

- Historical relationship between Liberals and Labour
- Historical relationship between Liberals and Conservatives
- Why has the Conservative Party historically been so successful?
- Party splits - why do the Conservatives generally avoid them, while parties of the left suffer from them repeatedly? (Possible speakers include Hugo Young, Edward Pearce, Will Hutton, Vernon Bogdanor, Ben Pimlott)
- The historical development of liberal thought
- League of Nations/United Nations
- How do opposition parties win elections? common factors in 1906, 1945, 1964/66, 1979 - when the major changes in government occurred this century
- 'Old Heroes for a New Party' - a balloon debate between (current) Party notables justifying historical figures whose ideas contributed most to our current philosophy. (This was Gordon Lishman's idea; when I asked him for his favoured thinkers, he mentioned Montaigne, Burke, Fox and Keynes!)

Some of these may be possible ideas for joint meetings between ourselves and other groups within the Party - eg LINK (our long-term partner) or the Philosophy Group. Any responses? Any ideas? Let **Duncan Brack** know at the address below.

Witness Seminars

The concept of a 'witness seminar' is to discuss historical events with actual participants in them. In a similar vein to the list of potential fringe meetings above, we list a number of potential ideas below (possible speakers in brackets):

- Foundation of the SDP (Gang of Four)
- Lib-Lab Pact (Steel, etc)
- Liberal Assemblies
- The Bleak Years - the '50s (Seear)
- The Thorpe Affair
- Byelection victories (Bonham-Carter, Avebury)

The seminar could possibly be run as an interview, with proceedings taped for the record. We hope to organise one of these in the forthcoming year, using the same format as the successful LINK Seminar series - an evening meeting in a room in Kettner's Restaurant (Soho), which is free to us provided some of the audience eat a meal afterwards! If the event proves a success, we will organise more.

Once again, if you have any ideas for witness seminars, let **Duncan Brack** know - your thoughts will be passed on to Malcolm Baines, who is in charge.

Publications

Mediawatch

Richard Grayson is responsible for maintaining and updating a bibliography of articles on the Liberal Democrats appearing in the broadsheet papers and some magazines and journals (all those listed in the *British Humanities Index*, published by Bowker-Saur). Starting in 1988, this list now extends to six pages, and should be of use to any serious student of the Party. Any History Group member is entitled to receive a copy free of charge; send a large (at least A5) SSAE to **Duncan Brack**. The current issue extends to 30 June 1993.

Introductory Reading List

Members of the History Group are invited to help the Party's Policy Unit in compiling a short (max 20 books) reading list for inquirers wishing to

learn more about the Party and its predecessors. The following is a provisional list of titles:

General Studies:

- Adelman, Paul, *The Decline of the Liberal Party 1910-31* (1981)
Adelman, Paul, *Gladstone, Disraeli and Later Victorian Politics* (1970)
Bogdanor, Vernon (ed), *Liberal Party Politics* (1983)
Cook, Chris, *A Short History of the Liberal Party 1900-92* (1993)
Dangerfield, George, *The Strange Death of Liberal England* (1935, reprinted 1983)
Eccleshall, Robert, *British Liberalism: Liberal Thought from the 1640s to the 1980s* (1986)
Joyce, Peter, *Towards the Sound of Gunfire* (1993)
Kilmarnock, Alastair (ed), *The Radical Challenge: The Response of Social Democracy* (1987)
Searle, Geoffrey, *The Liberal Party: Triumph and Disintegration 1886-1929* (1992)
Stephenson, Hugh, *Claret and Chips: The Rise of the SDP* (1982)
Stevenson, John, *Third Party Politics since 1945: Liberals, Alliance and Liberal Democrats* (1993)
Vincent, John, *The Formation of the British Liberal Party 1857-68* (1972)
Williams, Geoffrey Lee, & Williams, Alan Lee, *Labour's Decline and the Social Democrats' Fall* (1989)

Biographies/Autobiographies:

- Clarke, Peter, *A Question of Leadership* (1992)
Grimond, Jo, *Memoirs* (1979)
Jenkins, Roy, *Asquith* (1988)
Jenkins, Roy, *A Life at the Centre* (1991)
Matthew, H.C.G., *Gladstone 1809-1874* (1988)
Owen, David, *Time to Declare* (1991)
Powell, Enoch, *Joseph Chamberlain* (1977)
Pugh, Martin, *Lloyd George* (1988)
Steel, David, *Against Goliath: David Steel's Story* (1989)

The list will eventually be issued with a short description/ summary of each title, to give more information.

If you think that there are any startlingly good books missed off the list above, or that some of those here shouldn't be on, please let **Duncan Brack** know: this will be of great help.

History Group Publications

We can be pleased with the fact that we have now helped Liberal Democrat Publications with the production of two titles:

Learning the Lessons of History: Hung Parliaments and Coalition Governments, by Lord Jenkins of Hillhead, is the text of the speech he gave, plus the discussion afterwards, to the History Group fringe meeting in 1991. It covers the British experience of such eventualities throughout the twentieth century. Price: £2.95.

Towards the Sound of Gunfire: A Short History of the Liberal Democrats, by Peter Joyce, has been printed in the last month, and was written with help from History Group members. A brief history of the Liberal Democrats and their forebears, it costs £2.50.

Both are available from Liberal Democrat Publications, 8 Fordington Green, Dorchester, DT1 1GB (0305 264646). Remember to add 20% P&P.

Book Review

The Liberal Party: Triumph and Disintegration, 1886-1929, by G.R.Searle. Macmillan, 1992; £30 (hardback), £8.99 (paperback),

Mr Searle is not the first historian to explore this territory. That dubious honour probably belongs to George Dangerfield and his *Strange Death of Liberal England*, a book now widely regarded as an idiosyncratic and unreliable account. Many other historians have followed and there is now a wealth of literature on the topic, so much that it's about time someone wrote a guidebook.

Fortunately, Searle has done just that and what we have here is essentially an historiographical