For the study of Liberal, SDP and Liberal Democrat history

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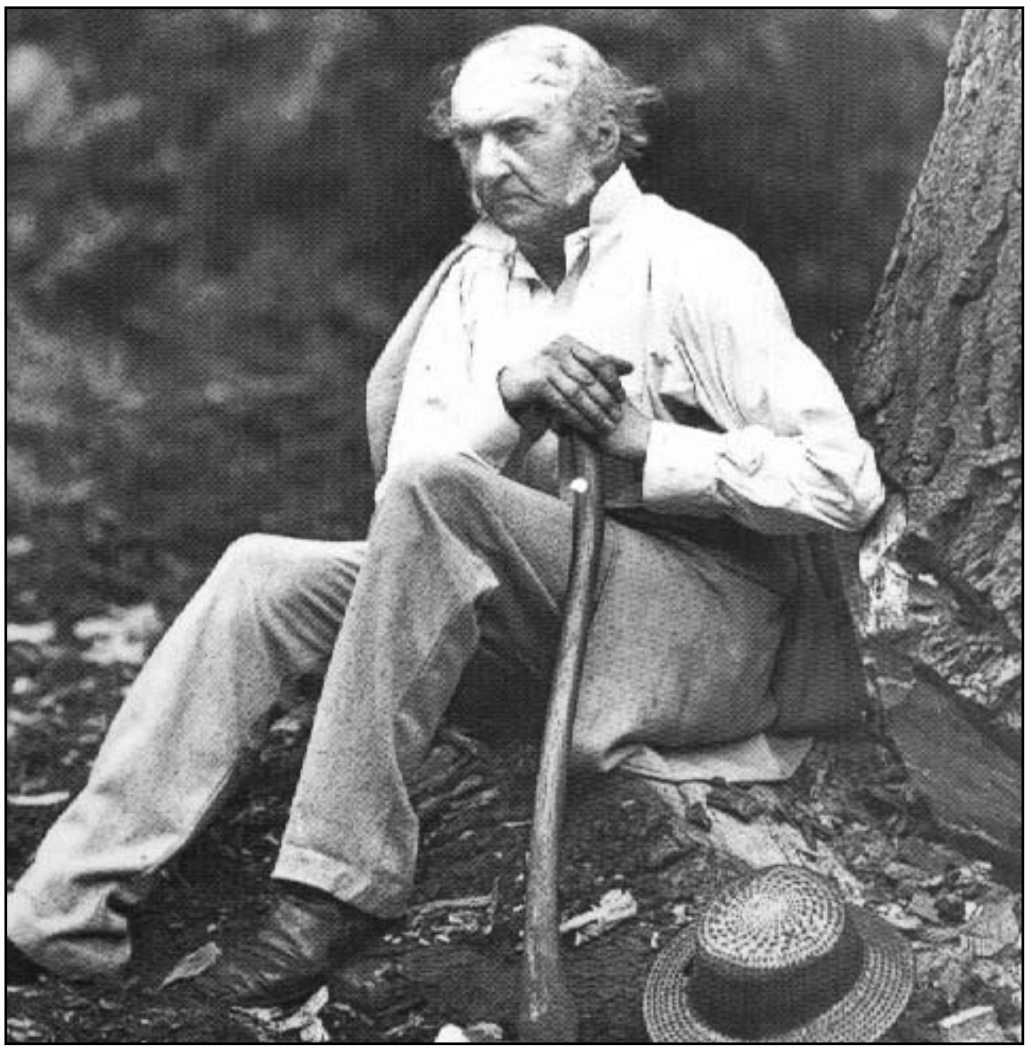
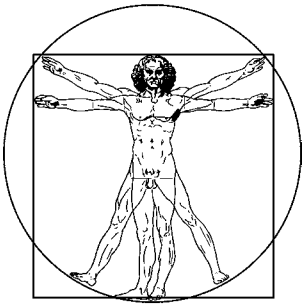
Journal of Liberal HISTORY



Gladstone on leadership



Liberal Democrat History Group

Varnished Leaves

Pages 26–32 of this *Journal* contain a biography of Geoffrey Mander, Liberal MP for Wolverhampton East 1929–45. The article has been written by Charles Nicholas Mander, using material published in his book *Varnished Leaves: A Biography of the Mander Family of Wolverhampton 1750–1950* (Owlpen Press, 2005).

By the 1820s the family had established one of the largest chemical factories in Britain. The varnish business flourished so much following the rise of the railways that John Mander was able to describe his forebears as the 'uncrowned kings of Wolverhampton'. As well as the business, the book tells of the family's houses, gardens and art patronage, and, of course, its politics.

We reproduce here the first page of the flyer produced for the book. Further information can be obtained from The Owlpen Press, Owlpen Manor, Dursley, Gloucestershire GL11 5BZ; tel. 01453 860 8261; email sales@owlpen.com.

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The relevance of history

'Those who cannot remember the past are doomed to repeat it.' (George Santayana, 1905)

The *Journal of Liberal History* announces a new series of articles. What can we learn from the lessons of history for modern-day Liberal politics?

For example, what relevance has the Liberal record on international institutions have to current problems in the Middle East? Does the historic Liberal attachment to free trade have any relevance in these days of globalisation and the WTO? What can Gladstone's, or Lloyd George's, approaches to taxation tell us about modern tax policy? Are the principles on which Beveridge founded welfare provision still of value in the twenty-first century?

Articles are invited in this series; we hope to run the first in the summer issue of the *Journal*. Articles should be thought-provoking and polemical, and between 1500 and 2500 words in length. If you would like to discuss any ideas for articles, please contact the Editor on journal@liberalhistory.org.uk.

Next issue: 1906 special

The spring 2007 issue of the *Journal of Liberal History* will be a special issue on the 1906 election and the legacy of the period of reforming Liberal government which followed.

Articles, several of which were given as papers to the Cambridge seminar in October, include pieces on Liberal economic policy, foreign policy, and the constitution; assessments of Campbell-Bannerman, and of Churchill as a Liberal; and a debate between academics putting the pessimistic and optimistic view of the long-term prospects for the Liberal Party. Contributors include David Dutton, Vernon Bogdanor, Ian Packer, Thomas Otte, Richard Toye and Ewen Cameron.

Journal of Liberal History 54 will be published just before Easter.

Journal of Liberal History

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Contributions to the *Journal* – letters, articles, and book reviews – are invited. The *Journal* is a refereed publication; all articles submitted will be reviewed. Contributions should be sent to:

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Liberal Democrat History Group

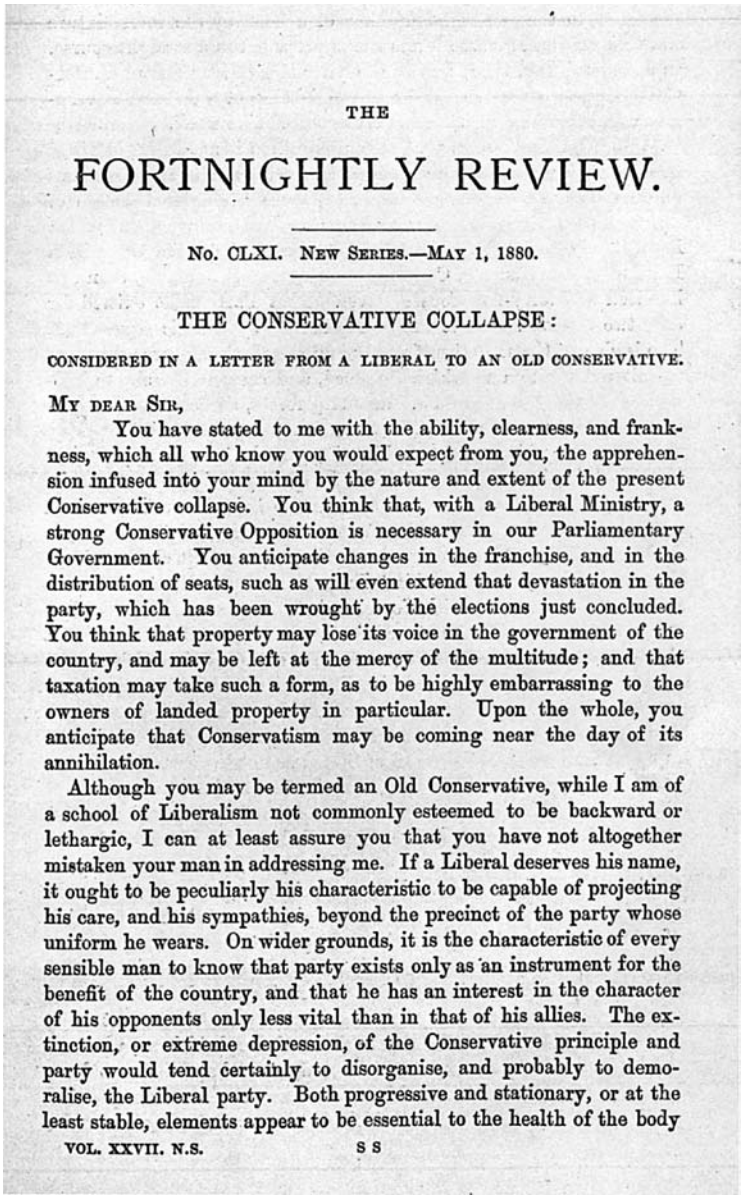
The Liberal Democrat History Group promotes the discussion and research of historical topics relating to the histories of the Liberal Democrats, Liberal Party, and SDP, and of Liberalism. The Group organises discussion meetings and produces the *Journal* and other occasional publications.

For more information, including details of publications, back issues of the *Journal,* tape records of meetings and archive and other research sources, see our website at: **www.liberalhistory.org.uk**.

Chair: **Tony Little** Honorary President: **Lord Wallace of Saltaire**

GLADSTO CONSERVAT

On 1 May 1880 the *Fortnightly Review,* edited by John Morley,[1] published an anonymous article of about 7,500 words under the heading 'The Conservative Collapse: Considered in a Letter from a Liberal to an old Conservative'.[2] The pseudonym 'Index' concealed the authorship of Gladstone, then on the threshold of his second administration, and the article is of considerable interest both for what it says and for the circumstances in which it was written. The aim of this article by **Patrick Jackson** is to consider what this little known episode reveals about the idiosyncratic views of Gladstone on Liberalism and on the nature of party leadership; and also to consider how Liberal supporters such as Morley were made to realise that the old man's indispensable leadership was only available on his own terms.



THE

FORTNIGHTLY REVIEW.

No. CLXI. New Series.—May 1, 1880.

THE CONSERVATIVE COLLAPSE:

CONSIDERED IN A LETTER FROM A LIBERAL TO AN OLD CONSERVATIVE.

My dear Sir,

You have stated to me with the ability, clearness, and frankness, which all who know you would expect from you, the apprehension infused into your mind by the nature and extent of the present Conservative collapse. You think that, with a Liberal Ministry, a strong Conservative Opposition is necessary in our Parliamentary Government. You anticipate changes in the franchise, and in the distribution of seats, such as will even extend that devastation in the party, which has been wrought by the elections just concluded. You think that property may lose its voice in the government of the country, and may be left at the mercy of the multitude; and that taxation may take such a form, as to be highly embarrassing to the owners of landed property in particular. Upon the whole, you anticipate that Conservatism may be coming near the day of its annihilation.

Although you may be termed an Old Conservative, while I am of a school of Liberalism not commonly esteemed to be backward or lethargic, I can at least assure you that you have not altogether mistaken your man in addressing me. If a Liberal deserves his name, it ought to be peculiarly his characteristic to be capable of projecting his care, and his sympathies, beyond the precinct of the party whose uniform he wears. On wider grounds, it is the characteristic of every sensible man to know that party exists only as an instrument for the benefit of the country, and that he has an interest in the character of his opponents only less vital than in that of his allies. The extinction, or extreme depression, of the Conservative principle and party would tend certainly to disorganise, and probably to demoralise, the Liberal party. Both progressive and stationary, or at the least stable, elements appear to be essential to the health of the body

VOL. XXVII. N.S. S S

Front page of the *Fortnightly Review* article of 1 May 1880

ONE AND THE TIVE COLLAPSE

GLADSTONE'S DIARIES provide the salient facts: on 13 April 1880, 'Began tentatively an anonymous letter on the Conservative Collapse'; on the following day, 'Worked on Anon Letter: really drawn forth by the letter of Lord Bath'; and on 17 April, 'Finished my "letter" & revision of it.'[3] The use of the word 'anonymous', and of inverted commas around 'letter', indicates that this was intended from the outset to be a published article, stimulated by a letter from Lord Bath but not simply a personal reply to it.

The period when Gladstone wrote the article was a brief interlude between the end of a strenuous election campaign in Midlothian and his resumption of power as Prime Minister. On 7 April he returned to his home at Hawarden, near Chester, from Dalmeny House, Lord Rosebery's seat near Edinburgh ('this most hospitable of all houses') which had been his base during the election. Despite 'frightful unearthly noises at Warrington', the overnight railway journey had provided 'time to ruminate on the great hand of God, so evidently displayed'.[4] During the next few days the scale of the electoral victory became apparent, as it emerged that Disraeli's Conservative Party had lost a third of the seats it had held in the previous parliament. For Gladstone the downfall of 'Beaconsfieldism' was 'like the vanishing of some vast magnificent castle in an Italian romance.'[5]

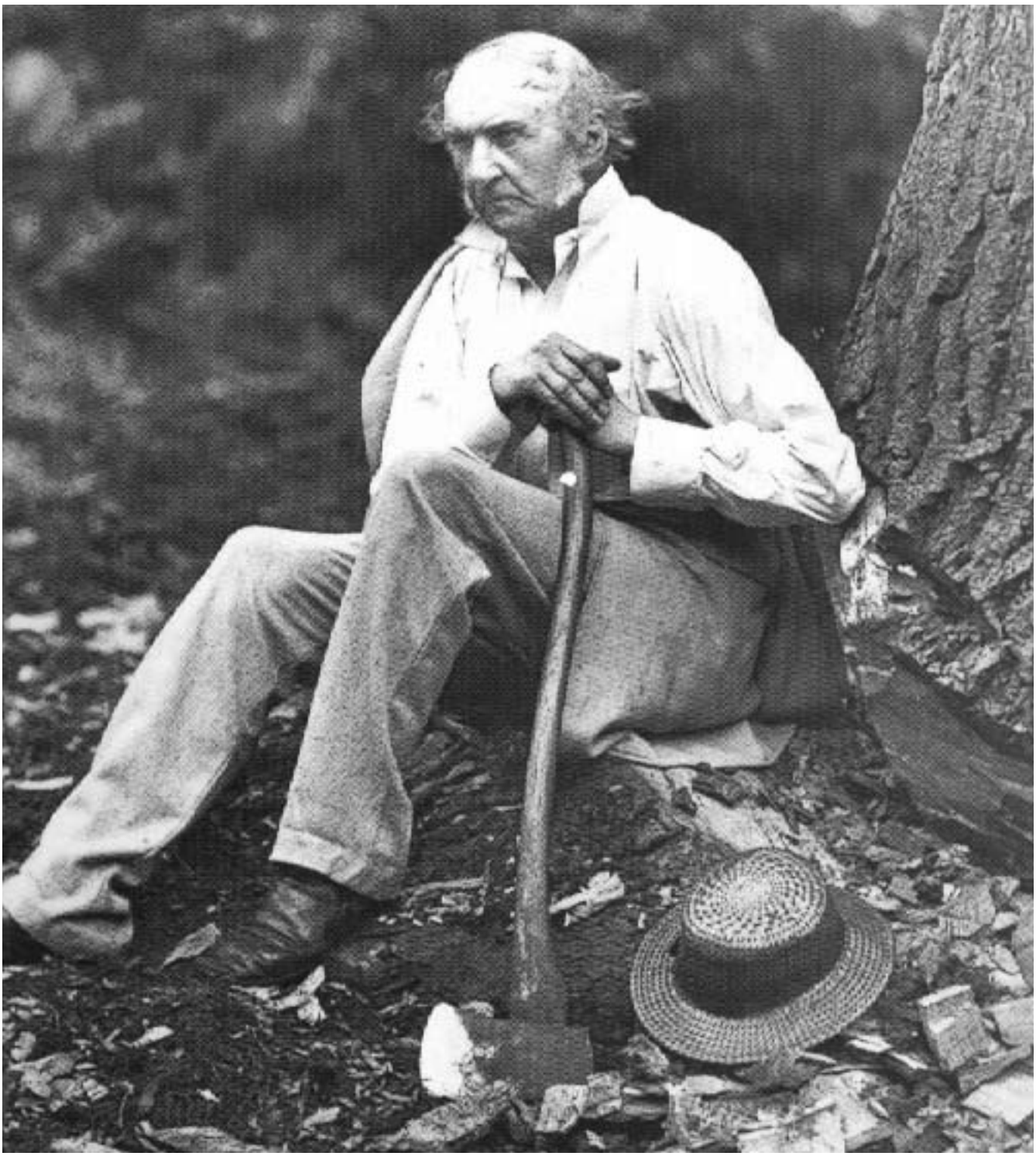
However, Gladstone was not the leader of the triumphant Liberal Party, having resigned in high dudgeon in 1875, and the Queen was determined to avoid sending for 'that *half mad firebrand*'.[6] She did not return from Baden Baden until 17 April, but told Disraeli in a cipher telegram to let it be known unofficially that she intended to send for Lord Hartington.[7] Gladstone, for his part, did not return to London until 19 April ('a plunge out of an atmosphere of peace into an element of disturbance'[8]), and while in seclusion at Hawarden he did not see either of the official party leaders. However, on 13 April, in a letter to his friend, the former Chief Whip Lord Wolverton, who was deputed to see Granville and Hartington on his behalf,[9] he set out his position in deviously convoluted terms:

For Gladstone the downfall of 'Beaconsfieldism' was 'like the vanishing of some vast magnificent castle in an Italian romance.

> The claim, so to speak, of G and H, or rather, I should say, of G with H as against me, or rather as compared *with* me, is complete … [If] they should on surveying their position see fit to apply to me, there is only one form and ground of application, so far as I see, which could be seriously entertained by me, namely their conviction that on the ground of public policy, all things considered, it was best in the actual position of affairs, that I should come out.[10]

It was essential to Gladstone's self-esteem that he should not appear to be actively seeking to resume the leadership he had voluntarily renounced. However, there was nothing more to be done until the Queen showed her hand, and on the same day, amid sessions spent reading '*dear* Guy Mannering' and 'that most heavenly man George Herbert', Gladstone began to draft the article on 'The Conservative Collapse'.

The Marquis of Bath was forty-nine, twenty-two years younger than Gladstone, and had served as ambassador-extraordinary in Lisbon and Vienna. Although nominally a Conservative he



W. E. Gladstone in 1877

was in many ways much closer to Gladstone than to Disraeli, whom he disliked and distrusted. Bath was a devout high-church Anglo-Catholic and, like Gladstone, he had strongly opposed the Public Worship Regulation Act of 1874, which had empowered bishops to discipline clergymen guilty of introducing unauthorised ritualist practices, scathingly described by Disraeli as 'the mass in masquerade'.[11]

Bath had also played an active part in Gladstone's campaign against the Bulgarian atrocities, making Longleat available for meetings and consultations.[12] He was thus the sort of Conservative with whom Gladstone would find it natural and congenial to correspond.

Bath's long letter of 11 April 1880[13] left no doubt about his attitude towards the outgoing Tory administration:

> We have had no security with the present government who have proved ready to tamper with every question in order to meet the exigencies of the moment, and I have been ever ready to recognise how conservative has been your financial policy compared with Northcote's.

Bath said that he 'rejoiced that the government are driven out.

Honour, religion, the interests of mankind generally require it … But I must frankly admit I am dismayed at the Conservative collapse.' It would be 'difficult to secure any voice to property in the government of the country and … easy to leave the few money & land owners to the mercy of the multitude'.

As a landowner himself, and a life-long believer in the social and political role of the aristocracy, Gladstone was naturally sympathetic to Bath's concerns, and began his reply with the reassurance:

> Although you may be termed an Old Conservative, while I am of a school of Liberalism not commonly esteemed to be backward or lethargic, I can at least assure you that you have not altogether mistaken your man in addressing me … [It] is the characteristic of every sensible man to know that party exists only for the benefit of the country, and that he has an interest in the character of his opponents only less vital than in that of his allies … Both progressive and stationary, or at least stable, elements appear to be essential to the health of the body politic; and the two parties may be … compared to the oars right and left of a boat, by the intermixture and composition of whose forces she is propelled in a straight course. In a general way, then, I accede to your *thesis* that a strong Conservative Opposition is needed for the well-being of a Liberal Government, and for the due and safe performance of its work.

~

In 'The Conservative Collapse', Gladstone set the outcome of the general election in a historic context. He had entered the House of Commons as a Tory in 1832, and the Conservative Party was now numerically weaker than in any parliament since then. In most of the large urban constituencies outside London Liberals had been returned with large majorities, and even more significantly the Conservatives had in many areas lost their traditional hold on the rural counties, despite the continued allegiance of most of the landlords and clergy. The proposed extension of the county franchise would probably have the initial effect of further reducing the Conservative representation, although Gladstone perceptively envisaged the possibility that 'after a time the liberal enfranchisement of the rural labourers, together with the consequent redistribution of seats, may be found to have given it a permanent increase'.

Gladstone was in no doubt about the underlying strength of Conservatism. The established institutions of monarchy, church, army, administrative hierarchy, and landed power were all inherently Conservative, and in recent years this strength had been enhanced by growing national prosperity:

> Personal wealth is ten times more conservative among us now than it was forty years back. It had then scarcely a single *novus homo* on those Tory benches where lately the great brewers, the distillers, the tradesmen … and the dabblers in speculations, mustered by the score. Nay more, during the last few years, though the existence of the sea-serpent has not yet been established to the satisfaction of the world in general, yet the existence of the Conservative working man has, and this in considerable, though very far from dominant numbers.

This led Gladstone to the heart of his thesis. He suggested that 'this rout, so terrible in the eye of the political wire-puller', was not really a Conservative defeat: 'it is the men, and the men only, who have been condemned.'

Gladstone set out to demonstrate that Disraeli had subverted the traditional policies of the Conservative Party, and had not sought to conceal his intentions.

> Although a Liberal, who would gladly see what are termed Conservative principles *en bloc* in a minority at a general election, I am bound to make the admission that they have not now been on trial … The spirit of the Administration has been concentrated in one extraordinary man. But what has been the relation of that remarkable personage to historic Conservatism?

Gladstone paid a generous tribute to his defeated rival. Disraeli was 'not a man of mere talent, but of genius', and the moment of his downfall was not a time for 'dwelling on the matters, grave as they may be, which will be put down on the wrong side of his account. Thus much is certain, that in some of his powers he has never been surpassed; and that his career, as a whole, is probably the most astonishing of all that are recorded in the annals of Parliament.' Nevertheless Gladstone set out to demonstrate that Disraeli had subverted the traditional policies of the Conservative Party, and had not sought to conceal his intentions. As far back as 1844, two years before the overthrow of Peel after the repeal of the Corn Laws, Disraeli had denounced the 'organised hypocrisy' of the Conservative government:

> The notice thus given was afterwards as formally renewed when, at a great festival, he apprised the party that he had been busy in educating them, and that they required a great deal of this education. This some may have termed insolence … It is, at any rate, plain speaking, and those to whom it was uttered have lost all title to complain.

