment to increased democratic participation did not sit easily with their opposition to referendums, proportional representation and coalition government. In many areas of policy in these years, the YLs were ahead of their time, such as environmental politics, gay rights, and support for the withdrawal of military forces from Northern Ireland. Devoid of responsibility, they could often say what others in the party were thinking but unwilling to articulate aloud.

Paradoxically, the YL experience in these years was that the Liberal Party, which had the least political influence in the country, offered its younger members greater influence

than any other party. They were the constituency activists, the parliamentary candidates, and the 'shock troops' of the byelection campaigns that lifted party spirits after the 1970 debacle.

Their greatest assertion of influence within the party remained the mobilisation of the rank and file in support of their community politics strategy at the 1970 Assembly, an achievement unsurpassed by any other political youth group. Their successes, however, only served to heighten the differences with the party leadership. The radicals were unconvinced of the potency of parliamentary politics, and the parliamentarians simply did not understand municipal politics, as few of their constituencies had a strong Liberal local council base.

The party's failure to make significant gains during the 1974 general elections, coupled with the debate that arose in the party over the prospect of coalition agreements as a result of the Thorpe-Heath talks in February 1974, meant that the YLs were distanced from the main sphere of Liberal activity in the years that followed, as the party's concentration returned to national rather than local politics. Municipal politics further assisted the decline of the YL movement, when individuals, increasingly drawn into the minutiae of local council issues, became able to devote less time to the NLYL. Instead they looked to the ALC as a more suitable focus for their activities, and it was this organisation that replaced the YLs as the radical arm of the party in the later 1970s and early 1980s.

Ruth Fox is a Ph.D student at Leeds University, studying the political strategy and philosophy of the Liberal Party 1970-83. She completed an M.A. thesis on 'the Young Liberals 1970-79'.

Notes:

- 1 Reasons for joining, as expressed in interviews with the author, by Graham Tope, Peter Hain and Steve Attack.
- 2 *Scarborough Perspectives* (YLM Publications, 1971), p. 5.
- 3 The Wainwright Report 1972-75: memorandum from John Spiller, retiring agent for North Cornwall, undated, p. 13.

Archive Sources

The Liberal Democrat History Group is aiming to develop and publish a guide to archive sources for students of the history of the Liberal Democrats and its predecessors.

Liberal Democrat archives are stored in the LSE Library, which also contains much Liberal Party material; SDP archives are kept at Essex University.

We would like to hear from anyone knowing the whereabouts of any relevant archive material, including the records of local and regional parties, internal groups and so on.

Please write to Duncan Brack at the address on the back page.

Postwar Liberalism

*Book Review: Arthur Cyr, Liberal Politics in Britain
(Transaction Books, New Brunswick, 1988). Reviewed by Duncan Brack.*

We still lack a good comprehensive history of the Liberal Party after 1945. Roy Douglas' *History of the Liberal Party 1895–1970* ends too soon, and the later parts are too anti-Common Market. John Stevenson's *Third Party Politics since 1945* suffers from too many inaccuracies. Chris Cook's *A Short History of the Liberal Party 1900–92* is probably the best, but concentrates too heavily on psephology at the expense of policy. All of these three, however, are considerably better than Arthur Cyr's *Liberal Politics in Britain*.

This 1988 version claims to be a substantial revision of the author's 1977 publication, *Liberal Party Politics in Britain*, though it reads as though the chapter on the SDP, plus a few other references to it and the Alliance, have simply been tagged on to a substantially unchanged earlier text.

Cyr's main problem is that he is, as his Introduction explains, a fan of Samuel Beer (of Harvard University) and his 'broad conceptual categorization and analysis of British party politics' – to the extent that more than half of all the references in chapter one are to a single work of Beer's. Beer's explanation for Liberal decline in the twentieth century is simple: the party was individualist and anti-class, and failed to adapt as British politics became increasingly collectivist and class-based after 1900. Along the way, Cyr entirely ignores the New Liberalism, with its agenda of progressive social reform, states that the Gladstonian Liberals opposed the extension of the franchise, writes as though Radicals, Whigs and Liberals were entirely separate organisations and implies that the Liberal Party did not change its policy or structure in any significant respect from the mid-1850s to the mid-1950s.

The Liberal Party survived, according to this thesis, only because there were enough pockets of anti-collectivist sentiment and anti-class activism from which to draw residual support. Any deviation from this analysis is ignored; Cyr makes no attempt, for example, to explain the byelection victory in Orpington, which was clearly not a 'peripheral and neglected' area, even while correctly identifying its importance in restoring Liberal morale and organisation. Similarly, the Liberal Party, as the embodiment of anti-collectivism, must always be ill-disciplined and hostile to holding power, despite the acknowledged growth in local government strength. The SNP and Plaid Cymru, because they are not the Conservatives or Labour, must also be anti-collectivist liberals, so Cyr devotes part of two chapters to examining their electoral successes, while completely failing to mention anything they actually stood for. Thatcherism,

because in some respects it was anti-collectivist, must have had something in common with Liberalism – privatisation and hostility to bureaucracy, we learn.