The traditional Conservatism of Peel, under whom Gladstone had served his ministerial apprenticeship, was characterised by a rigid economy in expenditure, and an 'instinctive indisposition to raise questions which might

bring Conservatism into collision with Liberalism on an open field'. By contrast 'not even in the most faltering tones is the praise of economical management' urged on behalf of the Disraeli government: what they claimed credit for was 'a systematically free expenditure for great national objects'.

Gladstone itemised the successive measures by which Disraeli had aroused unnecessary controversy and turbulence: the purchase of shares in the Suez Canal company; the Royal Titles Act, making the Queen Empress of India; the rash commitment to sustain the crumbling Ottoman Empire; the war in Afghanistan; and the invasion of Zululand. This whole group of 'astonishing transactions' was 'the pure offspring of executive discretion … hatched almost without an exception in the darkest secrecy, Parliament and the nation neither knowing nor approving, however generally, the intention until it stood revealed, full grown and full armed, in act'. Gladstone denounced the prevailing spirit of Disraeli's foreign policy:

> Studious of theatrical effects, regardless of ulterior consequences, grounded in no firm principle, dependent on the whim of the moment, and having for its prime endowment an art, or knack, of misdirecting the temporary sympathies of the public … it is better known to us by fruits than by definitions; and the nation, after tasting, has found it as ashes in its mouth.

The traditional Conservative foreign policy of Wellington, Peel and Aberdeen had been characterised by 'scrupulous regard for treaties, marked and uniform courtesy to foreign powers, equally marked indisposition to entangle the nation in novel and hazardous engagements, and a most careful abstinence from all language which could excite popular passion or national pride.' The weakness of this approach was that it 'leaned too much to established power', and did not 'duly appreciate the claims of rising liberty'. It was Canning who set the precedent for intervention in support of the cause of national liberation, and thereafter this had become part of the Liberal tradition. Disraeli's offence had been that, 'while imitating … the Liberal policy, on its dangerous and peccant side, that of habitual stir, it has never once stirred on behalf of freedom, but always against it'.

The future hopes of Conservatives now depended partly on the mistakes of an over-confident Liberal Party. Bath had warned that a Liberal government might have found it easier to deal with a strong 'Conservative opposition without than with a Liberal opposition within its ranks'. Gladstone seems to have shared this apprehension:

> With great powers come great temptations. It remains to be seen whether this party will be able to command itself, as it commanded its adversaries … It has borne bad times; can it bear the good?

More fundamentally the prospects of the Conservatives would depend on learning the lesson that the creed for which they had been 'so emphatically dismissed was a pseudo-Conservatism'. They must

> … shape again a policy which, if somewhat stiff and narrow, shall yet be modest, manly, upright, self-denying, assiduously practical. Let them think once more of the old foundations … when, before their very eyes, their house built upon the sand has fallen, and great has been the fall of it.

Interestingly Gladstone did not address one major issue raised by his correspondent. About a quarter of Lord Bath's letter was devoted to his 'alarm' over the prospect of 'any change in the Probate or succession duties so

far as land is concerned'. Gladstone no doubt sympathised with the portrayal of the burdens falling upon landowners, but recognised that it would be impolitic to give any kind of reassurance. In the event the decision was deferred until after the old man's retirement in 1894, when Harcourt's budget imposed a graduated scale of death duties on land as well as personal property. It was then left to Gladstone's successor Rosebery to voice the anxieties of the landowners.[14]

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For John Morley the opportunity to publish an article by Gladstone was a long-sought journalistic scoop. In November 1877 he had unsuccessfully tried to persuade the nominally retired leader to write something on the Eastern Question, pleading that the *Fortnightly Review* had remained 'staunch to what you have persuaded the best part of England to regard as the true cause.[15] In September 1878 Morley renewed the 'old prayer and humble petition for the honour of an article from you. I have done such battle as I could for many months on behalf of the policy in which you have been the leader, and a contribution from you would be an invaluable encouragement … to waverers and doubting friends.'[16] Finally, in April 1880, Morley achieved his objective, and readily waived the normal rule that contributions to the *Fortnightly* Review should be signed.[17] He assured Gladstone that he would handle the proofs personally, 'so that we may not put the discretion of the printer and others to too severe a test. No one will be in the secret but myself: of course in time it will be likely to ooze out – from internal evidence if for no other reason.'[18] Many insiders must have recognised Gladstone's style; Edward Hamilton certainly did so.[19]

This was a crucial period in Morley's career. He was forty-one, and during the thirteen years of his editorship the *Fortnightly Review* (now a monthly publication, despite the name) had won a formidable reputation as a medium for advanced, and often very controversial, radical opinions. Notoriously the editor favoured a lower case 'g' for god. Many of Morley's own contributions were articles on philosophical subjects, or excerpts from work in progress on the writers of the eighteenth-century French enlightenment. However, he had also shown a keen interest in more immediate political questions, and had come under the powerful influence of Joseph Chamberlain, who had been encouraged to use the *Fortnightly* as his platform. Morley looked forward to a parliamentary career; in 1869 he had unsuccessfully contested a by-election in Blackburn, his birthplace, and at the 1880 general election he had been defeated at Westminster, in one of the few areas less susceptible to the swing toward Liberalism. On 21 April 1880 Morley was again disappointed when the Liberal caucus in Nottingham decided by 27 votes to 24 in favour the candidacy of his namesake Arnold Morley.[20] It was to be three years before John Morley was finally returned to Parliament as one of the members for Newcastle-upon-Tyne.

Morley's attitude towards Gladstone warrants careful consideration. From 1886 onwards he was to be a convinced disciple, acting as Gladstone's closest ally in the struggle for Irish home rule, and ultimately paying tribute, after the old man's death, in a great biography. However this position of unquestioning loyalty was reached only gradually. Like most radicals Morley had been disappointed by the performance of the first Gladstone government from 1868 to 1874, and the 1870 Education Act was a particularly sore subject. As Morley saw it, by favouring the church schools Gladstone had failed to grasp an unprecedented opportunity to re-establish elementary education on a truly national, secular basis, and this had alienated nonconformist Liberals. When Disraeli introduced household suffrage in the boroughs, wrote Morley, he had the satisfaction of 'dishing the Whigs, who were his enemies', whereas Gladstone had 'dished the Dissenters, who were his friends'.[21] Morley was also critical of Gladstone's lack of interest in labour questions, and in January 1873 he sharply suggested that intervening on behalf of the imprisoned leaders of a gasworkers' strike would have been a more effective way for Gladstone to persuade the working classes to believe in providence than the attacks on agnostic writers in which he did 'so deplorably little justice to his own intellectual quality'.[22]

The low-key opposition leadership of Gladstone's Whig successors, after his resignation in 1875, did not inspire enthusiasm among the radicals, and Gladstone's emergence from semi-retirement to lead the attack on Disraeli's foreign policy was welcomed by Morley, who fastidiously dismissed Disraeli as 'a second rate romance writer', and 'one of the most random-minded, flighty, and essentially unreal men that ever lived'.[23] In October 1876 Morley responded warmly to Gladstone's high-minded campaign against the Bulgarian atrocities:

> We know few spectacles so fine, so moving, as that offered by England today:– Mr Gladstone … setting all hearts aflame … all the living and thinking part of the nation raising up so powerful a voice in condemnation of Turkey and breaking once and for all with British policy in the East.[24]

However it was far from clear that Gladstone would be prepared to endorse the sort of domestic programme demanded by the radicals. Morley agreed with Chamberlain that only the disestablishment of the Church of England would rekindle the

Cartoons of John Morley, from *Vanity Fair*

enthusiasm of the nonconformists, but this was a policy that Gladstone was unlikely to accept, even though some high churchmen regarded disestablishment as a price worth paying to escape parliamentary interference in liturgical matters. In a *Fortnightly Review* article, 'Next Page of the Liberal Programme', published on 1 October 1874, Chamberlain had written that, much as Gladstone was respected, it was 'not for his credit, or for ours, that we should take him back as we recover a stolen watch – on the condition that no questions are asked'. Changing circumstances might persuade Gladstone to reconsider his position on disestablishment, but if not, 'his worst enemies will admit that he has earned his right to repose'.

In January 1880 Chamberlain told Morley that he had come round to the view that 'the balance of advantage would be greatly in favour of Gladstone's lead', although 'he would be King Stork, and … some of us frogs would have a hard time of it under him'.[25] In the immediate aftermath of the 1880 general election Morley's earlier doubts seemed to have receded, and in a letter dated 7 April 1880, acknowledging Gladstone's message of commiseration over the defeat at Westminster, the 'heartfelt congratulations' sounded genuine:

> It is needless to say how keenly I exult in the magnitude of the victory which you have won. It is not often given to a public man to perform so beneficent a service, in stirring all that is best in his countrymen in successful protest against all that is worst. It is only now that I realise how dark was our hour two years ago.[26]

The uncertainties of the situation increased when Morley heard from Mrs Gladstone's nephew, Alfred Lyttelton, that it was 'quite understood in the family circle' that Gladstone would come back as Prime Minister for only two years 'just to see the ship well on her voyage'.[27]

By the time Gladstone's article appeared in print on 1 May 1880 he was back in office as Prime Minister, having undermined the self-confidence of the Queen's preferred candidate. When Hartington reported to Gladstone, on his return from Windsor on the evening of 22 April, he was warned that any support for a government formed by him, 'or by Granville with him', would be conditional:

> Promises of this sort I said stood on slippery ground and must always be understood with the limits which might be prescribed by conviction.[28]

The reluctant Queen was persuaded to accept the inevitable. However, Morley's reservations were reawakened by what, in the June issue of the *Fortnightly Review*, he called 'delays and hitches, ungracious and unnecessary as well as impolitic' in the formation of the new cabinet. Lord Bath ought to have been reassured to see that seven out of the fourteen members of the cabinet were peers (or, in Hartington's case, the heir to a peerage). Although Gladstone had agreed under pressure to include Chamberlain, it was clear to Morley that if he had been free to follow his own inclinations Gladstone would not have conceded cabinet rank to 'any member of that division of the Liberal Party which has been chiefly instrumental in procuring from the constituencies so emphatic a reversal of the verdict pronounced six years ago'. In the *Fortnightly Review* article Morley issued a reminder that although 'Liberalism owes much to Mr Gladstone, Mr Gladstone owes not less to the work that Liberalism has undertaken and accomplished on his behalf'.

It may not be too fanciful to speculate that Gladstone's article on 'The Conservative Collapse', when considered coolly after the electoral euphoria had died away, might have contributed to Morley's uneasiness.[29] He originally told Gladstone that he found the argument 'irresistible', and that it 'ought to touch deeply all honest conservatives, and to reconcile them to what is in truth their own deliverance'.[30] However for radicals the article revealed a streak of the old Conservatism in the new Liberal Prime Minister. As Peter Ghosh has put it in a recent article, 'the idea of a once and future Liberal leader offering advice on the reconstruction of the Tory party was extraordinary to a degree … and the episode stood as a further revelation of his eccentricity in relation to the rank and file of the Liberal Party'.[31]

The two leaders, although so different in many respects, were alike in insisting that their leadership would be made available only on their own terms.

Gladstone had shown that he intended to be a Liberal after his own fashion, rather as he had accused Disraeli of being a Conservative after his own fashion. If the election had been a verdict on men, rather than on the rival merits of traditional party policies, then victory as well as defeat could be attributed to individuals. The two leaders, although so different in many respects, were alike in insisting that their leadership would be made available only on their own terms. After 1886 the Liberal Party was made to pay a high electoral price for Gladstone's leadership. By then Morley, like most of his frontbench colleagues, was prepared to pay the price, but Chamberlain was not.

*Patrick Jackson has written political biographies of three Gladstonian Liberals, Lord Hartington (*The Last of the Whigs*, 1994), W. E. Forster (*Education Act Forster*, 1997), and Sir William Harcourt (*Harcourt and Son*, 2004). He has also edited selected extracts from the journals of Lewis Harcourt (*Loulou*, 2006), and is now writing a life of John Morley.*

1 A footnote to the 13 April 1880

entry in Colin Matthew (ed.), *Gladstone Diaries*, vol. IX (Clarendon Press, 1986), p. 501, suggests that Morley was 'just ceasing to be editor' of the *Fortnightly Review*. In fact he did not resign the editorship until October 1882.

2 Walter E. Houghton (ed.), *The Wellesley Index of Victorian Periodicals*, vol. 2 (University of Toronto Press, 1972), p. 227.

3 Matthew, *Gladstone Diaries*, vol. IX. In his *Life of Gladstone*, vol. 2 (Macmillan, 1903), p. 617, Morley merges the entries for 13 and 14 April.

4 Matthew, *Gladstone Diaries*, vol IX. Entries for 6 and 7 April 1880.

5 Letter to the Duke of Argyll: Morley, *Life of Gladstone*, vol. 2, p. 615.

6 Arthur Ponsonby, *Henry Ponsonby* (Macmillan, 1942), p. 184.

7 Monypenny and Buckle, *Life of Benjamin Disraeli*, vol. 6 (John Murray, 1920), p. 532.

8 In *Gladstone* (Macmillan, 1995), p. 434, Roy Jenkins wrongly said that Gladstone returned to London on 13 April 1880.

9 On 10 April 1880 Gladstone recorded a conversation in which Wolverton 'threatens a request from Granville and Hartington. Again I am stunned, but God will provide.' (Matthew, *Gladstone Diaries*, vol. IX, p. 500).

10 Matthew, *Gladstone Diaries*, vol. IX, p. 501.

11 Patrick Jackson, *Harcourt and Son* (Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 2004), p. 55.

12 R. T. Shannon, *Gladstone and the Bulgarian Agitation 1876* (Harvester Press, 1975), p. 185.

13 Gladstone Papers ADD MSS 44463 f 96.

14 Jackson, *Harcourt and Son*, pp. 252–54.

15 Gladstone Papers ADD MSS 44255 f 2. F. W. Hirst, *Early Life and Letters of John Morley*, vol. 2 (Macmillan, 1927), p. 60. In December 1876 Gladstone had written a signed article for the *Contemporary Review* on 'The Hellenic Factor in the Eastern Question', and in May and August 1877 articles by him on Montenegro and Egypt appeared in the *Nineteenth Century* (reprinted in *Gleanings of Past Years*, vol. 4 (John Murray, 1879), pp. 259, 305, 341

16 Gladstone Papers ADD MSS 44255 f 6.

17 Hirst (vol. 2, pp. 91–92) suggests that Morley persuaded Gladstone to send him a contribution about the general election, but it seems clear that Gladstone wrote the article without prior invitation. The adoption of a policy of signed articles in the *Fortnightly Review* was an innovation; in the older reviews anonymity had been the norm. Thus Gladstone's article on the Franco-Prussian War for the *Edinburgh Review* in October 1870 had been unsigned. However, when the article was reprinted in *Gleanings of Past Years* (vol. 4, p. 197) he appended a note, dated 1878, saying that this was the only one of his articles 'meant … to be in substance, as well as in form, anonymous'.

18 Gladstone Papers ADD MSS 44255 f 15 and f 17, 21 April 1880. Morley persuaded Gladstone not to use the initial 'E' as a pseudonym, since when the authorship became known 'this signature might be taken as artificially misleading'.

19 Dudley Bahlman (ed.), *Diaries* (Clarendon Press, 1972), entries for 1 and 2 May 1880.

20 Letter from Morley to Gladstone: Gladstone Papers ADD MSS 44255 f 15.

21 John Morley, 'The Struggle for National Education', *Fortnightly Review*, 1 August 1873.

22 John Morley, 'The Five Gas Stokers', *Fortnightly Review*, 1 January 1873.

23 John Morley, 'Home and Foreign Affairs', *Fortnightly Review*, 1 July 1876.

24 Ibid.

25 J. L. Garvin, *Life of Joseph Chamberlain*, vol. 1 (Macmillan, 1932), p. 288.

26 Gladstone Papers ADD MSS 44255 f 13.

27 Garvin, *Life of Joseph Chamberlain*, vol. 1, p. 290.

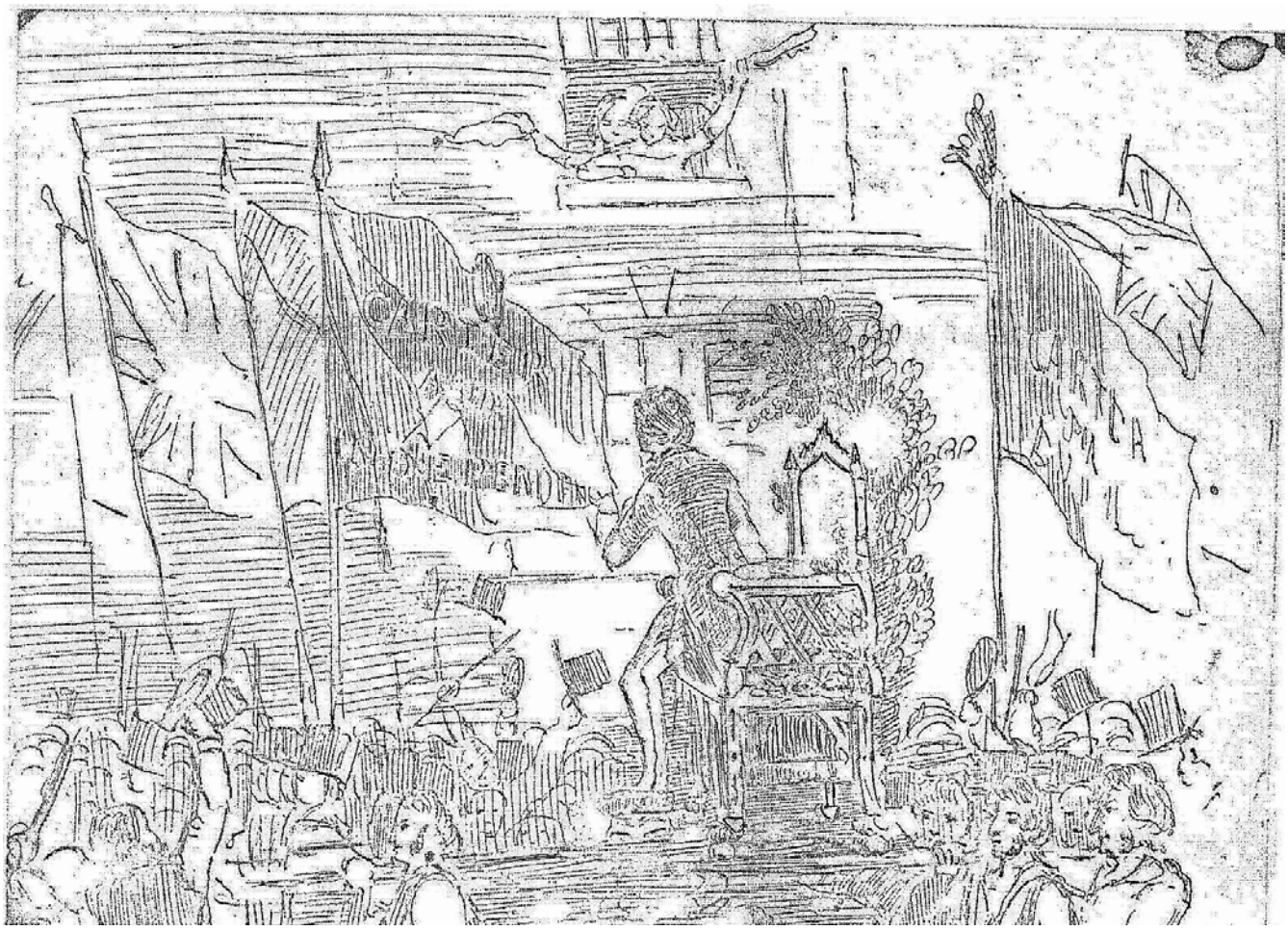
28 Gladstone Papers ADD MSS 44764 f 43. Patrick Jackson, *The Last of the Whigs* (Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1994), pp. 110–23.

29 Correspondingly, of course, the tone of the article would have appealed to the less radical sections of the Liberal Party, and I am indebted to Professor John Vincent for the suggestion that Gladstone's intention might have been to reassure those who feared that he had gone too far in the Midlothian campaign.

30 21 April 1880. On 5 May Morley sent Gladstone an 'honorarium' of £36. Gladstone Papers ADD MSS 44255 f 17 and f 21.

31 Peter Ghosh emphasises the point that Gladstone was using Peel 'as an exemplar to Conservatives, not to Liberals', and discounts the idea of a Liberal lineage from Peel to Gladstone. ('Gladstone and Peel' in Ghosh and Goldman (ed.) *Politics and Culture in Victorian Britain* (Oxford University Press, 2006), pp. 70–71.)

DISHING THE WHIG



Successive reforms of the franchise throughout the nineteenth century changed voting patterns and led to switches in the political allegiance of many constituencies. Althought it might have been thought that the Liberals, as the main proponents of voting reform, would be the beneficiaries, this was not necessarily the case; Lord Derby's comment that the Tories had, in passing the Second Reform Act, 'dished the Whigs', referred not only to Disraeli's Parliamentary sleight of hand, but to the growing realisation of the electoral benefit promised for the Conservatives. **Robert Cook** looks at the impact of electoral reform on the outcome of elections in Winchester.

GS IN WINCHESTER

Sir Robert Peel, speaking of his opposition to the Reform Bill of 1832, said 'I was unwilling to open a door which I saw no prospect of being closed.'[1] His belief that any reform of Parliament must eventually lead to further reform was vindicated by the passage of the Representation of the People Act 1867, which established virtually universal male household suffrage in boroughs (although not yet in rural areas).

The death of Lord Palmerston in 1865 had changed the balance of power in the Liberal government; the ascendancy passed to a more radical section of the party under Lord John Russell. The government proposed a bill for moderate extension of the franchise in 1866, but this was too strong for the Conservatives and for those Liberals, the 'Adullamites', who combined with them to defeat the bill, and bring down the government, which was replaced by a minority Conservative administration.

Benjamin Disraeli, as leader of the new government in the Commons, proposed what was intended to appear a more attractive measure of reform, but one which was hedged about by many safeguards and 'fancy franchises'. Radical Liberals then proposed sweeping amendments and roused popular opinion in favour of them. Eventually the government was converted. A new bill in 1867 took Tories, Radicals, Whigs and Adullamites by surprise. Disraeli had outmanoeuvred the Liberals, and secured a majority for a far more radical measure of reform than the one Parliament had rejected from Russell and Gladstone the previous year. As Lord Derby said, the Conservatives had 'dished the Whigs'. He referred primarily to the Parliamentary sleight of hand, but some also thought that it presaged a growing realisation of some electoral benefit promised for the Conservatives by the new franchise.

Winchester can be considered a good example of this. Until 1832 the cathedral city and county town of Hampshire had been a corporation borough, with its two members of parliament elected by the hundred or so members and freemen of the municipal corporation. At the time of reform the city was half as large as Southampton, and retained its two members, with a reformed electorate of 537. But it was a city to some extent in a state of torpor, for its silk and woollen industries had largely failed, and its mainly traditional industries such as brickmaking, printing and brewing, had been bypassed by the Industrial Revolution. It was an Anglican stronghold, with relatively few nonconformists, but a small, long-established community of recusant Roman Catholics.

The Chairing of the Member – from an undated pen-and-ink drawing showing Bonham Carter being chaired through the streets of Winchester following election, in the first volume of W. H. Jacob's *Winchester Scrap Books* (Winchester City Library).

The chief interests in the corporation were those of Richard Grenville (1776–1839), 1st Duke of Buckingham and Chandos, of Avington House, and of Sir Henry St John Mildmay (1787–1848), of Farley Chamberlayne.[2]

The Duke of Buckingham and Chandos, the model for Trollope's Duke of Omnium, was a Tory and protectionist. So was his heir, the Marquis of Chandos, who was also known as the 'Farmers' Friend,' for having introduced the so-called Chandos clause into the 1832 Reform Bill, giving the vote to £50 tenant farmers in the counties. Most of the Grenville family were Tories, but not all; the Duke's younger brother, Lord Nugent (1788–1850) was a radical Liberal who unsuccessfully contested Southampton in 1842. But by the time the Marquis of Chandos had succeeded as 2nd Duke in 1839, the estates were in serious financial difficulties, and he was later forced to flee his creditors, and to sell Avington House in 1848. Prior to reform, the Duke's nominee as MP for Winchester was Sir Edward East followed, in 1831, by the latter's son, James Buller East.

Mildmay, on the other hand, was a Whig and reformer, whose younger brother Paulet St John Mildmay (1791–1845) sat as the other MP for Winchester in the unreformed House of Commons. The family was not, however, politically united, and the dowager Lady Mildmay was a Tory,

Election results in Winchester, 1832–85		
12 December 1832	**Paulet St John Mildmay (L)**	351
	William Bingham Baring (L)	263
	James Buller East (C)	151
10 January 1835	**James Buller East (C)**	254
	William Bingham Baring (L)	176
	Paulet St John Mildmay (L)	123
26 July 1837	**James Buller East (C)**	258
	Paulet St John Mildmay (L)	242
	Bickham Sweet Escott (C)	216
29 June 1841	**James Buller East (C)**	320
	Bickham Sweet Escott (C)	292
	Richard B Crowder (L)	191
	Francis Piggot (L)	166
3 August 1847	**John Bonham Carter (L)**	336
	Sir James Buller East (LC)	315
	Bickham Sweet Escott (L)	234
9 July 1852	**John Bonham Carter (L)**	376
	Sir James Buller East (C)	369
	Whittear Bulpett (L)	288
28 March 1857	**John Bonham Carter (L)**	397
	Sir James Buller East (C)	385
	Wyndham Spencer Portal (LC)	252
30 April 1859	**Sir James Buller East (C)**	403
	John Bonham Carter (L)	348
	Thomas Willis Fleming (C)	342
	George John Shaw-Lefevre (L)	230
By-election *vice* East resigned		
10 February 1864	**Thomas Willis Fleming (C)**	
12 July 1865	**John Bonham Carter (L)**	459
	William Barrow Simonds (C)	366
	Thomas Willis Fleming (C)	336
By-election *vice* Carter appointed a Lord of the Treasury		
4 June 1866	**John Bonham Carter (L)**	361
	C Lempriere (C)	46
17 November 1868	**William Barrow Simonds (C)**	840
	John Bonham Carter (L)	727
	Arthur Jervoise Scott (L)	548
3 February 1874	**William Barrow Simonds (C)**	949
	Maj Arthur Robert Naghten (C)	763
	John Bonham Carter (L)	649
31 March 1880	**Francis George Baring, Viscount Baring (L)**	979
	Richard Moss (C)	808
	William Barrow Simonds (C)	773
25 November 1885	**Arthur Loftus Tottenham (C)**	1,153
	Francis George Baring, Viscount Baring (L)	982

as was Mildmay's other brother Humphrey St John Mildmay, who was elected as Conservative MP for Southampton in 1842.

The city had a small but influential group of political leaders, many of whom, like the Grenvilles and the Mildmays, had previously been involved in the corporation. They included, on the Tory side, Dr David Williams, headmaster of Winchester College,[3] and in the Whig interest, Charles Shaw-Lefevre, MP for the county, and Reverend Thomas Garnier, a friend of Palmerston, who was nominated Dean of Winchester in 1840, and held office until 1872; most of the cathedral clergy, however, were reckoned to be Tory. In addition, new Whig landowners were growing in influence in Winchester, particularly with the decline of the Chandos estates. These included the banking family of Baring, based at Stratton Park, East Stratton, and at Northington Grange, Alresford, and the Bonham Carters at Adhurst St Mary.[4]

In this atmosphere politics were conducted at a high level, with public issues foremost, and hardly a suspicion of electoral corruption,[5] although aristocratic patronage may have been a subtler surrogate. The high standing and influence of local leaders was reflected in the character of the candidates. They were overwhelmingly men of higher social status than were normally to be found contesting borough seats, and bore more similarity to the usual aspirants in a county division. Almost all of them, successful and unsuccessful, were members of Hampshire landed families, and it was unusual for one who was not to poll well.

Local ties and family prestige had a stronger pull than party loyalties, because of the absence of any formal party organisation. Extremism was not favoured, and frequently a bipartisan approach was adopted. For example, Sir James East (1789–1878), who was Conservative

member for twenty-nine years, usually gave general support to Liberal governments when Palmerston was Prime Minister.[6] The effect of these influences was that the representation was generally shared between the parties. Only in the post-reform landslide of 1832 were the seats monopolised by the Liberals, and in the Tory recovery of 1841 by the Conservatives. This was by no means the result of an arrangement, however, since every general election was contested. It arose because there were few four-cornered contests, much cross-voting, and for long periods no formal coalition between candidates of the same party. To some extent this can be seen as the survival of the electoral influence of the great landed families,[7] and of church and college, all of whom were major patrons of the tradesmen and professional classes who made up much of the new electorate.

The reforming Whigs elected in 1832 were Paulet St John Mildmay, one of the retiring members, and William Bingham Baring. They had substantial majorities, but even so nearly ninety voters split their votes between Mildmay and East for the Tories. When the same candidates were nominated again in 1835, Mildmay publicly declared that he would use his second vote for the other Whig candidate, Baring, which led to his downfall. It suggested a rejection of all non-party ties, and as a result about sixty Tories who would have been happy to split their votes between East and Mildmay plumped for East alone and withheld their second vote from any candidate, so that Mildmay trailed in third place.[8]

Mildmay took up the Whig cause again in 1837, against East and a second Tory candidate, Bickham Escott, an outsider from Somerset. Once again there was a conflict between party and local ties. The Tories were numerically strong, but thirty or forty of them could not be relied on to vote the Tory ticket, out of respect for the long connection with the city of the Mildmay family, some of whom were themselves Tories.[9] Escott made an appeal to them, saying that some people had difficulty in acting on their principles because of the claims of friendship, but that they should not make a bargain between friendship and patriotism.[10] This was of no avail, and the poll returned East and Mildmay.

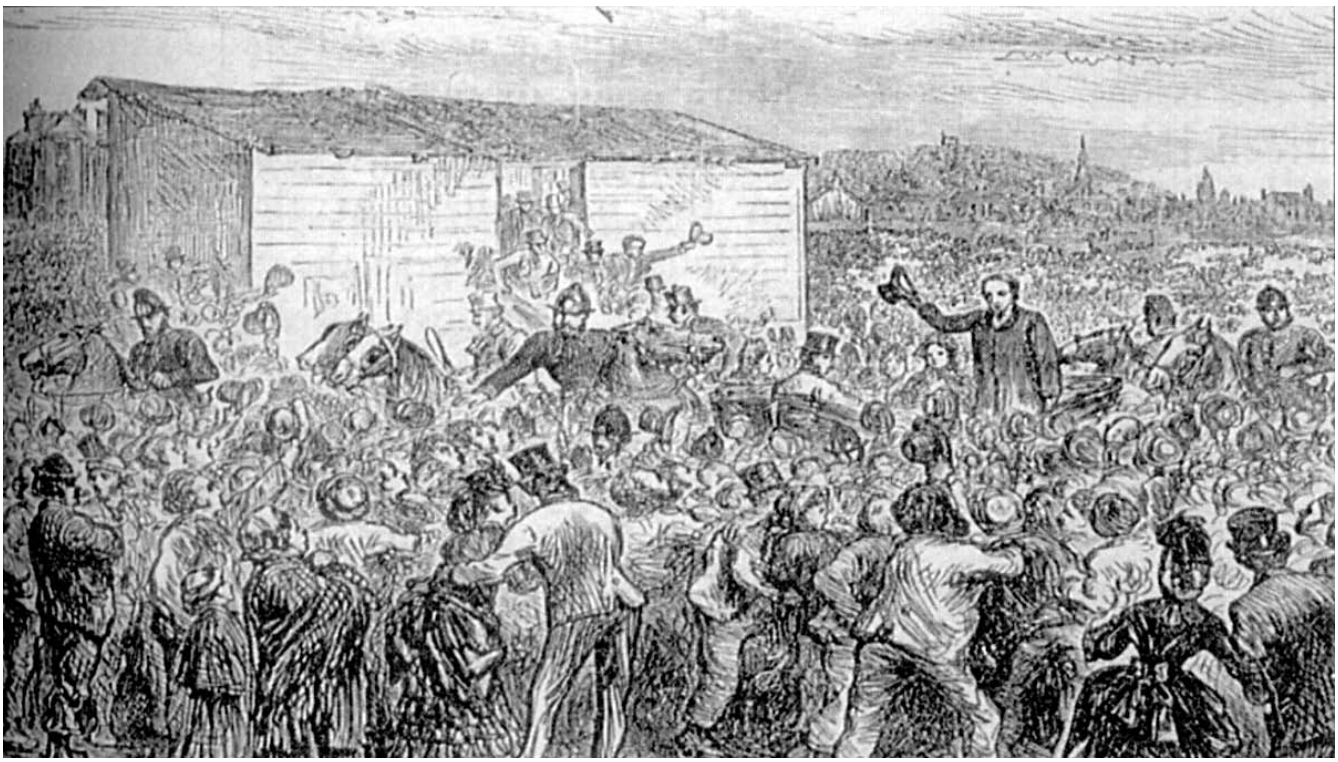
The election of 1841 was the only one under the first Reform Act in which the Tories monopolised the seats. This was due partly to the general political reaction, and the well-organised exertions of the Tories in the registration of their electors in 1840.[11] But it also resulted from a split among the Whigs. Mildmay, a moderate Whig, had annoyed a section of his supporters by not going the whole way in support of repeal of the Corn Laws. The free-trade wing of the Liberals demanded his withdrawal, which he conceded, leaving them with the problem of finding a replacement. Unable to find candidates locally, they turned to James Coppock, national election agent of the Reform Club,[12] who sent down two young and unknown nominees of party headquarters, to whom many Liberals were indifferent. In these circumstances there was a fierce contest. For the first time there were rumours of bribery,[13] and on polling day a powerful team of canvassers was brought in, including Francis Baring, MP for Portsmouth and Chancellor of the Exchequer. But this was not effective, and East and Escott were elected with large majorities.

They came forward again in 1847, when politics had been transformed nationally by the repeal of the Corn Laws in 1846, which had split the Peelite leadership from the rest of the Conservative Party. East had at first voted against repeal of the Corn Laws, but later identified himself with the Peelites. Escott, on the other hand, had undergone an even greater transformation, and had voted with the radicals for complete and immediate repeal.[14] They faced a single Whig candidate, though Escott reaped the unpopularity of a turncoat, and could count on the support only of the most radical Liberals. Many of East's supporters gave their second votes to the Whig, and the representation again reverted to one of each party.[15]

Local ties and family prestige had a stronger pull than party loyalties, because of the absence of any formal party organisation. Extremism was not favoured, and frequently a bipartisan approach was adopted.

The new Whig member was John Bonham Carter (1817–84), of Adhurst St Mary near Petersfield. He was the son of John Bonham Carter senior (1788–1838), the veteran Whig MP for Portsmouth between 1818 and 1838. The latter's protégé as junior member for Portsmouth since 1826 was Sir Francis Baring (1796–1866), of Stratton Park. It was he who gave a classic definition of Whiggery in the 1830s: 'A body of men connected with high rank and property, bound together by hereditary feelings, party ties, as well as higher motives, who in bad times keep alive the sacred flame of freedom, and when the people are roused stand between the constitution and revolution and go with the people, but not to extremities.'[16] He held high office as Chancellor of the Exchequer (1839–41) and First Lord of the Admiralty (1849–52), and retired from the House of Commons in 1865, to be created first Lord Northbrook. There was also eventually a family link, as in 1864 John Bonham Carter junior married, as his second wife, Northbrook's daughter, Mary Baring.

The effects of the 1847 election left their mark for many years. The prestige built up by East and Bonham Carter made their position secure. In subsequent elections they received an almost bipartisan vote, regardless of what other candidates there were.[17] The polls indicate that there were between 250 and 350 electors for each party who would vote the full party ticket or plump for a single candidate



Nineteenth-century election hustings

if there were only one, and between 60 and 150 more who would split their votes between East and Bonham Carter.[18] Indeed, in 1852 Whittear Bulpett, a Winchester banker, came forward as a 'no-party man on the Liberal interest,'[19] implying almost an independent challenge to the bipartisan establishment, regardless of party labels. Much the same went for Wyndham Spencer Portal, of Laverstoke, who came forward in 1857 as a Peelite, with a progressive policy of extension of the franchise, the ballot, relief from church rates, and state education.[20]

Not until 1859 was there an election in which the local parties stirred themselves from this bipartisan attitude and nominated two candidates each. Although the contest was more partisan and the number of electors who split their votes was reduced, there were still seventy-seven who split between East and Bonham Carter, while sixteen others, mostly clergy, plumped for East and withheld a vote from the second Conservative, so that the established members were once again returned.[21]

When East resigned in 1864, the Liberals were not disposed to use the by-election to contest the vacancy in the city's single Conservative seat, and the new Conservative candidate was elected unopposed. But in 1865 the Conservatives nominated two candidates, although there was a split among Conservative electors, who each tended to vote for their own man alone; one of them, William Simonds, also gained some radical votes, and was elected along with Bonham Carter.[22]

In 1866 Bonham Carter was also faced with a by-election on his appointment as a government whip. As in 1864, the local leaders of the opposing party were not disposed to seek a monopoly in the representation by taking advantage of the by-election. But a small group of Conservatives persuaded the Carlton Club to send down a candidate;[23] he polled only a fraction of the usual Conservative strength, which mainly preferred not to upset the city's tradition of prestigious bipartisanship.

Under the second Reform Act, no borough with a population less than 10,000 retained a second member. With a population of 14,776 in 1861, Winchester's representation remained unchanged. Under the new franchise, its 1865 electorate of 963 underwent an increase to 1,557, fairly modest by comparison with the four- and fivefold increases in some large industrial towns. The Liberals had hopes of capturing both seats, and nominated a second candidate. However, the sitting members triumphed again, showing that the tradition of bipartisanship had survived reform. There appear to have been about 180 voters who split their votes between the successful candidates, and while this bipartisan vote had not increased proportionately with the electorate as a whole, it was enough to ensure the survival of the sitting members.

In 1874 it was the Conservatives who were on the attack; they adopted a second candidate, while the Liberals nominated only Bonham Carter. The bipartisan vote was about the same size as in 1868, but with the increased party vote in the new electorate, and a general swing to the Conservatives, it was no longer sufficient to preserve Bonham Carter. Despite his high reputation, and his position as Deputy Speaker, which

he had held since 1872, he was unceremoniously defeated, and retired, disillusioned, from politics[24] – a plain example of 'dishing the Whigs'.

So Winchester was not a clear-cut example of the survival of patronage under reformed elections. Major patrons certainly continued to exercise influence, but they were not always politically united. On the principal political issue of the later 1830s and 1840s, that of agricultural protection, while strong views were held, they were not always cohesively expressed, and in the aftermath of the repeal of the Corn Laws, the 1847 election was characterised by major changes of opinion and some degree of political confusion. The bipartisan tradition which had preceded reform was able to survive in a double-member constituency, but it was weakened by these political divisions, and also by the collapse of the Buckingham and Chandos interest. It would be tempting to think that the enlarged electorate might have been more independent from influences which had shored up the sharing of the seats, but there is no strong evidence for this.

On the other hand, it is well established that growing electorates required increasingly well-organised political parties, both centrally and locally, to manage them,[25] and this may have increased the party-politicisation of elections. Until the 1860s, candidates in Winchester seemed to come forward entirely on their own initiative, even if ostensibly of the same party. Not until 1865 do we find evidence of John Bonham Carter presiding over a meeting of Liberal leaders with a view to securing two Liberal members.[26] It is perhaps a surprise that bipartisanship survived so long. While it approached 20 per cent of those voting on occasions in 1832, 1847 and 1857, it could still account for nearly 13 per cent of voters in 1868 and 1874, although a mere 2 per cent in 1880.

This was not quite the end of the story, for the Whigs had one final success in 1880. The Conservatives defended both seats, while the single Liberal candidate was Viscount Baring, the grandson of Lord Northbrook, the former MP for Portsmouth, and Bonham Carter's nephew by marriage. The bipartisan vote which had subsisted for more than thirty years was considerably eroded; Baring headed the poll, but mainly because of plumped votes and the general swing to the Liberals.

Under the further electoral reform of 1884, Winchester lost one of its Parliamentary seats, and barely survived losing both; as it was, it was among the ten smallest boroughs in England to survive with separate representation. Viscount Baring contested the new constituency in 1885, but it proved safely Conservative, and remained so until it lost its parliamentary borough status in 1918, and became simply a county division of Hampshire. Indeed, Baring himself became a Unionist in 1886, with the Liberal split over Irish home rule. The Winchester division remained safe Conservative territory, apart from going Labour in the landslide of 1945. It was not until 1997 that a Liberal Democrat was to recapture Winchester.

Robert Cook studied at the London School of Economics and spent his working life in the National Audit Office. He has also written on the electoral history of Portsmouth.

1 Quoted in Norman Gash, *Politics in the Age of Peel* (London: Longmans 1953), p. 7.
2 Sir Lewis Namier and John Brooke, *The History of Parliament: The House of Commons 1754–90* (HMSO, 1964).
3 *The Times* 8 January 1835.
4 This latter family had been Whig leaders in Portsmouth since the eighteenth century, and remained prominent in Liberal politics until the present, with Mark Bonham Carter, MP for Torrington 1958–59, and later, as Lord Bonham-Carter of Yarnbury, Liberal Democrat spokesman on Foreign Affairs in the House of Lords, and his daughter Jane, Baroness Bonham-Carter of Yarnbury, currently Liberal Democrat spokesperson on broadcasting in the Lords, while his sister, Laura Bonham Carter, married Jo Grimond, Liberal leader 1956–67.
4 Reform League Papers (1867) in the George Howell Collection, Bishopsgate Institute.
5 *The Times* 28 March 1857.
6 Roy and John Lewis, *Politics and Printing in Winchester 1830–1880* (Richmond: The Keepsake Press, 1980), pp 37–47.
7 *The Times* 10 January 1835.
8 *The Times* 17 July 1837.
9 *The Times* 7 July 1837.
10 *The Times* 22 June 1841.
11 *The Times* 21 June 1841.
12 *The Times* 22 June 1841.
13 *The Times* 2 March and 5 March 1846.
14 *The Times* 31 July 1847.
15 Quoted in Donald Southgate, *The Passing of the Whigs 1832–86* (London: Macmillan 1965), p. 21.
16 *Hampshire Advertiser* 19 June 1852, 10 July 1852.
17 *Hampshire Advertiser* 9 April 1859; for the method of calculating cross-voting, see W. A. Speck, *Tory & Whig – The Struggle in the Constituencies 1701–1715* (London: Macmillan 1970), p. 125.
18 *The Times* 8 July 1852.
19 *The Times* 28 March 1857.
20 *Hampshire Advertiser* 7 May 1859, and the *Winchester Poll Book 30 April 1859* (Hampshire County Record Office W1/122).
21 *Hampshire Advertiser* 15 July 1865 and supplement.
22 W. H. Jacob, *Winchester Scrap Book* vol. I p. 93 (Winchester City Library). Jacob was a part-proprietor of the *Hampshire Chronicle.*
23 Ibid.
24 H. J. Hanham, *Elections and Party Management – Politics in the time of Disraeli and Gladstone* (London: Longmans 1959) pp. 125, 233, 347 ff.
25 *The Times* 2 September 1865.

LIBERAL POST-WAR BY-ELECTIONS

THE INVERNESS

The by-election victories at Torrington in 1958 and Orpington in 1962 confirmed that the Liberal Party's recovery from its low point of the 1951 general election – only about a hundrded candidates, only six of whom were elected – was under way. But when did the recovery start, and was there an identifiable turning point? Fifty years on, **Alun Wyburn-Powell** examines how the Liberals' little-remembered 1954 by-election near-miss at Inverness marked a step-change in the Liberal Party's electoral fortunes.

The 1951 election is widely accepted as the low point in Liberal general election performance. It saw the party's lowest share of the total vote, lowest number of candidates and a fall in the number of MPs elected to its lowest level at a general election.[1] At the following general election in 1955 the average share of the vote per Liberal candidate increased slightly, to 15.1 per cent from 14.7 per cent. Fewer deposits were lost in 1955, despite an increase of one in the number of candidates. All six Liberal MPs who fought the 1955 election were returned – the first election since 1929 when the party did not suffer a net loss of seats. These figures suggest that a recovery may have started between 1951 and 1955.

The 1951 general election and its aftermath

The Liberals had entered the 1951 general election with nine seats; five were held, four were lost and one new seat was captured, resulting in a new low of only six. The party had only been able to field 109 candidates and, of these, only 45 were fighting the same seat as in 1950. The severe pruning of the number of Liberal candidates, from the broad front of 475 in 1950, inevitably meant a drastic reduction in the total number of votes cast for the party. The Liberals' share of the vote collapsed to 2.5 per cent, down from 9.1 per cent in 1950. The party polled only 730,556 votes, compared to 2,621,548 in 1950.

The most high-profile casualty among the Liberal MPs at the 1951 election was the party's Deputy Leader, Megan Lloyd George, who lost Anglesey to Labour by 595 votes, after having represented the constituency without a break since 1929. Emrys Roberts lost Merioneth, also to Labour. The other two losses were both to the Conservatives: Edgar Granville lost Eye in Suffolk, having represented the constituency since 1929, and Archibald Macdonald lost Roxburgh and Selkirk, only eighteen months after first capturing the seat. The Liberals' one gain in the 1951 election was at Bolton West, won by Arthur Holt. Here a pact had been agreed with the Conservatives, who did not contest the constituency in return for the Liberals' standing aside in neighbouring Bolton East.

In 1951 only eleven Liberal candidates managed to achieve second place. Even this figure flattered the real achievements

TURNING POINT

and gave little optimism for future breakthroughs, as four of them were the sitting Liberal MPs who had been defeated. Another two, Frank Byers and Dingle Foot, were former Liberal MPs from earlier parliaments attempting to return.[2] Another, Violet Bonham Carter, came second out of two in Colne Valley, where the Conservatives had stood aside. Only four other Liberal candidates managed second place in 1951. John Halse achieved this in Honiton, but was over 17,000 votes away from victory. Roy Douglas came 15,595 votes behind the Labour victor in Bethnal Green, a constituency which had been represented by a Liberal MP, Sir Percy Harris, as recently as 1945. Stuart Roseveare came slightly closer, but was still nearly 10,000 votes adrift of being elected in Bodmin – the constituency which had been held by Dingle Foot's father, Isaac, for the Liberals until 1935. Lastly, John Junor, the journalist, achieved a strong showing in Dundee West in the absence of a Conservative opponent, gaining over 25,000 votes but still falling 3,306 short of victory.

The Parliamentary Liberal Party which emerged after the 1951 election could hardly have claimed to represent a broad cross-section of society: it comprised five lawyers and a hosiery manufacturer.[3] All were men; half were Welsh. Only one of the Liberal MPs, Jo Grimond, had faced a Conservative opponent at the election. In the space of six years and three general elections all except one of the MPs had changed. The party leader, Clem Davies, was the only Liberal MP who had sat continuously in the Commons since before 1945 and he had only returned to the Liberals in 1942, having been outside the party for eleven years, as an Independent and, before that, a Liberal National.