The book is rather better at discussing the importance of Jo Grimond and his policy innovations to the Liberal revival, though even here the policies chosen for analysis are those that fit the Beer straitjacket – welfare, education, industrial democracy, local government and devolution, but hardly anything on foreign policy, the wider agenda of constitutional reform or civil liberties. And this is the only point at which Liberal policies are analysed; the same is done for the SDP, but Liberal policy-making might as well have stopped dead when Grimond retired for all we read. The book is better on the salience of community politics, linking it to the rise of single-issue pressure groups in the 1960s, and identifying both as anti-collectivist movements.

There is also some interesting survey material on the beliefs of Liberal activists in the early 1970s, though it deals mainly with their attitude to class, Liberal failure to draw support and activists from the working classes being one of Cyr's themes (if the Party had only taken the Association of Liberal Trade Unionists seriously, all would have been well, apparently). But there are very few other reasons to read this book. It is badly structured and highly repetitive, and its arguments are unclear and littered with inaccuracies (Dick Taverne, for example, may be surprised to find out that he won the Dundee byelection, but probably even more taken aback to discover that the SDP, apart from David Owen, was 'generally anti-nuclear'). Buy one of the other ones.

Membership Services

The History Group is pleased to make the following listings available to its members:

Mediawatch: a bibliography of major articles on the Liberal Democrats appearing in the broadsheet papers, major magazines and academic journals from 1988; plus articles of historical interest appearing in the major Liberal Democrat journals from 1995.

Thesiswatch: all higher degree theses listed in the Bulletin of the Institute of Historical Research under the titles 'Liberal Party' or 'liberalism' (none yet under SDP or Liberal Democrats).

Any History Group member is entitled to receive a copy of either of these free of charge; send an A4 SSAE to Duncan Brack at the address on the back page.

A Liberal Democrat History Group fringe meeting

Why didn't the Liberal Party Die?

The first Liberal revival, 1959-66

with

William Wallace

Chair: Sir Russell Johnston MP

After almost thirty years of continuous decline, the leadership of Jo Grimond, and byelection and local election victories, seemed to herald a new era for the Liberal Party. Why did it all go wrong? William Wallace (Lord Wallace of Saltire), Lords spokesman on defence and reader in international relations at the LSE, examines the record.

Wedgewood Suite, Park Hotel, Cardiff

Friday 7 March, 8.00pm – 9.30pm

Liberal Democrat History Group Meetings: Tape Records

The History Group has been organising meetings since 1988, and currently aims to hold about four per year. All meetings since June 1994 (plus one earlier one) have been recorded, and tape copies are available to History Group members. The meetings recorded are:

Landslide for the Left (22 September 1996)

The 1906 election; with Andrew Adonis and John Grigg

God Gave the Land to the People! (29 July 1996)

Liberal Party policy on the land; with Dr Roy Douglas

The European Inheritance (15 March 1996)

with Dr Alan Butt Philip, Lord McNally and Michael Steed.

The Repeal of the Corn Laws (14 February 1996)

with John Vincent

Does New Labour leave room for New Liberals?

(17 September 1995)

with Martin Kettle and John Curtice

The Legacy of Gladstone (26 June 1995)

with Professor Colin Matthew and Andrew Adonis

Old Heroes for a New Party (10 March 1995)

W.T. Stead and Judge Learned Hand; with Alan Beith MP and Sir William Goodhart

We Can Conquer Unemployment (18 September 1994)

with Lord Skidelsky

Witness Seminar: *The Origins of Community Politics*

(21 June 1994)

with Gordon Lishman

Hung Parliaments and Coalition Governments: Learning the Lessons of History (8 September 1991)

with Roy Jenkins

Audio cassette tapes of the meetings listed above (including questions and discussion following the speaker(s)) are available. All tapes are standard C90 cassettes. The June 1994 witness seminar on community politics needs two cassettes; the remainder occupy one each.

Please note that with one exception (the September 1991 meeting with Roy Jenkins), the tapes were not recorded to professional standards; they are mono rather than stereo and suffer from slightly higher levels of hiss than normal. They are, however, perfectly audible! In two cases, however (the witness seminar in June 1994 and the fringe meeting in September 1994), technical problems were experienced which do render the recordings of low quality and occasionally difficult to hear; you have been warned!

Tapes costs **£5.00 per cassette ordered**; this includes postage. Payment must accompany orders; cheques should be made payable to 'Liberal Democrat History Group'. Orders should be sent to:

Patrick Mitchell, 6 Palfrey Place, London SW8 1PA

Membership of the Liberal Democrat History Group costs £7.50 (£4.00 unwaged rate); cheques should be made payable to 'Liberal Democrat History Group' and sent to Patrick Mitchell, 6 Palfrey Place, London SW8 1PA.

*Contributions to the Newsletter – letters, articles, and book reviews – are invited. Please type them and if possible enclose a computer file on 3.5 inch disc. The deadlines for issue 15, 16 and 17 are **8 April, 8 July and 7 October, respectively**; contributions should be sent to the Editor, Duncan Brack, at the address below.*

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