Any hope for the future?

In the aftermath of the 1951 general election, Clem Davies wrote: 'Curiously, I am less depressed today than I was in 1945 or 1950. I cannot give a reason for this. It is just a state of mind and may be quite illogical. However, there it is.'[4] But Davies' curious statement may have been based on more than mere wishful thinking. His own position as party leader had, perversely, been strengthened by the bad result of the election.[5] For the first five years of his leadership from 1945, his predecessor, Archie Sinclair, had been expected to return to the Commons and retake the helm. Sinclair was by now extremely unlikely to stage a comeback, having failed to regain his seat in 1950 and then not having stood again in 1951. The 1951 election had removed from the Commons the three left-wing MPs who had been most vocal in their opposition to the party's leadership and direction – Megan Lloyd George, Edgar Granville and Emrys Roberts. Megan Lloyd George's and Violet Bonham Carter's defeats

Liberal Party general election performance 1945–1964

Election date	Number of Liberal candidates	Number of Liberal MPs elected	Liberal share of total vote (%)
1945	306	12	9.1
1950	475	9	9.1
1951	109	6	2.5
1955	110	6	2.7
1959	216	6	5.9
1964	365	9	11.2

By-elections contested by Liberals, Tories and Labour 1945-1959			
By-election date	**Constituency**	**Liberal share of vote (%)**	**Change in Liberal share of vote from last general election (if fought) (%)**
14 Nov 45	Bromley	11.3	–9.7
15 Nov 45	Bournemouth	19.5	–3.4
19 Nov 46	Bermondsey	22.6	
11 Sep 47	Liverpool Edge Hill	4.4	
25 Sep 47	Islington West	16.0	
27 Nov 47	Howdenshire	10.5	–4.4
27 Nov 47	Edinburgh East	10.1	
4 Dec 47	Surrey, Epsom	7.5	–4.7
28 Jan 48	Glasgow Camlachie	1.2	
11 Mar 48	Croydon North	9.4	–9.4
8 Dec 49	Bradford South	6.3	–8.1
30 Nov 50	Bristol South East	8.1	–1.4
6 Feb 52	Bournemouth East	10.1	–1.5
6 Feb 52	Southport	9.5	–5.5
13 May 53	Sunderland South	5.3	
30 Jun 53	Abingdon	7.1	
19 Nov 53	Holborn & St Pancras	2.3	–1.7
3 Feb 54	Ilford North	7.9	+1.4
30 Sep 54	Croydon East	8.0	
21 Dec 54	Inverness	36.0	
15 Dec 55	Torquay	23.8	+9.6
14 Feb 56	Hereford	36.4	+11.6
14 Feb 56	Gainsborough	21.6	
1 Mar 56	Walthamstow West	14.7	
15 Nov 56	Chester	12.1	+0.4
29 May 57	Edinburgh South	23.5	
27 Jun 57	Dorset North	36.1	+3.7
12 Sep 57	Gloucester	20.1	
24 Oct 57	Ipswich	21.5	
5 Dec 57	Liverpool Garston	15.2	
12 Feb 58	Rochdale	35.5	
27 Mar 58	Torrington	38.0	
12 Jun 58	Ealing South	17.2	+7.6
12 Jun 58	Weston-Super-Mare	24.5	
12 Jun 58	Argyll	27.5	
20 Nov 58	Aberdeenshire East	24.3	
29 Jan 59	Southend West	24.2	+9.2
9 Apr 59	Galloway	25.7	

removed the potentially disruptive prospect of the daughters of Asquith and Lloyd George sitting together as Liberal MPs. The newer MPs were more amenable to being managed as a party,[6] and the Liberal MPs' voting patterns after 1951 began to show a much higher consistency than had been the case in the previous parliaments.[7]

Immediately after the 1951 election Clem Davies turned down an offer of a cabinet post and a coalition. The offer came from Churchill, who had narrowly won the election. Churchill had several coinciding motives for making the offer. He was indebted to Clem Davies for the part he had played in Chamberlain's downfall in May 1940, which had cleared the way for Churchill's premiership. Churchill wanted to shore up his parliamentary majority of eighteen seats and was keen to bring the Liberal Party into his government. He also hoped to include the sons of Asquith and Lloyd George in his team. Former Liberal MP, Gwilym Lloyd-George,[8] had by then become a Conservative MP and was appointed Minister of Food, but Cyril Asquith, a lawyer, rather than a politician, declined the Woolsack on health grounds. Although Clem Davies realised that Churchill's offer would almost certainly provide his last opportunity to serve in government, he knew that it would not be in his party's interests to accept. Davies was desperately tempted but decided to decline, as long as his party managers agreed with his decision.[9] Davies called a meeting of his twelve most senior colleagues, explained the position to them and left the room while the group debated the decision. Eleven of the twelve felt that Davies should decline the offer. Only Violet Bonham Carter was minded to press for acceptance.[10] It later became clear that, in addition to her personal admiration for Churchill, she also believed that she would have been offered a junior ministerial post.[11]

In 1951 the Liberal Party could have been taken over by the Conservatives or have been obliterated, but instead it survived this testing time intact. After Clem Davies' renunciation of Churchill's offer, the divisive debate within the Liberal Party over potential pacts was calmed.[12] However, no immediate signs of recovery followed. Figures for the party's share of seats won in local elections fluctuated between 1951 and 1953, but if there was a trend, it was still downwards.[13] Post-war

opinion poll ratings from Gallup show a fluctuating pattern from month to month with the Liberal share of the vote generally around the 10 per cent mark.[14] However, if a running average of the polls is taken to smooth out short-term variations, there is a discernible downward trend from 1945 to 1954. Between 1955 and 1956 there is a slight upturn, which accelerates from 1956 to 1958. From the (not very reliable) party membership records, it appeared that membership continued to fall, probably reaching its lowest point in 1953, before beginning to recover.[15] There was also firmer evidence that this reflected a real recovery. This can clearly be seen from the Liberals' by-election performance.

Post-war by-elections

After the war, the Liberal Party's decision on whether or not to contest a by-election usually depended on the vagaries of local conditions and personalities. By-elections routinely went by default, due to problems such as a derelict local constituency organisation, or its total absence, lack of funds, lack of a candidate or the selected candidate 'saving her energy for the general election'.[16] The Liberals only contested about one by-election in five between 1945 and 1955. Some hopeless contests were joined, resulting in embarrassments such as sixth place out of six with just 1.2 per cent of the votes in Glasgow Camlachie in January 1948. The following month, Air Vice-Marshal Bennett, a former Liberal MP, lost his deposit at Croydon North and in Holborn and St Pancras South the party polled 2.3 per cent of the vote in the November 1953 by-election. However, despite the disorganised pattern of by-election participation, a clear trend in the results is discernible.[17]

The pattern which emerges is one of a continuing slide in post-war Liberal support, until a sudden change in fortunes in 1954. The first indicator of the change in the trend appears in the result of the Ilford North by-election in February 1954. At first sight the Liberals' performance in obtaining 7.9 per cent of the vote does not look impressive. However, this was the first time in a post-war by-election contested by all three main parties that the Liberals improved their share of the vote compared to the previous general election.[18] No other by-election since the war had shown this – the previous ten had all shown a decline. But from this date onwards, in every single one of the next twenty-four by-elections fought by the Liberals, Labour and Conservatives, where all three parties had contested the previous general election, there was an improvement in the Liberals' share of the vote. Ilford showed a slight, but significant shift in the trend, but before the year was out, there was to be a dramatic step-change in performance. The event which marked the change was the Inverness by-election of December 1954.

After the war, the Liberal Party's decision on whether or not to contest a by-election usually depended on the vagaries of local conditions and personalities.

Turning point – Inverness by-election 1954

In 1954 the constituency of Inverness contained just under 51,000 electors, spread over an area of 4,000 square miles, stretching from the county town of Inverness in the east right across to the west coast and including the Isle of Skye and surrounding smaller islands. However, half of the electorate lived in the town of Inverness or its immediate surroundings. The constituency was described in *The Times* as a land of deeply religious 'Free Kirk' tradition, where coal and bread were expensive but fish and game were cheap, and a crofter's cottage could be bought for £20. Topical issues in the constituency at the time were the problems of depopulation, transport and midges.[19]

The by-election was called at short notice by the Conservatives, whose sitting member had resigned. Conservatives used the label Unionist, rather than Conservative, in Scotland at the time. Their incumbent MP was Lord Malcolm Douglas-Hamilton. 'Lord' was a courtesy title: he was the third son of the thirteenth Duke of Hamilton and not a member of the House of Lords. He had first been elected to the Commons in 1950 and was re-elected in 1951, but in 1954 he resigned his seat, causing the by-election. No Liberal had stood in Inverness at the 1951 general election and the Unionists had beaten Labour by over 10,000 votes.

Lord Malcolm Douglas-Hamilton's resignation had been anticipated within his party. The *Inverness Courier* reported that in 'December 1952, following differences of opinion with the Inverness-shire Unionist Association, Lord Malcolm intimated that he would not be seeking re-adoption as the Association's candidate at the next General Election, and in April 1953 he severed his connection with the Association'.[20] Lord Malcolm's first marriage, to Pamela Bowes-Lyon, had been dissolved and he had remarried. His new wife, Mrs Natalie Paine, was an American widow.[21] Although still committed to raising funds for investment in the Highlands, Lord Malcolm was spending an increasing proportion of his time in the US and, having decided to leave parliament before the next general election, he had telephoned from New York to apply for the Chiltern Hundreds.

By the time that the by-election was called, a prospective

1951 Inverness general election result		
Lord Malcolm Douglas-Hamilton	Unionist	22,497
TA Macnair	Labour	12,361
Unionist majority		10,136

successor Unionist candidate had been in place for eighteen months; the 36-year-old Eton and Sandhurst educated Lt Col. Neil Loudon Desmond McLean. He had seen military service in Egypt, Syria, Turkey and the Balkans. His wife was the daughter of a Yugoslavian shipping magnate.[22] McLean had moved up from Gloucester Square in London to a new home outside Beauly, ten miles west of Inverness.[23] He had local connections and as a youth had lived at Aviemore.

The last day for nominations was set as Saturday 11 December 1954, with polling on Tuesday 21 December. The short notice and mid-winter timing of the by-election were designed by the Conservatives to wrong-foot their opposition. The amount of time available for the campaign was further curtailed, as all parties felt obliged to observe a Sunday moratorium on electioneering, out of respect for local religious sensitivities.

The short notice of the poll certainly disadvantaged Labour, who did not have a candidate in place. The Labour contestant from the previous general election, a bookseller named Alexander Macnair, had resigned his candidature shortly before the by-election was called, citing business and financial pressures. Once the contest was announced he changed his mind and offered to stand again, but was rejected by his party in favour of Dundee engine driver and union official William Paterson. Macnair, resentful at the dismissal of his offer to fight again, complained about the 'rigging of the selection of candidates, the selling of nominations to union funds' and 'nepotism'. He threatened to stand as an independent and at a public meeting raised the possibility that Lord Malcolm Douglas-Hamilton might be 'waiting outside with his Highland Fund to induce him to go forward as an example of private enterprise'. In the event, Macnair's threats turned out to be hollow. He did not receive such an offer and he did not put himself forward, but reports of the disunity in the Labour ranks appeared in the press. His successor as Labour candidate, Paterson, had further difficulties in presenting a united Labour front when he was questioned about his support for the dissident former Labour minister, Nye Bevan, who was by now openly in conflict with his party leader, Attlee. Paterson claimed to have admiration for Attlee and Bevan, but went on to say that he was 'Proud that the Labour Party had men who would defy the whip, and take the risk of expulsion'.[24]

The Liberals quickly managed to agree on an excellent candidate – John Bannerman, a gregarious, Gaelic-speaking broadcaster, potato developer and former Scottish Rugby international.

By contrast, the Liberals quickly managed to agree on an excellent candidate – John Bannerman, a gregarious, Gaelic-speaking broadcaster, potato developer[25] and former Scottish Rugby international, whose mother was from the Isle of Skye. He managed the estate of the Duke of Montrose and also ran his own farm on the shores of Loch Lomond. Bannerman had contested neighbouring Argyll in 1945 and had stood in Inverness at the 1950 general election, when he had come third, 8,033 votes behind the winning Unionist and 3,213 votes adrift of the second-placed Labour candidate. Although Bannerman had not fought the 1951 election, he was the only one of the three by-election candidates who had previously contested Inverness.

The Unionists drew their main support from Inverness town. Labour had pockets of support in the smaller towns of Kinlochleven and Fort William. But in the outlying areas of the constituency the voters tended to empathise with the kilt-wearing, Gaelic-speaking Liberal candidate. However, Bannerman later recalled that there were times when he doubted if his kilt was an asset. When he was campaigning in Inverness town he felt he encountered some prejudice against his attire and when he was introduced to bee-keeping he found that a kilt offered limited protection against stings![26] During the election campaign Bannerman became suspicious over undue influence being exerted on voters when he came across tenants who had their postal votes organised for them by their Unionist-voting landlords. One Liberal supporter told Bannerman that 'the lady' was getting a postal vote for her 96-year-old mother and 'she was afraid it would be Tory'. Her aged mother was completely unaware of the election.[27] Bannerman based his campaign on his support for home rule and increases in old age pensions.

Prior to Lord Malcolm Douglas-Hamilton's election in 1950, the constituency had been represented in parliament for twenty-eight years by the independently minded National Liberal, Murdoch Macdonald.[28] During the by-election campaign Bannerman was accused by the Unionists of 'trying to give the impression that he is a National Liberal because of his support of Sir Winston Churchill'.[29] In fact, in 1950 the retiring Murdoch Macdonald had discussed the idea of Bannerman's succeeding him as a National Liberal candidate, but Bannerman had chosen to stand as a Liberal. Bannerman and Macdonald were still friends, but Macdonald objected to Bannerman's support for home rule and instead sent a message of support to the Unionist candidate, McLean.

The Earl of Home and Patricia Hornsby-Smith came to the constituency to address meetings on behalf of the Unionist candidate, as did Guy Senior, who had resigned as Chairman of the Inverness Liberal Association earlier that year.[30] Labour sent Margaret Herbison and Malcolm Macmillan to support their candidate. John Bannerman received support from within the Liberal Party in the form of Frank Byers and Jo Grimond.[31] To broaden his appeal (and adding to the confusion over party labels) Bannerman also had the

1954 Inverness by-election result		
NLD McLean	Unionist	10,329
JM Bannerman	Liberal	8,998
W Paterson	Labour	5,642
Unionist majority		1,331

National Liberal, Sir Andrew Murray,[32] and the Leader of the home rule campaign, the Scottish Covenant, Dr John McCormick, to speak on his behalf.[33] The three candidates each addressed an eve-of-poll meeting at a local cinema. The venues had been selected by drawing lots. The Liberals went to *La Scala,* Labour to the *Playhouse* and the Unionists occupied the *Empire.*

So remote were some of the 102 polling stations that by the time the ballot boxes had all been brought to Inverness for the count, the result could not be announced until 23 December at the earliest.[34] Newspapers could therefore not carry the results until Christmas Eve.[35] Even this timetable relied on reasonably good weather. In fact, for mid-winter in Highland Scotland, the weather remained relatively good during the campaign. Generally the candidates had managed to reach most of their planned campaign meetings in schools, village halls and other local venues, although on one occasion the Unionist candidate had become stuck in a snowdrift near Loch Ness. Polling day dawned stormy, but the wind abated later in the day and the ballot boxes made their journey on time.

John Bannerman's energetic and charismatic campaign contributed to the highest Liberal share of the vote (36.0 per cent) in any by-election contested by all three parties since 1932. Bannerman gathered a total of 8,998 votes to come second, falling only 1,331 behind the Unionist candidate and pushing Labour into third place.

Inverness – fifty years on

Unfortunately for the Liberals, the announcement of the Inverness result on Christmas Eve meant that they received relatively little national publicity for their good performance. The headline in the Christmas Eve edition of the *Inverness Courier* read 'Unionist Victory in Inverness-shire – Labour at Foot of Poll'; but coverage in Inverness had generally been low-key. Throughout the campaign, reports on the by-election had to share a page in the local press with stories with headlines such as 'Inverness Rabbit Show' and 'Baker's eve-of-wedding Mishap'.

The Conservatives dismissed their weakened showing at the polls, partly blaming it on the weather and the size of the constituency. They drew the conclusion that 'the result shows neither a resurgence of the Liberal Party nor support for Home Rule' and that 'much of the Liberal vote is a personal vote'. They blamed the Liberals for spreading stories 'to the effect that McLean is a Roman Catholic, which he is not; and that he has been involved in a divorce case, which he has not'. He was also seen as 'not yet well known and he is not yet very familiar with local conditions and local problems'. The party further concluded that 'Some people in the habit of voting Labour switched their vote to Bannerman when they realised that the Labour candidate could not win'.[36]

In the aftermath of the by-election, the Conservatives' conclusions did appear superficially justified; after all, they had won. However, the size of the constituency was in fact more likely to have favoured the Unionists, whose support was concentrated in the town of Inverness and whose supporters had a higher level of car ownership than their rivals. Their point about Labour voters switching to the Liberal candidate was recognition of tactical voting. It was also an implicit acknowledgement that some people locally believed that the Liberal candidate, unlike his Labour rival, did have a chance of winning, implying at least some measure of a Liberal revival.

Inverness turned out not to be just a flash in the pan for the Liberals, but rather an enduring step-change in their by-election performance.

Within the entrails of the Inverness by-election were the seeds of serious future threats, from which the Conservatives were to suffer and their opponents to benefit. Rising levels of car ownership among their opponents and increased use of radio and television election campaigning deprived the Conservatives of their earlier car-owning advantage. The Conservative Party was to suffer in the following decades from the effects of growing support for home rule, later translated into support for the Scottish National Party and a rise in support for the Liberals and Labour. The 1950s marked the beginning of a long-term decline in Conservative support in Scotland. In 1954 the Conservatives and Labour each held thirty-five Scottish seats, with the Liberals holding only Orkney & Shetland. At their lowest ebb in the 1997 general election the Conservatives failed to win any Commons seat in Scotland.[37]

Inverness turned out not to be just a flash in the pan for the Liberals, but rather an enduring step-change in their by-election performance. Before Inverness, the Liberals' average share of the vote in the nineteen post-war by-elections fought by all three parties was 9.3 per cent. In the following nineteen by-elections, starting with Inverness, the party's average share of the vote nearly tripled to 25.2 per cent. After Jo Grimond succeeded Clem Davies as Liberal leader in November 1956, the pattern of by-election results established by the party at Inverness

continued. The Liberals' average share of the vote in by-elections in Clement Davies' last two years in office, from Inverness to the end of his leadership, was 26.5 per cent. Under Jo Grimond the comparable figure for his first two years was virtually unchanged at 24.7 per cent.

The reasons for the initial improvement in the by-election results from 1954 to 1956 included a combination of high-quality candidates standing in potentially promising Liberal territory, supported by an improved party organisation and an initial slight shift in public opinion towards the Liberals. The recovery was sustained from 1956, even though by-elections occurred in generally less promising seats for the Liberals. The reasons for this included Jo Grimond's reinvigoration of the party leadership, the problems faced by the Conservatives after Suez and a further improvement in Liberal opinion poll ratings.

In March 1958 a 38 per cent share of the vote at Torrington – just 2 per cent more than that achieved at Inverness – was sufficient to deliver the Liberals' first post-war by-election victory. The Liberals' average share of the vote in all by-elections during Grimond's leadership remained fairly consistent at 22.8 per cent, but during his tenure further gains were made at Orpington in 1962 and Roxburgh, Selkirk & Peebles in 1965.

John Bannerman went on to contest and narrowly lose two further elections in Inverness, reducing the Tory majority still further in 1955, followed by two contests at Paisley. Although he failed to be elected to the Commons after a total of eight attempts, he did eventually enter Parliament as Lord Bannerman of Kildonan in 1967, though he died less than two years later. However, family persistence paid off when his daughter, Ray Michie, won Argyll & Bute for the Liberals in 1987, at her third attempt. Russell Johnston succeeded John Bannerman as the Liberal candidate for Inverness and won the seat in 1964, holding it at the following eight elections, until his retirement. As a result of boundary changes, parts of the 1954 constituency of Inverness now fall within Charles Kennedy's seat of Ross, Skye & Inverness West. The general pattern for the party to perform better in by-elections than in the preceding general election has held true since Inverness and has resulted in thirty by-election victories in the past fifty years, up to and including Dunfermline & West Fife in February 2006.[38]

Alun Wyburn-Powell is the author of Clement Davies – Liberal Leader*, published by Politico's in 2003. He is currently researching MPs who defected to or from the Liberal Party and Liberal Democrats since 1918 for a PhD at Leicester University.*

1 When the Liberal MP Sir Rhys Hopkin Morris died in 1956, the total number of Liberal MPs was reduced to five. At the resulting by-election in Carmarthen, Megan Lloyd George, who had left the Liberal Party and joined Labour in 1955, contested the seat for Labour and won.
2 Frank Byers was contesting his former seat of Dorset North and Dingle Foot, former Liberal MP for Dundee, was fighting Cornwall North.
3 Clement Davies, Jo Grimond, Roderic Bowen, Rhys Hopkin Morris and Donald Wade were lawyers and Arthur Holt was the hosiery manufacturer.
4 Letter from Clement Davies to Gilbert Murray, 16 November 1951, Clement Davies Papers, J/3/67, National Library of Wales.
5 Alun Wyburn-Powell, *Clement Davies – Liberal Leader* (Politico's Publishing, 2003), pp. 205–06.
6 Rhys Hopkin Morris, although apt to be very inflexible and sometimes difficult, was always polite and did not indulge in plotting against the party leadership.
7 Matt Cole, *Analysis of Voting Records of Liberal MPs 1951 to 1959,* unpublished research paper, Birmingham University.
8 By this time he included a hyphen in his surname.
9 Interview: author with Stanley Clement-Davies, 18 May 2002.
10 Letter, Lady Violet Bonham Carter to Clem Davies, 2 October 1956, Clement Davies Papers, J/3/83, National Library of Wales.
11 Mark Pottle (ed.), *Daring to Hope: Diaries and Letters of Violet Bonham Carter 1946–69* (Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1996), p. 386.
12 Local electoral pacts between the Liberals and Conservatives continued into the 1960s in Huddersfield and Bolton.
13 David Butler and Jennie Freeman, *British Political Facts 1900–60* (Macmillan, 1964), p. 193.
14 Ibid., pp. 133–135.
15 John Stevenson, *Third Party Politics since 1945* (Blackwell, 1993), p. 37. According to Alan Watkins in *The Liberal Dilemma* (Macgibbon and Key, 1966), pp. 71–82, the party's General Director, Herbert Harris, reported 'that in 1954 party membership had gone up by 50 per cent'. However, it is not clear on what basis this claim was made, or if it referred to the number of new members joining or to the total membership.
16 Liberal Party Executive, Minutes 14 January 1955, Liberal Party Papers, British Library of Political and Economic Science, London.
17 By-elections which were not contested by all three parties are excluded from the calculations. Only Kensington South in November 1945 and Carmarthen in February 1957 are thus excluded. Information extracted from Chris Cook and John Ramsden, *By-elections in British Politics* (Macmillan, 1973).
18 This change does not appear to be accounted for by extraneous factors such as significant changes in support for the other major parties, or by the changes in the base figures at successive general elections.
19 *The Times*, 11 December 1954, p. 3.
20 *Inverness Courier,* 3 December 1954, p. 5.
21 *Highland News,* 4 December 1954, p. 1.
22 *Inverness Courier,* 7 December 1954, p. 3.
23 Conservative Party Records, Bodleian Library, CCO 1/10/567/1.
24 *Inverness Courier,* 10 December 1954, p. 7.
25 The Arran Banner potato was named after him.
26 John Fowler (ed.), *Bannerman: The Memoirs of Lord Bannerman of Kildonan* (Impulse Books, 1972), p. 90.
27 Ibid., pp. 107–108.
28 Macdonald had been elected as a Liberal in 1922, had joined the Liberal Nationals in 1931, but had withdrawn from the Liberal National group in parliament in 1942, whilst remaining in the party.
29 *Inverness Courier,* 17 December 1954, p. 7.
30 *Inverness Courier,* 7 December 1954, p. 3.

The general pattern for the party to perform better in by-elections than in the preceding general election has held true since Inverness.

31 *Inverness Courier,* 10 December 1954, p. 7.
32 Murray was described in the local press at the time as a 'National Liberal'. He had in fact previously been a National Liberal, but had been 'Unionist' prospective parliamentary candidate for Central Edinburgh in 1951. He had then been adopted as an 'independent' candidate by the Leith Liberal Association in 1954. He later became a Vice-President of the Scottish Liberal Party and 'Liberal' candidate for Leith in 1959. Entry by Mark Egan in *Dictionary of Liberal Biography,* ed. Duncan Brack, (Politico's, 1998), p. 274.
33 *Highland News,* 18 December 1954, p. 5.
34 *The Times*, 6 December 1954, p. 8.
35 In Scotland Hogmanay was a more significant festival than Christmas. Local newspapers appeared on 25 December in Inverness, but not in England.
36 Conservative Party Records, Bodleian Library, CCO 1/10/567/2, Memo of telephone conversation between Col. Blair, Political Secretary of the Unionist Party of Scotland and the Prime Minister's Secretary.
37 In 1997 the Scottish Nationalists won six, the Liberal Democrats ten and Labour fifty-six seats.
38 Including seats captured by Liberal, Liberal Democrat and SDP candidates, but excluding seats which were retained at by-elections.

RESEARCH IN PROGRESS

If you can help any of the individuals listed below with sources, contacts, or any other information — or if you know anyone who can — please pass on details to them. Details of other research projects in progress should be sent to the Editor (see page 3) for inclusion here.

Hubert Beaumont MP. After pursuing candidatures in his native Northumberland southward, Beaumont finally fought and won Eastbourne in 1906 as a 'Radical' (not a Liberal). How many Liberals in the election fought under this label and did they work as a group afterwards? *Lord Beaumont of Whitley, House of Lords, London SW1A 0PW; beaumontt@parliament.uk.*

Letters of Richard Cobden (1804–65). Knowledge of the whereabouts of any letters written by Cobden in private hands, autograph collections, and obscure locations in the UK and abroad for a complete edition of his letters. (For further details of the Cobden Letters Project, please see www.uea.ac.uk/his/research/projects/cobden). *Dr Anthony Howe, School of History, University of East Anglia, Norwich NR4 7TJ; a.c.howe@uea.ac.uk.*

Cornish Methodism and Cornish political identity, 1918–1960s. Researching the relationship through oral history. *Kayleigh Milden, Institute of Cornish Studies, Hayne Corfe Centre, Sunningdale, Truro TR1 3ND; KMSMilden@aol.com.*

Liberal foreign policy in the 1930s. Focusing particularly on Liberal anti-appeasers. *Michael Kelly, 12 Collinbridge Road, Whitewell, Newtownabbey, Co. Antrim BT36 7SN; mmjkelly@msn.com.*

Liberal policy towards Austria-Hungary, 1905–16. *Andrew Gardner, 17 Upper Ramsey Walk, Canonbury, London N1 2RP; agardner@ssees.ac.uk.*

The Liberal revival 1959–64. Focusing on both political and social factors. Any personal views, relevant information or original material from Liberal voters, councillors or activists of the time would be very gratefully received. *Holly Towell, 52a Cardigan Road, Headingley, Leeds LS6 3BJ; his3ht@leeds.ac.uk.*

The rise of the Liberals in Richmond (Surrey) 1964–2002. Interested in hearing from former councillors, activists, supporters, opponents, with memories and insights concerning one of the most successful local organisations. What factors helped the Liberal Party rise from having no councillors in 1964 to 49 out of 52 seats in 1986? Any literature or news cuttings from the period welcome. *Ian Hunter, 9 Defoe Avenue, Kew, Richmond TW9 4DL; 07771 785 795; ianhunter@kew2.com.*

Liberal politics in Sussex, Portsmouth and the Isle of Wight 1900–14. The study of electoral progress and subsequent disappointment. Research includes comparisons of localised political trends, issues and preferred interests as aganst national trends. Any information, specifically on Liberal candidates in the area in the two general elections of 1910, would be most welcome. Family papers especially appreciated. *Ian Ivatt, 84 High Street, Steyning, West Sussex BN44 3JT; ianjivatt@tinyonline.co.uk.*

Liberals and the local government of London 1919–39. *Chris Fox, 173 Worplesdon Road, Guildford GU2 6XD; christopher.fox7@virgin.net.*

The Liberal Party in the West Midlands from December 1916 to the 1923 general election. Focusing on the fortunes of the party in Birmingham, Coventry, Walsall and Wolverhampton. Looking to explore the effects of the party split at local level. Also looking to uncover the steps towards temporary reunification for the 1923 general election. *Neil Fisher, 42 Bowden Way, Binley, Coventry CV3 2HU ; neil.fisher81@ntlworld.com.*

Recruitment of Liberals into the Conservative Party, 1906–1935. Aims to suggest reasons for defections of individuals and develop an understanding of changes in electoral alignment. Sources include personal papers and newspapers; suggestions about how to get hold of the papers of more obscure Liberal defectors welcome. *Cllr Nick Cott, 1a Henry Street, Gosforth, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, NE3 1DQ; N.M.Cott@ncl.ac.uk.*

Life of Wilfrid Roberts (1900–91). Roberts was Liberal MP for Cumberland North (now Penrith and the Border) from 1935 until 1950 and came from a wealthy and prominent local Liberal family; his father had been an MP. Roberts was a passionate internationalist, and was a powerful advocate for refugee children in the Spanish civil war. His parliamentary career is coterminous with the nadir of the Liberal Party. Roberts joined the Labour Party in 1956, becoming a local councillor in Carlisle and the party's candidate for the Hexham constituency in the 1959 general election. I am currently in the process of collating information on the different strands of Roberts' life and political career. Any assistance at all would be much appreciated. *John Reardon; jbreardon75@hotmail.com.*

Student radicalism at Warwick University. Particulary the files affair in 1970. Interested in talking to anybody who has information about Liberal Students at Warwick in the period 1965-70 and their role in campus politics. *Ian Bradshaw, History Department, University of Warwick, CV4 7AL; I.Bradshaw@warwick.ac.uk*

Welsh Liberal Tradition – A History of the Liberal Party in Wales 1868–2003. Research spans thirteen decades of Liberal history in Wales but concentrates on the post-1966 formation of the Welsh Federal Party. Any memories and information concerning the post-1966 era or even before welcomed. The research is to be published in book form by Welsh Academic Press. *Dr Russell Deacon, Centre for Humanities, University of Wales Institute Cardiff, Cyncoed Campus, Cardiff CF23 6XD; rdeacon@uwic.ac.uk.*

Aneurin Williams and Liberal internationalism and pacificism, 1900–22. A study of this radical and pacificist MP (Plymouth 1910; North West Durham/Consett 1914–22) who was actively involved in League of Nations Movement, Armenian nationalism, international co-operation, pro-Boer etc. Any information relating to him and location of any papers/correspondence welcome. *Barry Dackombe. 32 Ashburnham Road, Ampthill, Beds, MK45 2RH; dackombe@tesco.net.*

LAST OF THE MID

SIR GEOFFREY MANDER, LIBERA WOLVERHAMPTON EAST 1929 –

Geoffrey Mander (1882–1962) was the last in the line of Black Country nonconformist radical politicians; as his onituary put it, 'he was supremely a man of causes'. He held his parliamentary seat in Wolverhampton East for the Liberal Party against all comers from 1929 until 1945. His cousin, **Nicholas Mander**, recounts his career as a Liberal MP, industrialist, art collector and philanthropist.

Geoffrey Mander (1882–1962)

OLAND RADICALS

AL MP FOR
-45

SIR GEOFFREY Le Mesurier Mander (1882–1962)[1] was a Midland industrialist, an art collector and impassioned parliamentarian, the Liberal specialist on foreign policy between the wars. From a nonconformist and radical background, he held a strong patrician sense of public service and philanthropy. As a politician he spoke up as an anti-appeaser and a crusader for the League of Nations between the wars. He made a reputation as an oppositionist, for his determined use of parliamentary questions; a gadfly who never spared to wing into the attack whenever sloppy thinking and deceit threatened to obscure the issues of the day. He represented Wolverhampton East from May 1929 until the 1945 Labour landslide.

Geoffrey Mander came from a strong Liberal tradition. The Mander family were in the vanguard of the Industrial Revolution in the Midlands.[2] From 1773 they established in Wolverhampton a durable cluster of businesses as manufacturers of chemicals, gas, japanware and (mostly successfully) varnish, paint and printing ink. By 1827 they already operated 'one of the largest chemical elaboratories in the kingdom', trading from China and the East Indies to the Americas. As the business prospered with the Industrial Revolution, they became established as the varnish kings of the Empire, and were given the means and leisure to become active and progressive philanthropists.

In the early nineteenth century, they campaigned against the slave trade, lobbied for the reform of the criminal code, and set up a union mill to provide cheap flour and bread in the difficult aftermath of the Napoleonic Wars. Four Manders at the same time were Town Commissioners in Georgian Wolverhampton. They pursued a twenty-two-year chancery suit for the protection of nonconformist chapels and endowments, a test case which was heard by Lord Chancellor Eldon and was to lead to an act of parliament by 1844. In 1817, Charles Mander rode to London to petition the Home Secretary, Sidmouth, for the reprieve of two innocent soldiers condemned to death for stealing a shilling coin. It was a romantic incident which appealed to the imagination of contemporaries and became the inspiration of a forgotten Methodist novel by Samuel Warren.[3] It led, with the help of Samuel Romilly in Parliament (the Manders' first counsel in their litigation), to the repeal of the Blood Money Act (1818), 'one of the worst acts ever to disgrace the Statute Book'. The family founded chapels, fountains, free libraries and schools, and became progressive mayors, filling nearly every public office in the county. Geoffrey's younger brother, the Hollywood actor and novelist Miles Mander (who married an Indian princess), summarised

From a nonconformist and radical background, Mander held a strong patrician sense of public service and philanthropy.

the background, writing 'to [his] son in confidence' (1934):

> The Manders have nobly vindicated themselves. At the time of writing, they have produced one baronet, one Member of Parliament, High Sheriffs, Deputy Lieutenants and several of the lesser municipal dignitaries such as Mayors, Magistrates and Councillors. In fact, we are quite obviously worthy people … Your Canadian great-grandfather was in the Ottawa Parliament, your grandfather, Theodore, was one of the most prominent Liberals of his day, your Uncle Geoffrey is at present a Liberal Member, and I am hoping to be in the House shortly myself.[4]

Geoffrey Mander was the eldest son of Theodore Mander (1853–1900), a Gladstonian Liberal and strict Congregationalist. Theodore married Flora Paint, a Canadian from Nova Scotia of Guernsey extraction (from whose forebears Geoffrey derived his second name), whose father was himself, as Miles states, MP for Richmond county in the Dominion Parliament in the 1880s. Theodore was a man of refined tastes and sympathies, a collection of whose diaries and letters was published in 1993 as *A Very Private Heritage*.[5] He is remembered today as the builder of Wightwick Manor (1887–93), a half-timbered aesthetic house of exquisite craftsmanship and detailing, with outstanding William Morris furnishings and Pre-Raphaelite collections.

Theodore in own his day was known as a Liberal and a philanthropist. As a young man, he was active in public life in the arts and education and was one of the founding benefactors of Mansfield College, Oxford, which was the first nonconformist college in the university. He described Henry Fowler, first Viscount Wolverhampton, as 'his political mentor', chairing his election committee. In June 1895, he was offered the Mid-Worcester seat in parliament. William Woodings of the Midland Liberal Federation wrote to him: 'Your name would be well known and you have almost a local connection … The constituency is Liberal in tendency and is not difficult to work.' He was still committed to municipal affairs, however, and did not live long enough to contest the seat. He was a successful Mayor of Wolverhampton at the turn of the century, but died in office in 1901, following an operation on his kitchen table. He was aged just forty-seven.

Geoffrey was sixteen and still at Harrow at the time of his father's death. His mother Flora died soon after, in 1905, leaving him to assume the responsibilities of his father's estate early. He was a prickly, cross-grained youth, described by the paterfamilias, his father's cousin, the staunch Tory Sir Charles Tertius Mander, as 'an impossible young cub … It is time we brought him up with a round turn … he is very self opinionated, has no judgment or tact & is much too big for his boots, & has been ever since his father died.'

He went up to Trinity, Cambridge, where he followed family tradition by reading Natural Sciences. At Cambridge, he soon continued in the mould of public service, now with a radical slant. He joined the Union and the University Liberal League, and 'a thing called the Cambridge University Association for promoting Social Settlements. I have not the remotest idea what it's about, but I hope it's not socialism.' He founded a dining and debating club called 'The Dabblers'. As Stephen Ponder writes:

> From an early age he had a strong sense of social responsibility and interest in public life … He was typical of a particular sort of English radical, a man of wealth and position who devoted himself to public service, supporting and proposing measures at odds with his background and private interests.[6]

'The Manders have nobly vindicated themselves … we are quite obviously worthy people.'

Like most members of the family, he became a magistrate, in his case at the age of twenty-four, and in due course Chairman of the Bench, serving for fifty years. By the time of the Kingswinford by-election in 1905, the press was describing him as 'a Liberal member of a distinguished local Conservative family'. He supported the Labour candidate for West Wolverhampton in the 1906 election against a family friend, Sir Alfred Hickman. As he wrote later: 'My action caused great indignation in Conservative circles in the neighbourhood and I found myself cut in the hunting field by some of them.' His second wife Rosalie described how, like many radicals who refused to conform to the conventions of the 'county' pattern, he was looked upon askance by many families. This attitude only changed after the Second World War, 'both because party bitterness in general had died out and because Geoffrey Mander's sincerity and his devotion to the causes in which he believed won respect all round':

> A tolerant 'man of goodwill' himself, who never spoke or acted out of malice or spite, he was glad of this development and appreciated being invited to social functions in the neighbourhood – more perhaps than he enjoyed attending them.

He cut his teeth as a Liberal member of the Wolverhampton Borough Council (1911–20). He shocked the councillors, showing a foretaste of later interests, when he proposed a minimum wage of 23s. for all municipal employees.

He was High Sheriff of Staffordshire in 1921. He again created a stir when he proposed a woman as his successor, Lady Joan Legge, daughter of Lord Dartmouth. The Privy Council wrote to her father to inquire

whether she had the necessary property qualifications, and she was not appointed. But he did secure the selection of the first woman to serve on the grand jury, Mrs Kempthorne, the wife of the Bishop of Lichfield.

Mander was active in the Liberal Party organisation from the early 1920s, as a member of the Executive Committee of the National Liberal Federation and a frequent speaker at party assemblies. He stood unsuccessfully as a Liberal candidate for the Midland constituencies of Leominster in 1920 and then Cannock and Stourbridge, and then in 1929 he finally realised his early ambition by entering Parliament as Liberal MP for East Wolverhampton,

He made a reputation as a parliamentarian by his skilful use of 'awkward' parliamentary questions. The journalist Percy Cater recorded his memories of:

> … the pinkly pugnacious Mr Mander waving above the battle of question-time like the banner of some cause or another, accompanied by orchestral splurges of derisive laughter or 'Sit down' … one of the hornets or gadflies who animate the political scene, infuriating the stung and keeping the unstung in a lively state of tension. Baldwin once said, in one of those shrewd epigrams which come from him as easily as blowing the smoke from his pipe, that Mr Mander would 'tread honestly and conscientiously on every corn from China to Peru.'
>
> Mr Mander … is not pompous. A mild and benevolent eye darts from sandy brows in a face which is conspicuously equable and good humoured. He is a good, if not a great man. He is a sort of pocket edition of noble indignation. See him pouncing up to ask a question. There you see fire, purpose, an inextinguishable soul.
>
> No good a Baldwin bobbing up and answering Mr Mander briefly and completely, 'No, sir,' and rousing shocking laughter. No good a Chamberlain using the iron hand from Birmingham. Sharp as a game-cock and as perky, Mr Mander dashes in for some more of the fight.

Along with Churchill, Eden and Sinclair, Mander became a vehement, articulate critic of Neville Chamberlain's policy of appeasement.

His special interests in Parliament were industrial relations, on which he spoke with authority and sympathy as a manufacturer through the Depression, and foreign affairs. Between the wars he became the Liberal expert on international relations, peace and disarmament, and the most ardent defender of the League of Nations system of collective security; 'the most persistent speaker and questioner on foreign affairs in the 1930s and altogether a zealot for the League'.[7] He was one of the first to foresee the consequences of not taking a firm stand against the Japanese invasion of Manchuria in 1931. Into a House of Commons debate mainly devoted to currency, commerce, industry and tariffs, typically he intruded Manchuria and put forward the League position:

> It is a test question. We have to decide whether war is to be permitted … We have the whole of the League plus America on the one side and Japan on the other. [I hope the Council for the League would] use all the moral force they possibly can … and if that were not enough use financial and economic pressure and, if that will not do, use pressure in the way of a blockade in preventing goods from going into or coming out of Japan … We have to take a bold and courageous view and, without using any physical force – that will not be necessary – mobilise all the different methods of economic, financial and moral pressure which are available to force Japan to realise that war is not going to be permitted to break out again …[8]

As war again threatened again in the 1930s, he was one of the first to speak out against the dictators. He tabled the International Economic Sanctions (Enabling) Bill of 17 May 1933, which made him 'one of the first to call attention to the German danger publicly in Parliament and at the same time make definite proposals for dealing with it'; supporters included Sir Austen Chamberlain. The Peace Bill of 23 May 1935 (and subsequently) incorporated machinery embodied in the Covenant of the League of Nations for the settlement of international disputes.

Along with Churchill, Eden and Sinclair, Mander became a vehement, articulate critic of Neville Chamberlain's policy of appeasement. He later said that it would remain 'one of the regrets of my life that I did not make some sort of speech … when Mr Chamberlain announced his intention of flying to Munich … If the Debate had been kept up, the spell would have been broken … Others would have followed and the dangers inherent in what was happening would have been exposed.'[9] His polemic was set forth in his book, *We were* not *all Wrong* (1941), arguing that many people and parties foresaw the disaster to which errors of policy in dealing with 'the Nazi menace' in the 1930s would inevitably lead:

> Munichers should never again be allowed to control our destinies. It is too ghastly to think of the same unimaginative, isolationist, naïve, complacent attitude, however well meant, being adopted after the war. Absolute national sovereignty has outlived its usefulness in the world in which we now live, just as has the Divine Right of Kings internally. Old loyalties, deep-rooted, historic and admirable, remain – It is our responsibility as it is in our power in the great adventure we must lead: England cannot afford to be little, she must be what she is – or nothing.[10]

When Mander spoke up in the House of Commons in support of sanctions against Italy after the invasion of Abyssinia, Mussolini fired off a personal diatribe against him in his paper, the *Popolo d'Italia*. In 1938, in a climate of international tension, *Il Duce* took reprisals against the Milan branch of 'Fratelli Mander' and asked customers to boycott their goods.

He was far sighted in many of his peace campaigns. He was one of a handful of MPs who inveighed against Hitler's territorial ambitions in the Ukraine in 1935. As war broke out in 1939, he pleaded the Jewish cause, telling Parliament in July that government immigration policy was leaving Jews with no escape from Germany 'other than by illegal immigration into Palestine'. In April 1941, he wrote in the *Jewish Standard*: 'The cause of the Jews throughout the world is the cause for which Great Britain and her allies are fighting.'

During the war, when the Liberals were asked to join the government coalition under Churchill, Mander became Parliamentary Private Secretary (1942–45) to their leader, Sir Archibald Sinclair (later Lord Thurso), the Minister for Air.[11] He lost his seat in the Labour landslide of the 1945 general election and was knighted in the same year (KB). His was a great loss to Parliament. Thurso regretted the 'massacre' of so many 'able, experienced and popular' candidates such as he.[12] There was a rumour for a time of his being given a peerage, and the press proposed he be gazetted with the equivocal title 'Lord Meander', in commemoration of his tireless crusades and pertinacious questions, seamless diatribes and string of private member's bills in the House.

In 1948 Mander joined the Labour Party, arguing in his 1950 pamphlet, *To Liberals*, that it had become the logical successor of the Liberal tradition. In due course he became a Labour member of the County Council.

To many members of a family whose traditions stretched to radical Whiggery, this was beyond the pale. But he did say privately that, if he had not lost his seat, he would have remained a Liberal, and most likely have been appointed Chief Whip of the Liberals in parliament.

Geoffrey Mander the politician was not quite forgotten by an older generation. The first question Rab Butler asked me when I followed Cousin Geoffrey to Trinity, Cambridge was 'How are you related to that b***er, Geoffrey?'[13] My own memories are of a fusty, Edwardian patriarch, small in stature, with a watch chain, who called in after church with his political friends like Clem Attlee. Apart from his public service in politics, his Liberalism is vividly exemplified in his career as an industrialist and an art patron.

The family company, Mander Brothers, was known between the wars as a model company. Geoffrey Mander, as the eldest of his generation, was chairman, while his cousin, Charles Arthur (the second baronet), was managing director. Sir Charles was 'wet' as a Tory, active in local government and Midland affairs, and deeply interested in everything that touched the human side of industry.[14] In parliament Geoffrey had pushed through the Joint Industrial Councils and Work Councils Bills. Together they implemented typically progressive initiatives in industrial welfare, to foster peace in industry. These included a joint works' council providing a workable system of joint consultation (1920), a welfare club (1920), profit-sharing schemes for employees, holiday schemes, suggestion schemes (1925), works pensions (1928), a house magazine, staff pensions (1935), and a 'contributory co-partnership scheme' setting aside shares for employees, with provisions to pay for shares by instalments.

Most notably, Manders was the first company in the country to introduce the forty-hour week. The historic agreement, the first of its kind in Britain, was brokered and signed by Ernest Bevin, general secretary of the Transport and General Workers' Union, in September 1932.[15] 'Bevin was very proud of signing that agreement', said Mander later: 'He used often to refer to it when were both in the House of Commons.' The press wrote: 'In the history of industrial welfare, Manders may claim a high place', where welfare had been 'part and parcel of the outlook of Manders as employers almost since the company's foundation in [1773]'. Mander was reported summarising:

> My ancestors were very religious people. They always used to open the day's work with prayers and lead hymn-singing at the end of the day. Those religious principles which coloured their dealings with the then small number of workpeople were the forerunners of welfare principles as we know them today. In the history of industrial welfare Manders may lay claim to a great deal of pioneering work.

As an art patron and conservationist Mander's contributions to Wightwick Manor have been his most secure legacy. His taste was decisive in creating the ensemble we see today, improving and deepening not only the collections, but also the garden.

Mander first married, in 1906, Florence Caverhill, a Canadian like his mother. His second marriage in 1930 was to Rosalie Glynn Grylls (1905–88).[16] She was an early female graduate of Oxford, elegant, intellectual and talented. Elizabeth Longford was one of the last to remember this exceptional 'Cornish' girl at Lady Margaret Hall reading Modern Greats, 'brown eyed, dark haired, with teeth really like pearls … who went on from strength to strength'. She described her as amusing and amused, full of anecdotes, a vivacious speaker, quick thinking and always exquisitely dressed; she was also 'the last of the militant atheists'. Her husband, Frank, who took Schools on the desk beside her, was taken by 'the exceptionally pretty young girl whose arrival was always heralded by the tap of elegant shoes'.

Like Geoffrey, Rosalie also entered politics, as a prospective Liberal candidate for Reading, when the party was enjoying its late 1920s revival. She was nearly twenty years younger than he, of course, and was secretary to the Liberal MP, Edgar Granville. Before the time came for her to face the electors, she married Mander in the crypt of the House of Commons. She was eyed with suspicion as a bluestocking in the wider family, and soon became known to them – who tended to pious disapproval of divorce and remained wary of radical politics – as 'The Secretary'.

Rosalie never lost her interest in progressive politics. However, she went on to pursue her literary interests as a highly regarded biographer, lecturer and scholar, particularly of the Shelley/Godwin circle and the 'Pre-Raphaeladies'. With her knowledge and encouragement, Mander began in the 1930s to develop and extend the collections at Wightwick and they became pioneers and authorities in the overdue reassessment of Victorian art. They were among the first collectors to take a serious interest in the art and literary manuscripts associated with this late Romantic flowering, coming to know the survivors and successors of the circle of artists, designers and writers themselves. They fostered links with the romantic Utopian socialism preached by William Morris, and many of the radical politicians and thinkers of the day visited what became a Midland political fortress. In 1947, Mander intervened to save William Morris's Red House, at Bexley in Kent, offering to present it to the National Trust for the nation

(Left) Geoffrey Mander at Wightwick with Anthea, John and Rosalie (at typewriter), c. 1948; Wightwick Manor; Wightwick – postcard from Geoffrey, 1932.

if a body such as the Trades' Union Congress could be persuaded to take it as their headquarters building.[17]

In December 1937 the future of Mander's own house at Wightwick, with its collection, was finally secured when he presented it to the National Trust, with an endowment of 20,000 Manders shares. He was encouraged by the Trevelyans ('of another Liberal and eccentric family', wrote Rosalie, who gave their house Wallington to the Trust shortly afterwards) and Professor W. G. Constable.[18] Rosalie Mander wrote: 'He never regretted it, for he liked to think that the public should enjoy what had been his private property.'[19] He delighted in showing visitors round the house, and insisted on keeping no quarters barred from public view, his dressing room and bathroom included.

Mander had installed a squash court in 1928 and continued to play tennis until just shortly before he died, aged nearly eighty, in 1962. Lord Longford (then Frank Pakenham) wrote in his *Times* obituary that he was an 'issue man':

> There was never a more selfless politician … Perhaps he should not be thought of as a politician at all, for all his love of the House of Commons and the political life. He was supremely a man of causes. Abyssinia, Czechoslovakia, anti-Fascism, Collective Security – he preached them indefatigably and inflexibly, though with unfailing good humour, and what he preached he practised.
>
> He was the most modest of men and would have disclaimed the slightest comparison with Lord Cecil; yet even Lord Cecil did not embody more completely the idealism of the League of Nations and all it stood for. His horror of the whole policy of appeasement culminating in Munich led him to harry the government with an endless stream of questions in the House of Commons, to the irritation of his opponents and the admiration of his friends.
>
> In all the developments leading up to the establishment of the United Nations and throughout the years that followed, his staunchness and energy in the struggle for peace never flagged. It was the greatest of pities that he was without a seat in either House during the post-war years. But whether in his own Midlands or in the national and international politics he continued to find ways of rendering service that counted.

'There was never a more selfless politician … Perhaps he should not be thought of as a politician at all, for all his love of the House of Commons and the political life. He was supremely a man of causes.'

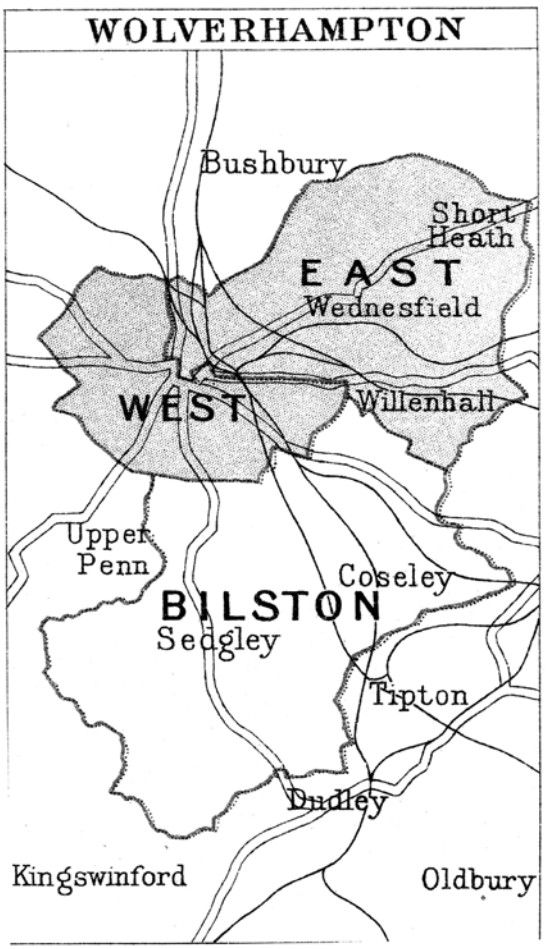
Nicholas Mander is first cousin twice removed of Geoffrey Mander. He was co-founder of Mander Portman Woodward, a group of tutorial schools in London. He has recently published Varnished Leaves, *a biography of the Mander Family of Wolverhampton 1750–1950. He lives at Owlpen Manor in the Cotswolds, a romantic Tudor house open to the public with Arts and Crafts associations. He is an FSA and the fourth Mander baronet.*

1 The fullest account is a booklet life, prepared by his widow mainly for sale at Wightwick: R. G. G. Mander, *Geoffrey le Mesurier Mander (1882–1962), Donor of the House* (Oxford, n.d.). He left an autobiographical fragment (1924–57) in the National Liberal Association archives at Bristol University Library (DM668).
2 For an account, see Geoffrey Mander (ed.), *The History of Mander Brothers* (1955) and the author's own *Varnished Leaves: A Biography of the Mander family of Wolverhampton* (2004) – with bibliography.
3 *Now and Then* (1848).
4 Miles Mander, *To my Son – in Confidence* (Faber, 1934). Lionel ('Miles') and his brother Alan both married daughters of the Maharajah of Cooch Behar (see Sunitee Devee, Maharani of Cooch Behar, *The Autobiography of an Indian Princess* (1921), pp. 43, 203–04).
5 Patricia Pegg (ed.), *A Very Private Heritage: The Family Papers of Samuel Theodore Mander of Wolverhampton, 1853–1900 (*Malvern, Images Publishing, 1996).
6 *Wightwick Manor*, National Trust guide (1993).
7 R. A. C. Parker, *Chamberlain and Appeasement* (1993), pp. 40, 52, 54.
8 259 HC Debs, cols. 1189, 45, 60, 201–02; Parker, pp. 40–41.
9 Geoffrey Mander, *We were* not *all Wrong* (1941), pp. 87–89.
10 Ibid., p. 118.
11 Archibald Sinclair (1890–1970), first Viscount Thurso (1951).
12 G. J. de Groot, *Liberal Crusader: The Life of Sir Archibald Sinclair* (1993), p. 227.
13 The answer, like a four-move chess problem, is that I am his first and second cousin, twice removed.
14 He was president of the local Conservative Party association for many years, but resigned in 1946 when he came out publicly in agreement with Labour Party housing policy. He was involved with a number of 'liberal' causes; for example, as vice chairman of the National Savings Committee, working closely with the Liberal peers, Lords Mottistone and Kindersley.
15 The agreement is quoted verbatim in *The History of Mander Brothers*. See also Mander Brothers Ltd., *An Account of the Internal Organisation of the Business of Mander Brothers, Ltd., Wolverhampton, In its relationship to the Employee (Approved by the Joint Works Committee),* 1925, revised 1934, 1939.
16 See obituaries in *The Times* (4 Nov. 1988); *The Daily Telegraph* (in part by Elizabeth Longford, 4 Nov. 1988); and Martin Drury (*National Trust Magazine*, Summer 1989).
17 The National Trust turned down the offer, as they doubted a tenant could be found in such a rum area (see Jane Marsh, *William Morris and Red House*, 2006, and the National Trust archives in Swindon).
18 Director of the Courtauld Institute, London, and Slade Professor of Fine Art at Cambridge. Another kindred spirit in the League of Nations, connected (distantly) by marriage through the Turnbull family, was Roger, ninth Lord Stamford; the tenth Earl presented Dunham Massey to the National Trust in 1976.
19 M. Waterson (ed.) *The Country House Remembered* (1985).

See page 2 for more details of *Varnished Leaves*, the biography of the Mander family of Wolverhampton, 1750–1950, written by Charles Nicholas Mander.

LAST OUTPOST OF URBAN RADICALISM: WOLVERHAMPTON EAST, LIBERAL SEAT 1832–1945

Jaime Reynolds examines the last redoubt of traditional Midland Radicalism



Geoffrey Mander was elected as Liberal MP for Wolverhampton East in 1929 and held the seat until his defeat by Labour in 45. It was one of the last remnants of urban Liberalism in the 1930s. By 1935 there were only three other urban seats where Liberals were able to withstand the combined challenge of the Labour and Conservative Parties: Birkenhead East, Middlesbrough West, and Bethnal Green South-West. Wolverhampton East was the last of the party's radical nonconformist Midland strongholds to fall.[1]

The constituency name was somewhat misleading, as only half of it lay within Wolverhampton proper, with the other half comprising a cluster of independent surrounding villages and towns. This explains the relative weakness of Liberalism in Wolverhampton, where between the wars the party was in fourth place on the borough council, with about five or six seats in the 1920s and three or four in the 1930s. By 1945, when Labour finally wrenched control of the borough from the anti-socialist majority, the Liberal councillors had been eliminated entirely.

Liberals held the old two-member borough of Wolverhampton continuously from 1832 to 1885, and also monopolised the East division from its establishment in 1885 until 1918, although George Thorne, in his first contest, held on by only eight votes at a by-election in 1908. Thorne, who was MP until 1929, was a Wolverhampton man, qualified as a solicitor, an 'Inland Revenue collector' and Alderman and Mayor. He was a Baptist and served as president of the West Midlands Federation of Evangelical Free Church Councils. He was the Asquithian Liberals' Chief Whip from 1919 to 1923.

Wolverhampton East was one of the last remnants of urban Liberalism in the 1930s.

Inter-war Wolverhampton East comprised the St James', St Peter's and St Mary's wards of Wolverhampton borough, plus Heath Town ward which was incorporated into the borough in 1927, and several smaller towns and villages on the periphery of Wolverhampton: the Urban District Councils of Willenhall (population in 1931: 21,000),

Wednesfield (9,300), and Short Heath (5,000). This was the cradle of the Industrial Revolution in the Black Country. The area was criss-crossed by canals and railways, and many large and small older businesses remained there, including iron works and metal-trade factories, the chemical industry and small engineering, and the Mander factories in Heath Town and Wednesfield. Willenhall was the capital of the lock-making industry in Britain, and Wednesfield was also a centre of lock and trap-making. It was a predominantly working-class district with extensive slum areas of shabby terraced housing.

Liberalism was sustained by the strength of nonconformity across most of the constituency, and the personal appeal of Thorne and Mander. It was also helped by the relatively slow advance of Labour among the poorer unskilled working-class voters, who were less organised into trade unions than in the more modern lighter industries of Wolverhampton. One Labour candidate in the 1920s remembered that 'the slums of the town were the worst I had seen anywhere in my life. The slum vote was unreliable. It was among the better-paid artisan type that I [had to] look for solid support'. Some of the working class continued to look to the Radical Liberals for their defenders against the local industrialists, many of whom were Conservatives on account of their support for protective tariffs against foreign competition in the iron and steel trades. Mander cultivated the working-class vote; for example, he was one of the few Liberals to oppose the unemployment benefit cuts in 1931 when desertions from Labour to the Liberals seem to have saved his seat – a rare and remarkable achievement in that general election. Very unusually he managed to squeeze the Labour vote further in 1935 to increase his majority.

St Peter's ward was the commercial and professional centre of Wolverhampton, with a working-class area in the north. It was a Conservative stronghold, which Labour began to break down only after 1945. St Mary's ward was an industrial and working-class area of large and small factories and terraced houses. In the 1920s it contained some of the worst slums in the town. Labour first won the ward in 1920 and it remained a safe Labour area into the 1950s. The Catholic Church (St Patrick's) was influential and there was a significant Irish vote. Many elected councillors were Catholics.

St James' ward was also industrial and working-class. From 1896 to 1945, however, the ward was a Liberal stronghold. The Conservatives rarely stood in the inter-war period and Labour never gained over 38 per cent of the poll. The pre-1945 Liberal councillors were mainly local traders and shopkeepers and very largely nonconformist. Many of them worshipped in the Mount Zion Primitive Methodist Chapel.

Heath Town was an independent Urban District until 1927, and retained its own community feeling until the 1950s. It was largely working class with extensive terraced housing, but also some large privately owned houses. It was industrial with large and small engineering, vehicle and electrical manufacturing and a Mander factory. Until 1945 in both St James' and Heath Town, the councillors were Independents with Liberal or Conservative support.

There was considerable cooperation between the Tories and Liberals in Wolverhampton. They both stood as Independents in local elections (although their national party allegiances were well known). From 1927 there was a formal anti-socialist electoral pact under which the Liberals concentrated their efforts in the east of the town. The Tories were strong in the West division, where the Bird family (of Bird's custard powder) provided the MPs from 1918 to 1945, except for a short break in 1929–31 when W. J. Brown won the seat for Labour. Brown carried

Election results 1918–45 (% of poll)

	1918	1922	1923	1924	1929	1931	1935	1945
Lib	51.8	45.9	unop	42.1	44.8	44.1	48.5	30.1
Lab		12.2		19.8	25.7	18.7	15.2	47.7
Con		37.3		38.1	29.5	37.2	36.3	22.2

Note: 1918: Coalition National Democratic Party 48.2%; 1922: National Liberal 4.6%

Wolverhampton borough council – party representation 1919–46

	1919	1922	1925	1928	1931	1934	1937	1946
Lib	6	6	5	6	5	3	4	0
Lab	6	9	12	11	9	13	14	26
Con	18	17	17	17	17	16	17	11
Ind	6	4	2	5	8	13	10	8

Key statistics

Wolverhampton boundaries in 1922:

- Nonconformist 1922: 6.1%

The following refer to the present-day boundaries of Wolverhampton:

- Working in manufacturing 1931: 46% (national: 29%)
- Unemployed 1931: 18% (national 12.5%)
- Middle-class (professional, managerial) 1931: 11% (national 15%)
- Clerical/skilled manual 1931: 53% (national 49%)
- Working-class 1931: 36% (national 36%)
- Households with one or more persons per room 1931: 23% (national 20%)

Modern constituency counterpart:

Wolverhampton North-east includes parts of Wolverhampton, Heath Town and Wednesfield. Willenhall is in Walsall North.

much of the Labour vote with him when he stood as an Independent in 1931 and 1935 (he sat as Independent MP for Rugby from 1942–50). Wolverhampton Bilston was a Tory/Labour marginal that swapped hands during the inter-war period. The Liberals generally kept out of both seats and in 1924 a number of prominent local Liberals openly supported the Conservative in the West division. In 1929, under pressure from younger members, Liberal candidates were nominated, polling 10.7 per cent in West Wolverhampton, and 12.2 per cent in Bilston.

The Conservatives continued to put up candidates in Wolverhampton East but their organisation was very weak, with only a couple of dozen members. In 1929 it was even proposed to close down the association there. A less radical and left-leaning MP than Geoffrey Mander would have probably been given a free run.

Mander still held on to 30 per cent of the poll at the 1945 general election, but Labour won by over 6,000 votes. The nonconformist and old working-class roots of Liberal support in the area were fast withering away. The Liberals had lost all their councillors in Wolverhampton borough by 1945–46 and although a few ex-Liberals survived as Independent councillors for a time, by 1952 both St James' and Heath Town wards were safely Labour. The Liberals gave up fighting municipal elections in a systematic way; they had no candidates between 1950 and 1956. They resumed contests on a sporadic basis from 1962. There was an active Liberal association in Wolverhampton South-West (Enoch Powell's seat) in the early 1960s, concentrated in the middle-class wards, but with strong residual links to nonconformity.

The constituency was dispersed in the 1949 redistribution. The four Wolverhampton wards were allocated to the new North-East division. Willenhall became part of Wednesbury constituency (1950–70), as did Wednesfield until 1955 when it was transferred to Cannock. These were comfortably Labour seats with little sign of any residual Liberal tradition.

The nonconformist and old working-class roots of Liberal support in the area were fast withering away.

Dr Jaime Reynolds studied at LSE and works for the European Commission. He has written extensively on Liberal history.

1 Nearby Walsall, held by the Liberals until 1924 and by the Liberal Nationals from 1931–45 was another example.

Sources

- G. W. Jones, *Borough Politics: A Study of the Wolverhampton Borough Council, 1888–1964* (Macmillan, 1969).
- W. J. Brown, *So Far…* (London, 1943).

LETTERS

Electoral support

In his review of four academic studies of the 2005 general election (*Journal of Liberal History* 52, autumn 2006), Tom Kiehl writes that the Lib Dems received the backing of 'a quarter, or thereabouts, of the electorate' in 2005. In fact, the party received the votes of only 13 per cent of the electorate (although 22 per cent of those who actually voted). This figure casts further light on Kiehl's comparison between the 1983 and 2005 election results, as in 1983 the Alliance won the support of 18 per cent of the electorate (25 per cent of those who voted). Hence, in terms of support throughout the country – not just among those who actually voted – the 2005 result is some way short of 1983.

John Meadowcroft

Herbert Gladstone and South Africa

Re-reading Lawrence Iles' article on Herbert Gladstone (*Journal of Liberal History* 51, summer 2006) I found myself wondering about his treatment of Gladstone's time as Governor-General of South Africa.

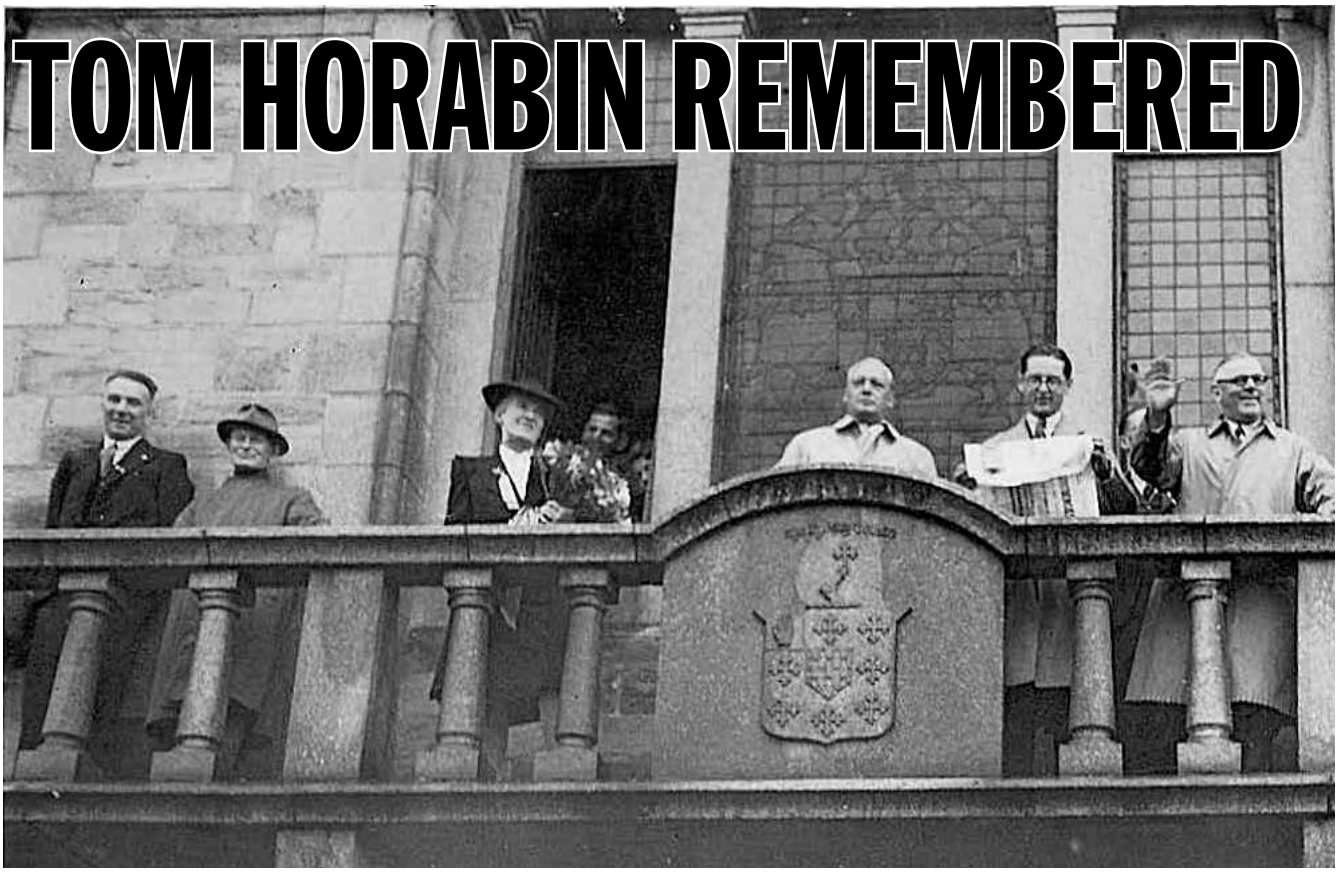
The reader might suppose that Lord Gladstone (as he had by then become) was an absolute 'prancing proconsul' like Lord Lugard in Nigeria. But under the Government of South Africa Act 1909 South Africa became a fully self-governing Dominion, and to blame Gladstone for its actions is like holding George V responsible for the actions of Asquith's government.

Gladstone's extensive correspondence with the Colonial Secretary, Lewis Harcourt, is in the Harcourt papers in the Bodleian Library, Oxford. Theses sons of famous fathers (Lewis was the son of the Sir William who unsuccessfully contested the succession to W. E. Gladstone), Gladstone and Harcourt, feared that their total lack of influence over Botha's government would be used as an argument against Irish home rule.

In my youth I raged at how the 1909 Act laid the foundations for apartheid and asked how our great government of 1906–14 could have passed it. My mature conclusions is that they expected public opinion always to be progressive, and to improve the weaknesses of the 1909 Act; unfortunately with minority settler public opinion that is not the dynamic.

Peter Hatton

TOM HORABIN REMEMBERED



TomHorabin (centre, above crest) at election declaration

In issue 28 of the *Journal*, Jaime Reynolds and Ian Hunter assessed the career of Tom Horabin, MP for North Cornwall from 1939 to 1950 and Liberal Chief Whip from 1945 to 1946, who later defected to the Labour Party. In December 2004, **Robert Ingham** interviewed Tom's daughter, **Mary Wright**, about her memories of her father.

'My father was a very personable, charismatic, big-hearted man. He had a varied career in business and was very generous. He lived life to the full although he made sure my mother was well provided for after his death. His business interests brought him into contact with a number of Liberal and Conservative politicians in the 1930s, including Churchill. He was always quite left wing, a champion of the underdog.

'My father's main business venture was the establishment with Harry, later Lord, Kissin of GH Kay Ltd, a general import and export merchants, in 1947. The name was derived from the initials of Grinstin, Kissin's brother-in-law, Horabin and Kissin himself. Kissin was the managing director and Clement Davies also sat on the board. In the 1950s, GH Kay acquired the majority shareholding in the commodity brokers Lewis and Peat, which Kissin later transformed into a vibrant concern. My father and Kissin were close friends and Kissin was extraordinarily upset by his death. My father was also chairman of Lachrinoid Products Ltd, a plastics firm, from 1943 until his death.

'His interest in pursuing a political career was sparked by the Chamberlain government's appeasement policy. He went on holiday to Germany in 1938. Through first-hand experience of what was happening there, and contact with the ordinary population, my father became more convinced that we should stand up to Hitler. His friendship with Dick Acland secured his selection as Liberal candidate for North Cornwall. I can remember us staying in the Acland family home before Francis Acland died. We retained the use of the chauffeur who had taken the family round Germany during the campaign.

'The by-election was very exciting. Feelings were running high, meetings were packed night after night, and even Lloyd George came to speak for the Liberals. Churchill helped devise the line my father repeated every night about Chamberlain: "the man who lets the bull out of the field is as responsible as the bull for the damage done". One night, a member of the audience challenged the imputation of any responsibility on Chamberlain's part for the international situation. My father, never one to duck a challenge, replied that, in his view, Chamberlain was as guilty as Hitler. The meeting erupted in uproar and the

platform party, including me, was forced to flee and our car was stoned as we left.

'My father combined his parliamentary duties with his business interests, as was common in those days, but was also a conscientious constituency MP. I worked in his office for a time and remember him dealing with casework and holding surgeries in Cornwall. His nickname in the House was "Honest Tom". I can remember seeing the fireworks to celebrate the end of the War in Europe from the House of Commons Terrace. My father was delighted with Labour's victory in 1945. Bumping into Churchill in the House shortly afterwards, the deposed Prime Minister said "you're not such a fan of me now, Horabin!"

'My father was always a radical, and I think he joined the Liberals because they were the people he tended to mix with before the War. He was close to Clement Davies, but in Parliament he also became friendly with Labour MPs such as Nye Bevan, Jennie Lee and Harold Wilson. W. J. Brown, who became the Independent MP for Rubgy, was another friend who helped in the by-election. My father was never ambitious to achieve high office in any party. He was more interested in achieving results than in gaining position for himself. I think he left the Liberals because he thought Labour were more likely to implement the radical policies in which he believed, given that they were in power. He was offered a peerage in 1947 or 1948 but refused. In those days there were no life peerages and my father didn't want to pass a title on to his eldest son without the backup of financial independence.

'He was part of the "Keep Left" group, which included Bevan. They used to meet in our London home. When he left the Liberals, my father decided not to contest North Cornwall again as he didn't wish to oppose old friends. He stood in Exeter in 1950 for Labour, but his political career had effectively been ended by the plane crash in Romney Marsh in which he broke a leg and was badly burned. He was wheelchair-bound for a year and never physically robust thereafter.

'My father was always a radical, and I think he joined the Liberals because they were the people he tended to mix with before the War.'

'The crash was not due to engine failure, as stated in your article, but to negligence on the part of BOAC. The flight crew lacked experience of the route being taken, from London to Bordeaux. They had not been supplied with the relevant maps and made a series of bad decisions when poor weather conditions forced them to seek an alternative place to land. They nearly got all the way back to Manston but the pilot did not appreciate how little fuel was left. Four of the five members of the flight crew as well as four of the eleven passengers were killed.

'My father sued BOAC for £11,000 loss of earnings and the case came to court in 1952. The company claimed that, under the Carriage by Air Act 1932, their liability was limited to £3,000 unless "wilful negligence" could be proved. The jury failed to reach a verdict and my father was forced to accept the lower level of compensation. He would have preferred to fight on, but couldn't afford to do so. His death, in 1956, was directly attributable to the nature of the burns he suffered.'

Mary Wright is the daughter of Tom Horabin. Robert Ingham is a historical writer, and Biographies Editor of the Journal.

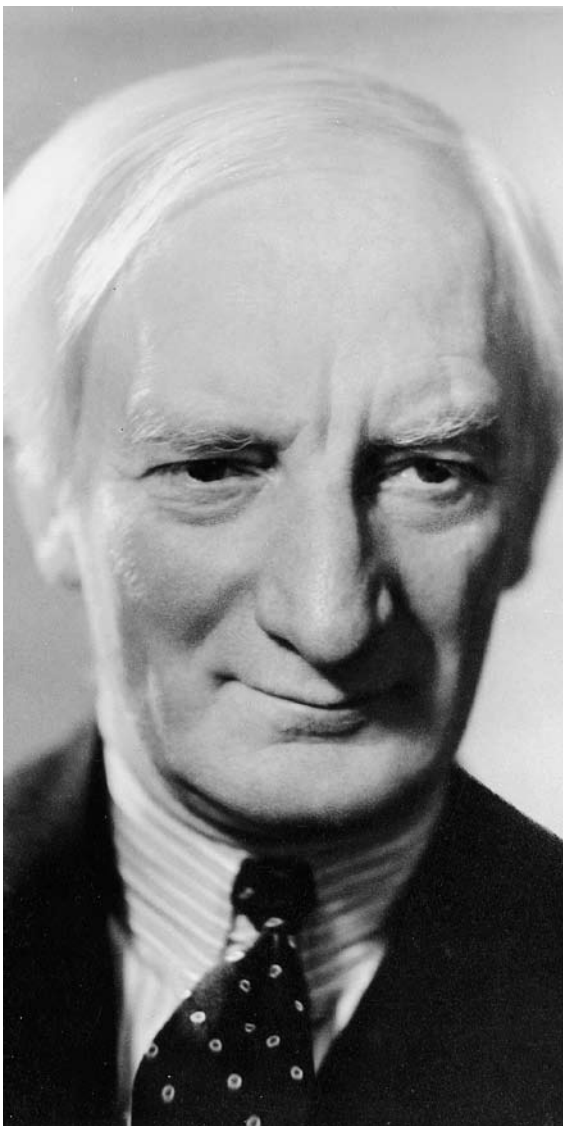
BEVERIDGE IN PERSON

In issue 34/35 of the *Journal* (spring/summer 2002), a biography of Ivor Davies was published, written by his son, John Davies. The following was found amongst Ivor Davies' papers.

A note on Lord Beveridge

I first met William Beveridge when I was but four years old. Immediately after the Second World War, my father, an avid Liberal, was released from the Royal Air Force to fight the Parliamentary constituency of Central Aberdeenshire. We were travelling north on the 'Flying Scotsman' when we were told that Beveridge was also on the train and would like to meet us. We were ushered along from the third-class carriages to the first-class section. In the corner of his more opulent apartment sat a bespectacled, white-haired man with a pile of papers on his knee. My father introduced me: 'John, this is Sir William Beveridge'. My subsequent conversation with him was inevitably limited, but I left with the impression that I had been in the presence of a very important old man.

Beveridge was himself a high-flying Scotsman. Born not in the country of his ancestors but in Rangpur, India, he was a child of empire, from a family sufficiently well off financially to send him to Charterhouse School and to Balliol College, Oxford, where he proved to be a brilliant scholar. A spell at Toynbee Hall in London awakened his social conscience. He



William Beveridge in 1938

became a dedicated Liberal and a recognised expert on unemployment insurance. As such, he participated vigorously in the radical reforms of the early twentieth century, but, with the rise of the Labour Party and the decline of the Liberals, he moved back to the groves of academe, first as Director of the London School of Economics and then as Master of University College, Oxford.

In 1941, he was recalled by the Coalition Government to supervise the production of the report on *Social Insurance and Allied Services* that made his name as a household word. He became Member of Parliament for Berwick-upon-Tweed. When we met him in 1945, he alighted at that station to embark upon an unsuccessful defence of this seat in the House of Commons.

In semi-retirement, he chose to return to Oxford, settling at Staverton House in Summertown to the north of the city. Here our paths crossed again. My father had been the Liberal candidate in Oxford at the 'Munich by-election' in 1938 and was in the 1950s reinstated as the candidate for the constituency. Beveridge was an important backer, much in demand for chairing meetings, providing picture opportunities, opening fetes and Christmas fairs. Regular visits were made to Staverton House.

There were large numbers of other visitors, too, from the many walks of life that Beveridge had inhabited. Some were not always entirely welcome. Beveridge was a man of consensus; he did not relish confrontation. I recall that on one occasion his wife Janet said: 'I am afraid that you will find us rather out of sorts today. That silly ass Bertie Russell has been here, arguing with William and upsetting him' – a somewhat peremptory dismissal of the Nobel Prize-winner, generally acknowledged to have possessed one of the finest mathematical and philosophical minds of his generation.

I still have the last Christmas card sent by Lord Beveridge to my parents, in 1960, shortly after Janet had died. Inside the card, over the simple signature of 'William Beveridge', is a photograph of him looking skyward. Opposite that is printed a sonnet by Samuel Butler, which Beveridge recalled copying on its first appearance in the *Athenaeum* magazine in 1902.

Beveridge died in 1963. The choice of this poem as his nunc dimittis is a curious and intriguing one. Butler, like Bertrand Russell, was an avowed atheist. In these verses, he dismissed the grand expectations of afterlife enshrined in Christian and classical religion. Lofty poetic concepts of heaven and hell are similarly rejected. The Greek title of the piece, 'Μέλλοντα Ταύτα' (which may be broadly translated as 'The whole future' or 'All that is to come') must be regarded as ironic. Death is portrayed as mere oblivion. The only hope of immortality lies in the remembrance of our actions and words by those still living on earth. All in all, this is an unusual and slightly controversial message to convey, particularly at Christmas. Beveridge's visions belonged strictly to this world.

Christmas 1960

I hope that you will care to have this Christmas card, the last to be of a long line of such greetings that Janet and I sent to our friends. The good wishes that I send with it will continue so long as I do, even though the cards have stopped.

Samuel Butler's sonnet is printed as I copied it out on its first appearance in the *Athenaeum* of January 4TH, 1902.

Μέλλοντα Ταύτα

Not on sad Stygian shore, nor in clear sheen
Of far Elysian plain, shall we meet those
Among the dead whose pupils we have been,
Nor those great shades whom we have held as foes;
No meadow of asphodel our feet shall tread,
Nor shall we look each other in the face
To love or hate each other being dead,
Hoping some praise, or fearing some disgrace.
We shall not argue, saying ''Twas thus' – or 'thus',
Our argument's whole drift we shall forget,
Who's right, who's wrong, will be all one to us,
We shall not even know that we have met.
Yet meet we shall, and part, and meet again,
Where dead mean meet, on lips of living men.

Samuel Butler, 1902

REPORT

The Suez crisis

Liberal Democrat History Group evening meeting, 3 July 2006, with Professor Peter Barberis

Report by **Graham Lippiatt**

In July 1956, the Egyptian President, Colonel Nasser, nationalised the company owning the Suez Canal, to the anger and frustration of the British and French governments, who were the majority shareholders. The British Prime Minister, Anthony Eden, reached a secret agreement with France and Israel to provoke hostilities through an invasion of Sinai by Israeli forces, using this as a pretext for Anglo-French military intervention in Egypt. The decision to send British troops to occupy the Canal Zone led to the downfall of Eden, affected the development of British foreign policy and represented what one historian of the Liberal Party has called a watershed for Jo Grimond and his party.[1]

The fiftieth anniversary of the Suez crisis and its impact on opposition politics was the topic for the History Group meeting at the National Liberal Club on Monday 3 July, chaired by Richard Grayson.[2] Sadly one of our speakers had to cancel because of a domestic emergency but we welcomed Peter Barberis, Professor of Politics at Manchester Metropolitan University and author of *Liberal Lion*, the recent biography of Jo Grimond, to give us his analysis of the importance of Suez to Grimond, the Liberals and British foreign policy.

Richard Grayson introduced the subject by reminding us that historians often like to focus on the issues of the past which have a resonance in the present day and that consequently it was no surprise that there was a renewed interest in Suez, over and above the fact of the fifteith anniversary of the crisis, as a result of the war in Iraq.

While some would argue that this perspective distorted our view of the past, Richard felt there was a balance to be redressed. The dominant issues in British politics from the 1940s to the 1980s were economic and social, with great debates, for example, over whether particular industries should be nationalised or privatised. Although there were significant foreign policy questions, such as possible British membership of the EEC, people's positioning on politics was more likely to be dictated by their stance on economic and social issues. Looking back at the political histories of the inter-war years written in the period from 1945 to the 1980s, it is not surprising to find that they tend to emphasise how the parties were debating economic and social questions. For example looking back to the 1920s it is the General Strike rather than the Treaty of Locarno that is seen as the more defining issue for the political parties. As an historian who had written in the late 1990s about the inter-war years, Richard felt that key issues dividing the parties, and providing them with distinctive ideological positions at that time, were in fact more to do with international rather than domestic politics, especially over the policy of appeasement. Richard therefore welcomed the theme of the meeting, examining how a foreign policy question played out in the domestic politics of the 1950s.

Peter Barberis started by questioning the proposition that is often made for Suez, that it represented a watershed for British foreign policy and the role of Britain in the world. This was too grand a claim, in Professor Barberis' view, and the best that could be said was that Suez brought home to sections of the British elite and public opinion that Britain's role in the world was a diminished one. And, despite much historical revision and re-interpretation about Suez, particularly around who knew what, when, and the role of the British government, Suez could not really be compared as an issue in British foreign policy with the reassessment which had been taking place around the policy of appeasement and the role of Neville Chamberlain in the 1930s. Historians have not yet begun to claim that the Suez adventure was justifiable.

One of the places in which the impact of Suez reverberated clearly at the time was within the ranks of the Liberal Party, producing divisions and posing dilemmas for Jo Grimond and the party.

However, one of the places in which the impact of Suez reverberated clearly at the time was within the ranks of the Liberal Party, producing divisions and posing dilemmas for Jo Grimond and the party. This was not, however, too surprising as within the Liberal tradition there are points of moral tension in the area of foreign policy going back to Gladstone and incorporating issues around the international rule of law and support for the role of supranational organisations such as the League of Nations or the United Nations. Against these internationalist ideas stand Liberal support for the self-determination of nations and the anti-colonial movement, and these competing principles were soon at play in the developing crisis over Suez, as they had been, for example, during the Boer War with

perfectly respectable Liberal arguments on both sides.

Nasser became president of Egypt in 1954 and the British government concluded an agreement with him to withdraw all British military forces from the Canal Zone by 1956, while the canal company would continue to operate the waterway itself until 1968. Liberals were divided over both the substantive issue and the timing of withdrawal. At this time Grimond was warning the government that failure to withdraw on an early timetable ran the risk of alienating world opinion and bringing Britain before the 'court' of the United Nations. However, Nasser's nationalisation of the Suez Canal company in July 1956 initiated a much more heated debate about what should be the nature of Britain's response, leading to a polarisation of opinion.

A stormy Liberal Party meeting took place on 31 July 1956, before any debate on the issue in Parliament. Lady Violet Bonham Carter noted in her diary that it had been a terrible meeting with many differing positions and a failure to reach any agreement with Jo Grimond taking an extreme stance in favour of going it alone and landing troops in the Canal Zone. On 2 August, the House of Commons debated the question, with the Labour leader Hugh Gaitskell making a major speech. Gaitskell did not oppose the government outright, sympathising with the dilemma it faced and denouncing Nasser's nationalisation of the canal in light of it being an international matter, not one just for the Egyptian government. Gaitskell also drew an analogy between Nasser's action and those of Hitler and Mussolini, which he may well have later regretted, but he rejected unilateral action and proposed an international solution through the UN. Liberal leader Clement Davies agreed with the points Gaitskell made, emphasising Britain's unique position in which to broker an international resolution to the crisis.

However, events moved on swiftly. The British government decided to act against Egypt and concluded the secret agreement with France and Israel to cover an Anglo-French invasion with the main purpose of 'regime change', i.e. the removal of Nasser and his government. The next major debate in the House of Commons came on 12 and 13 September 1956. At this point the Parliamentary Liberal Party was not yet resolved to oppose the government. On the contrary all five Liberal MPs eligible to vote (Davies, Grimond, Bowen, Holt and Wade) voted with the government against an opposition motion condemning its approach (the sixth MP, Hopkin Morris, was Deputy Speaker and chaired the session). Clement Davies did, however, base his position on the need to maintain Britain's moral authority in the face of international opinion.

By the time of the Liberal Assembly in September the mood within the party was beginning to change. The President-elect, Leonard Behrens, used his address to the Assembly to launch an attack on the government's handling of the crisis. A number of motions, mostly but not all critical in varying degrees of the government, were received for debate from constituencies but it is interesting to note that requests for debates on the Friday 'foreign affairs' session included more non-Suez than Suez issues.

The position changed further during September and October, however, with further international initiatives and the realisation towards the end of October that British and French troops were in the process of mobilisation. On 30 October, while the crisis was still under consideration by the UN Security Council, Eden announced a 12-hour ultimatum to Nasser. This represented a turning point for Liberal opinion with criticism of the government for pre-empting or ignoring the UN. This was led by Clement Davies, no longer Liberal leader but with Grimond out of the country on a pre-planned six-and-a-half week tour of the United States. Professor Barberis said he believed Grimond must have been thankful that his trip took him away from Britain during this period because by the time he returned, it had become clear which way opinion in the party was leaning and the direction in which he must take it. At the end of October 1956, however, there was still some sympathy for the government from Clement Davies along the lines that while Liberals preferred a UN-led solution, if that could not be found then Britain and France had the responsibility to act, having an accepted position in the world as 'policeman of the Middle East'. On the same day, former Liberal leader Herbert Samuel addressed a Liberal Council meeting, making an impassioned plea for intervention from a pro-Israel standpoint. At this time, of course, no one except those in the tight circle around Eden was aware of the British collusion with France and Israel.

It was the start of the British and French bombing campaign on 31 October that pushed the Liberal MPs into outright opposition to the government.

It was the start of the British and French bombing campaign on 31 October that pushed the Liberal MPs into outright opposition to the government. Surprisingly it was Roderic Bowen (not normally a great intervener in Commons debates) who made a speech condemning military action and blaming the government for effectively frustrating UN efforts to produce a diplomatic solution. Bowen, Davies and Wade all voted against the government; Holt did not and Grimond was still out of

the country. In the House of Lords, the Liberal leader Lord Rea announced that while the party had supported the government, albeit with increasing degrees of reluctance, they now felt that Eden had stepped over the line and Herbert Samuel became one of the first politicians to raise the question of the true importance of the Suez Canal to British or international interests against the background of Commonwealth, American and other international criticism of Anglo-French action.

By the time Grimond returned to Britain on 5 November to take up the reins as party leader, it was very clear that the direction the Liberal Party wished to take was one of outright opposition to the government. Notwithstanding this, there remained pockets of support for the government within the Liberal Party. Arthur Holt (one of two MPs holding their seats as a result of a local arrangement with the Tories) wrote a letter to his local newspaper as late as 8 November accepting that the government had no option but to take military action. Shockingly to some Liberals, Gilbert Murray[3] wrote to *The Times* in support of the government's stance. It later transpired that another leading Liberal, Gladwyn Jebb,[4] who was throughout the period of the Suez crisis British Ambassador to France, had been a strong advocate of robust joint action against Nasser within the Foreign Office, though he was not aware of the full details of the Anglo-French collusion. Interestingly, according to Professor Barberis, Jebb did not play a central role in the development of the crisis, despite his key diplomatic posting to Paris, because he was disliked and ignored by Eden. In his memoirs Jebb apparently took a critical position against the Eden government and its action over Suez.

Grimond used the example of Suez to make political capital against Conservative and Labour foreign policy virtually throughout the period of his leadership of the Liberal Party.

Commenting on one historian's analysis of the Suez crisis in relation to the Liberal Party, Professor Barberis had to disagree with Roy Douglas' conclusion that Suez redounded to the good of the party. One of the first electoral tests for the Liberals following Suez was the Carmarthen by-election of February 1957. There were special circumstances obtaining here, as this was Hopkin Morris' old seat and the local Liberal association had chosen an openly pro-Suez, pro-government candidate. His opponent was former Liberal MP Megan Lloyd George, who had defected to Labour in April 1955. Grimond felt the need to support the Liberal candidate despite his stance on Suez, although Grimond later regretted this and recorded in his memoirs that he felt it had been one of his greatest errors of judgment. According to Professor Barberis, in other by-election contests, Liberal support does not show any significant upturn until early 1958, with Rochdale (February 1958) being a very good result. It is doubtful, however, that the increased Liberal vote at Rochdale can be attributed to the party's stance on Suez. There was nevertheless some evidence from the soundings that the party itself had taken that some new members, particularly middle-class supporters, were being attracted to join as a result of its position on Suez.

What was true, however, was that Grimond and the party leadership cited Suez as an example of the failure of government policy and used it to attack the Conservative approach on a range of foreign policy questions and the failure of the Foreign Office to learn and implement the relevant lessons about Britain's new position in the world. Grimond used the example of Suez to make political capital against Conservative and Labour foreign policy virtually throughout the period of his leadership of the Liberal Party. Only in 1966 (the year before he stepped down as leader) did Grimond, in an article in *The Guardian*, admit that it might be time to 'lay the ghost of Suez'. By the time of the Nigerian civil war (the Biafran conflict) in 1969, Grimond was prepared to denounce it as the worst episode of British foreign policy since the Second World War, even worse than Suez.

In conclusion then, Professor Barberis could not support the claim that the long-term effects of Suez for the Liberal Party represented a watershed, with a swing of support and opinion behind the party. Neither would he accept the view that Suez was a key turning point in British foreign policy itself; he felt, rather, that the effects of the crisis simply brought to the surface trends – such as Britain's diminished role in world affairs and the importance of American influence – which were already established, and made the implications of these developments clearer to public and elite opinion.

Graham Lippiatt is Secretary of the Liberal Democrat History Group.

1 David Dutton, *A History of the Liberal Party in the Twentieth Century* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), p. 187.
2 Lecturer in politics at Goldsmith's College, former Director of Policy for the Liberal Democrats and speechwriter for Charles Kennedy; author of *Liberals, International Relations and Appeasement: The Liberal Party, 1919–39* (Frank Cass, 2001).
3 George Gilbert Murray (1866–1957), Liberal parliamentary candidate, pro-Boer radical, campaigner for the establishment of a League of Nations and President of Liberal International 1947–49.
4 Hubert Miles Gladwyn Jebb (1900–96), diplomat and Liberal peer after 1965.

REVIEWS

The reluctant leader

Greg Hurst, *Charles Kennedy: A Tragic Flaw* (Politico's, 2006)

Reviewed by **Duncan Brack**

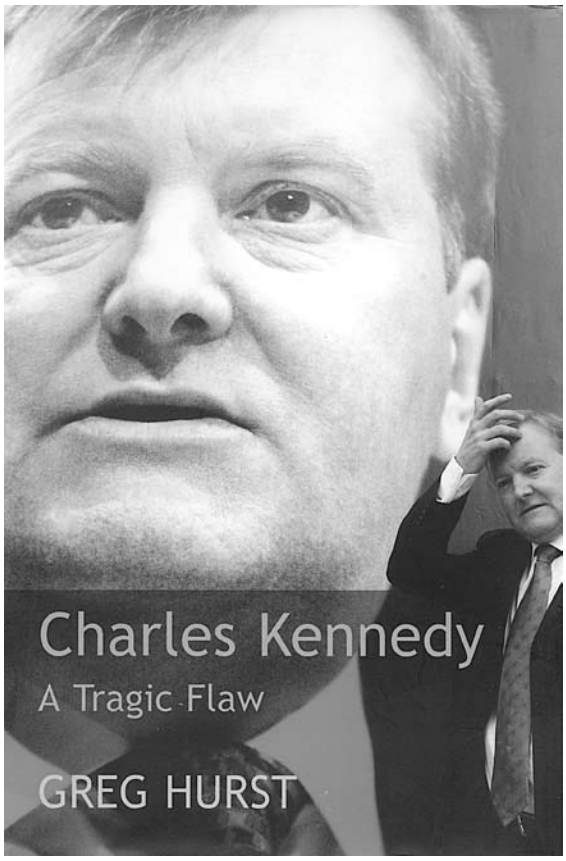
Liberal Democrat nerves were on edge this summer over the anticipated publication of *Times* journalist Greg Hurst's biography of Charles Kennedy. What would it reveal about his drunkenness and about his colleagues' behaviour in forcing him from office? To what extent would it disturb the ghosts of the traumatic period from November 2005 to January 2006, in which two attempts were made to persuade him to resign?

In the event, the serialisation of parts of the book in *The Times* in August 2006 generated few ripples – and was in any case overshadowed in the media by Labour's own succession crisis, as a number of junior ministers resigned in an attempt to put pressure on Blair. There was one genuine revelation, of an abortive press conference in July 2003, called, and then cancelled, to reveal Kennedy's problems with alcohol and a promise to seek treatment. In fact the book has probably done the Lib Dem leadership a favour, by revealing Menzies Campbell's scrupulous distancing of himself from the successive attempts to persuade Kennedy to resign, aware of the conflict of interest between his role as deputy leader and his position as a potential successor. Thus it was some of the younger MPs, particularly Ed Davey and Sarah Teather, who were left to take the lead in the second, successful, attempt to persuade Kennedy to go. The book should also do them a favour, revealing how reluctantly they were forced into their actions, and with so much justification.

Overall the book is well written, perceptive and comprehensive. Hurst appears to have talked to all the key figures involved at every stage in Kennedy's life, with the exception of Kennedy himself – and even there he managed to interview most of Kennedy's key staff and advisers. The book is a little light on Kennedy's early political career in the SDP, but covers everything thereafter, including his brave lone stand, amongst the SDP's MPs, in favour of merger in 1987, his faltering career under Ashdown, and his six years as leader of the Liberal Democrats.

The book is not without its problems. Hurst has an irritating habit of using everyone's full name, with the result that one gets tired of reading, repeatedly, 'Charles Kennedy' when just 'Kennedy' would usually do. In good thriller style, the book starts with the most dramatic part of the story – the two months leading up to Kennedy's resignation – but then has to return to the same topic at the end, as the rest of the text is arranged chronologically. The author uses some lazy journalistic shorthand – for example, repeatedly describing the Lib Dem conference as 'anarchic', because, presumably, very occasionally it dares to vote against its leadership ('democratic' might be another description). There are a number of errors; the contentious motion on Europe at the Blackpool conference in 2005, for example, was amended, not thrown out. And Hurst didn't find out quite all the details of the resignation drama – missing, for example, the fact that although the Chief Whip, Andrew Stunell, knew that more MPs than had been identified by Davey and Teather were prepared to express their lack of confidence in Kennedy's leadership, he did not use the information to persuade Kennedy to go before the Davey/Teather letter was released to the press.

Hurst has also bought a couple of Kennedy myths, including the assertion that the 'Meeting the Challenge' policy review exercise of 2005–06 was a Kennedy initiative; it was not, although Kennedy claimed it was. Similarly, Hurst takes at face value the argument, contained in Kennedy's post-2005 election speech, that the party suffered from attacks on policies that were not included in the manifesto but had been passed by conference 'on the basis of a brief, desultory debate in a largely empty hall'. In reality,



almost all the subjects of the attacks were drawn from policy papers approved by the Federal Policy Committee under Kennedy's own chairmanship.

These shortcomings do not, however, detract too much from what in general is an accurate and detailed account of the party's recent history, deserving to be read by anyone wanting to understand the Kennedy leadership and why it failed, and the events that led up to the leader's departure in such dramatic circumstances.

Hurst is scrupulously fair, pointing out Kennedy's strengths along with his weaknesses. This only serves to make the overall verdict even blunter: Kennedy was simply not fit to be leader, although that is an implicit rather than an explicit conclusion. The fact that despite this, he can fairly be described as 'the most successful third-party leader for more than eighty years', based on the election outcomes of 2001 and 2005, only serves to suggest how much more could have been achieved had he been more capable.

The book brings out the real tragedy of Kennedy's story, that the talents that had served him so well before he became leader – a gift for communications, as a conference speaker, on a one-to-one basis or on television chat shows, and a real ability to come over as a human being, the antithesis of spin – either deserted him or were not appropriate as leader. His native wit and speaking ability led him to rely too heavily and too often simply on busking it; he was not, in general, disposed to do the hard work and preparation required in the much more high-profile position of leader. Combined with his habitual indifference to policy detail, this led to disasters such as the 2005 manifesto launch, where he was lucky to have been able to attribute his inability to explain party policy on local income tax to exhaustion consequent on the birth of his son a few days before (in reality, he was badly hung over as well as unprepared).

There is much in the book to make one feel desperately sorry for Charles Kennedy.

During the 1999 leadership contest the *West Highland Free Press*, one of Kennedy's local constituency newspapers, remarked that people in London were beginning to ask what they had been asking for fifteen years: what exactly did Charles Kennedy stand for? The book exposes how little we still know, six years later. Kennedy had no agenda, no real reason to be leader other than simply filling the position. This may partly be a side-effect of the style of Highland politics, which tends to the personal rather than the ideological, but even without this the book leads the reader to the conclusion that Kennedy was essentially a dilettante, interested in style and technique (his abandoned PhD was on political rhetoric) but hardly ever in substance. The one exception seems to be Europe, which was one of his motivations for switching from Labour to the SDP in 1981.

Together with his failures at party management, which included insisting on chairing the Federal Policy Committee (like his predecessor Ashdown) but completely failing to give it any lead or direction (unlike Ashdown) this led directly to the 2005 manifesto, a comprehensive listing of things the party was against, but with no underlying narrative tying it all together and giving voters a sense of what the party was for. As a number of journalists observed at the time, Kennedy's own campaign in 2005 was similarly negative and uninspiring.

Kennedy hated confrontation, and generally avoided taking decisions, preferring to leave his options open until the last moment – or beyond. When forced to make a choice, however, he often displayed good judgment, and had a more accurate feel for what the party would stand for than Ashdown had sometimes displayed. The decision to oppose the Iraq war is often cited as the best example of this judgment, but that is unconvincing; what other course could Kennedy – or anyone else, with the possible exception of Ashdown – have chosen at the time? His decision to take on the Tories over immigration, in the Romsey by-election in 2000, and his refusal to join the Butler Inquiry into the intelligence on Iraqi weapons of mass destruction, are better examples. In reality – although this is not argued in the book – the Iraq war was a godsend to Kennedy, giving him the agenda he needed to carry him through to the 2005 election; without it the hollowness at the centre of his leadership might have been exposed much earlier.

There is much in the book to make one feel desperately sorry for Charles Kennedy. Hurst does a good job of revealing the enormous strains of leadership, ones under which even Paddy Ashdown, with his far greater stores of self-reliance and self-belief, buckled at times – as we know from reading his diaries. There is a sense that Kennedy the politician was a persona protecting Kennedy the man. In many ways a shy person, as Hurst points out, he nevertheless enjoyed acting at school and debating at university – not natural activities for a shy boy, unless he could submerge his reserve under an outward shell of self-confidence. The strain of playing such a role was bearable, even enjoyable, until it became his whole life – which it necessarily did after he became leader. The enormous stress which resulted reinforced Kennedy's lack of self-esteem and self-confidence, and tended to lead to inertia, particularly when there was no activity, such as an election campaign, to give him a clearly defined role into which he could fall. He had no agenda of his own to follow

when one was not provided for him by external events.

One of the book's chapters, called 'Reluctant leader', explores this theme to a certain extent. But what is never made terribly clear is why Kennedy wanted to be leader in the first place. Perhaps his main problem is that he never really had to fight for anything. Once he managed to be selected as SDP candidate for Ross, Cromarty & Skye in 1983, his political career followed almost effortlessly. His candidacy for the leadership in 1999 can be seen as simply following the line of least resistance; at the time it would been more difficult for him *not* to stand, since everyone expected him to, and many actively wanted an alternative to the potentially dangerous Simon Hughes.

Unsurprisingly, given the nature of Kennedy's departure, the book devotes a chapter to 'Demons and drink'. Obviously his binge drinking, although not consistently an issue, was hardly conducive to effective leadership. Yet Hurst leaves the reader with the impression that alcohol was the main problem, and without his drunkenness, Kennedy might still be leader. I think this is wrong.

Kennedy's first two years in the job, from 1999 to 2001, were quite successful, but primarily this is because he was not Ashdown; his lack of an agenda, and his approach to managing his party – which was not to – came as something of a relief after Ashdown's hyperactivity and insistence on trying to lead the party in a direction (closer links with Labour) in which it did not want to go. Since no one expected the Liberal Democrats to do well in the 2001 election, Kennedy and the party were not subjected to particularly searching scrutiny, unlike in 2005. But after 2001, everything fell apart. The absence of any meaning to his leadership, his inertia and drift, his failures at party management, and his lack of self-belief, were all increasingly and cruelly exposed. The underlying problem with Kennedy was not alcohol. The underlying problem was that he couldn't lead.

Duncan Brack is Editor of the Journal of Liberal History.

The underlying problem with Kennedy was not alcohol. The underlying problem was that he couldn't lead.

Citizenship and democracy

Geoffrey Foote, *The Republican Transformation of Modern British Politics* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2006)

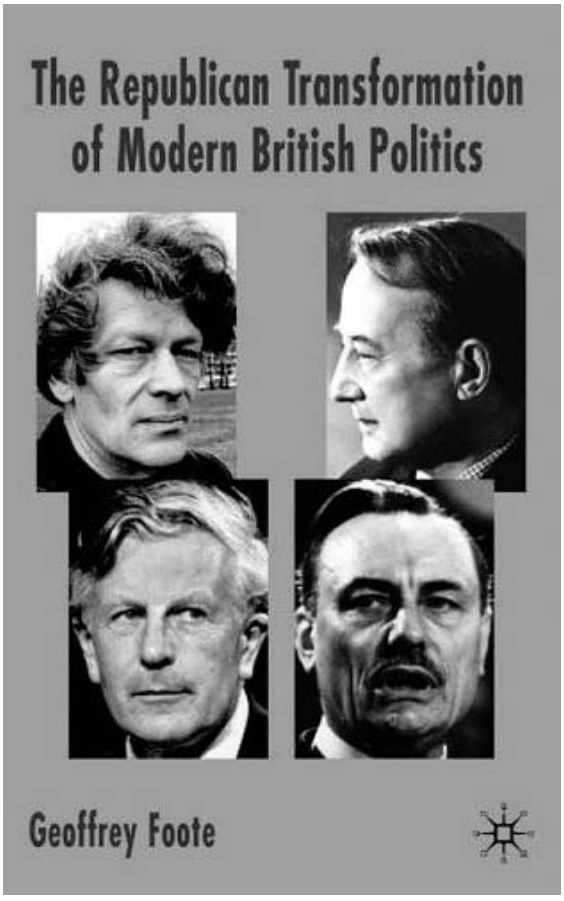
Reviewed by **Eugenio Biagini**

Here Geoffrey Foote, the author of the magisterial *The Labour Party's Political Thought* (3rd ed. 1997), identifies and explores a central factor in the development of the ideological and political framework of today's politics in Britain.

'Republicanism', in Foote's sense of the word, has nothing to do with anti-monarchism. It is, rather, the political tradition which insists that participatory citizenship and a sense of 'common good' are essential to healthy democratic life. For Thomas Jefferson, the 'mother principle' of republicanism was 'a government by citizens in mass, acting directly and personally, according to the rules established by the majority' (cit. p.4). While this was completely feasible only in the ancient city-states, such as Athens, or in the medieval republics of Italy and Germany, self-government by active citizens has been a dominant concern for generations of modern Liberals, from Mill and Gladstone to Grimond. The alternative, they thought, was a 'bare ballot-box democracy' and a more or less plebiscitarian regime. In the twentieth century, the latter has been the fate not only of Communist countries and 'banana republics', but, to some extent has also characterised Western democracies. Even in Britain since 1951 '[t]he problems of virtue and corruption within the market [have] … given way to the problems of avoiding a major slump in demand and employment, or later with maintaining full employment and stable prices. These problems appeared to demand an efficient management of the economy by mandarins of the Treasury and the Bank of England … It was a necessarily elitist and statist approach, against which the republican demand for citizen participation appeared irrelevant.' (p.11)

The social manifestations of the republican tradition in modern Britain have been explored by a number of scholars, including Jose Harris and Frank Prochaska. Here Foote is interested not in the social dimension, nor merely in the history of political thought, but rather in the interplay between political thought and intellectual traditions. In this sense he goes beyond Quentin Skinner's 'text in context' approach, and explores the complexity and confusion 'caused by the emergence of a new politics within an old language' – as in the case, for example, of republican ideas emerging from the Marxist language of *New Left Review.* From the late 1950s E. P. Thompson, John Saville, Alasdair MacIntyre, Raphael Samuel and others began to extol the virtues of 'culture' against Marxist determinism, and of 'community' against the rigid national assumptions of 'class'. What they most feared was apathy – non-participation – in an

increasingly complacent age of consumerism. Utilitarianism – the cornerstone of the centralised welfare state – was identified as a philosophy of passivity and corruption, 'the Western equivalent of the Stalinist enemy' (p.28). This had profound implications in the sphere of economic policy and revealed a real difference between the New Left and traditional Labour on the question of public ownership. While the Bevanites stressed nationalisation and relegated industrial democracy to a mere consultative role, 'the New Left … denied that the State was somehow in itself the embodiment of the *res publica* because it did not represent genuine citizens' (p.32). They detested Communist planning in the USSR, but also hated paternalism and bureaucracy in England. Their ideas influenced the Institute of Workers Control (1964), Tony Benn and the Left Militant, especially in the aftermath of the general strike and occupation of factories in France in May 1968.



In parallel, republican ideas were studied and adopted by other groups. Political theorists such as Carole Pateman and Dennis Thompson explored the participatory dimensions of liberty in the thought of J. S. Mill, which they contrasted with Isaiah Berlin's emphasis on 'negative' freedom. Significantly, it was in the context of the historic Liberal Party that the new republicanism delivered its most interesting fruits. As Foote writes, '[w]here the socialist politics of the New Left prevented them from moving beyond a Keynesian-corporatist approach to the management of the economy, the Liberal circle around Jo Grimond were able to develop a fuller republican conception of the economy, based on a politics of citizenship participation … without the need to reconcile it with public ownership of a centrally directed apparatus. The idea of an unservile society, where citizenship was based on property, was also distinct from the laissez-faire approach of other Liberals who saw the market as the crucial mechanism for individual choice, irrespective of an antagonism to the *res publica*' (p.89).

The latter was also going to be crucial to the appropriation of republican ideas by the Conservative right. Powell, and eventually Thatcher, insisted on the notion of individual property and resurrected the old republican suspicion against 'corruption' of the elite and related institutions. 'The sales of shares in publicly owned companies and of council housing, both at massively discounted prices to ensure popular acceptance and participation, could hardly be fitted into a strict market approach to society', but was a dimension of Thatcher's 'interlacing of liberal economics, social authoritarianism, and commitment to a republic of property-owners' (p.116). A republic of property-owners was the Thatcherite campaign which attracted support from the ageing Grimond. In the early 1980s he criticised the politics of the Alliance and their continued reliance on Keynesian corporatism and championed what he regarded as 'the positive side of Hayek', which he wanted to see 'married to a defence of the common interests'. 'While he supported the denationalisation of industry, he was critical of the manner in which pension and trust funds …. were allowed to take a controlling share of ownership; as an alternative he sought the fostering of workers' cooperatives. Similarly, his opposition to an incomes policy was based not on a simple free-market opposition to state intervention in the labour market, but on a concern over the collapse of the "common feelings, the bonds of a liberal society" which should make such centralised restrictions of liberty unnecessary.' (p.171)

The republican transformation is an important contribution to the study of modern British politics and political ideas. *Pace* Quentin Skinner, Foote shows that republicanism does not embody any particular self-contained, coherent notion of liberty which can be taken as a progressive alternative to liberalism. Instead, republicanism consists of a family of ideologies and concepts which have been used to serve different and even contrasting social and economic interests and visions of society. In the age of Tony Blair, the language of citizenship and community has been firmly established as the idiom of the new political consensus, although its rhetoric has often proved empty and illusory in a context which has continued to be dominated by a centralised state, the irrelevance of local government and the celebration of managerial

values and market imperatives, in contrast to civic responsibility and the normative function of the common good.

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'Women's rights and women's duties'

Ursula Masson (ed.), *'Women's Rights and Women's Duties': the Aberdare Women's Liberal Association, 1891–1910* (South Wales Record Society, 2005)

Reviewed by **Eugenio Biagini**

Local Women's Liberal Associations began to be established in various parts of the country from the early 1880s, but it was the 1886 home rule crisis which gave new impetus to local initiatives and generated a national movement culminating in the formation of the Women's Liberal Federation (WLF) in 1887. The WLF counted 20,000 members by 1888 and continued to grow in the following years. There were several reasons for this development, including the democratisation of the UK electoral system in 1883–85 (which required larger numbers of party workers for tasks at which women excelled) and the intrinsic nature of the issues under discussion from 1886. For Home Rule was more than merely the cause of Irish Nationalism. It was also about participatory citizenship, civil rights, the end of authoritarian rule from Dublin Castle and the plight of the evicted tenants and their families. Thus, supporting Gladstone's Irish policy soon came to signify a commitment to an all-encompassing humanitarian crusade, with clear implications for spheres as diverse as British social reform and foreign policy.

Morality and religion had long been perceived as the twin pillars of the women's 'duty to society', but from 1886, under the combined pressure of Gladstone's haunting rhetoric and the dictates of the 'nonconformist conscience', they also became central to national party politics. Exploiting the newly-blurred divide between public policy and the private sphere, women started to expand their claims to political rights, hitherto limited to local authority affairs. Feminine Liberalism developed a distinctive agenda, which was formally consistent with contemporary conventions about women's duties in society, and yet subversive of such roles and tasks. As one leaflet proclaimed, 'religion is not more important to our spiritual wants than politics to our material wants … Religion tells us we should be helpful to one another, and politics shows us how to be helpful, wisely and effectively.'[1] This line of argument was effectively summarised by Lady Aberdeen when she declared that 'Liberalism was the Christianity of politics'.[2] There was no longer any legitimate room for the selfish pursuit of naked national interest, because politics had become the arena in which moral standards were upheld and religious imperatives applied to the solution of social and constitutional problems. By the same token, humanitarianism, both at home and overseas, emerged as the defining feature of the Gladstonian faith. In the process, women felt politically empowered and legitimised and rank-and-file female Liberals were gradually won over to suffragism.

The Women's Liberal Federation counted 20,000 members by 1888 and continued to grow in the following years.

Ursula Masson has produced a splendid edition of the papers of one of the best documented local organisations, the Aberdare Women's Liberal Association. The latter was formed in 1891–92 and at its peak had a membership of 500, including eminent nonconformists such as Anne Griffith Jones and Maria Richards, herself a pioneer of women in local government (she served as a Poor Law Guardian from 1894–1929).

Especially in its first ten or fifteen years, the Association attracted suffragists and campaigners for women's rights, issues so hotly debated that they led to a nationwide split within the WLF as a whole in 1892 (a minority of anti-suffragists left the Federation). But the Aberdare WLA was also passionately involved in a range of other issues, especially those pertaining to the humanitarian agenda of contemporary Liberalism – such as the campaign to stop the massacre of Armenian and other Christians in the Ottoman Empire (1894–97) and the 'pro-Boer' agitation to stop British brutalities against civilians in South Africa (1899–1902). These Gladstonian issues were closely related to a parallel concern for human rights at home, which inspired the Association's campaigns on behalf of working-class women and children. For Masson, Liberal women's associations 'considered themselves to be working, above all, for women, rather than party' (p.23), but by so doing they extended the meaning and depth of Liberalism as a whole. The minute book records the meetings of the executive and general committees and includes also the reports of public meetings and speeches. Masson has contributed a substantial introductory essay

(pp.1–79), which sheds light on the context and meaning of the episodes mentioned in the minutes. *Women's Rights and Women's Duties* is an extremely valuable source for both the history of modern Liberalism and the study of women's political activism at the turn of the century.

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1 From a leaflet of the Warwick and Leamington Women's Liberal Association, 1890, cit. in L. Walker, 'Party political women: a comparative study of Liberal women and the Primrose League', in J. Rendall (ed.), *Equal or Different: Women's Politics 1800–1914* (Oxford, 1987), p.177.

2 Ishbel, Lady Aberdeen, *'We Twa'. Reminiscences of Lord and Lady Aberdeeen*, vol.1 (London, 1925), p.278.

From Walpole, 1720, to Blair, 2005

Roger Ellis and Geoffrey Treasure, *Britain's Prime Ministers* (London: Shepheard-Walwyn, 2005)

Reviewed by **Dr J. Graham Jones**

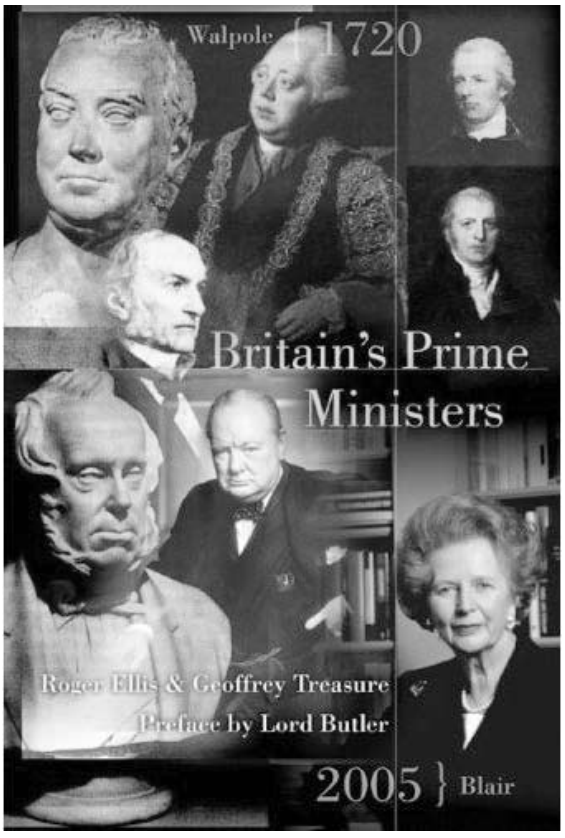
THIS IMPRESSIVE, eminently readable tome fills a distinct gap and is to be very warmly welcomed. We are presented with splendid biographical entries for each British Prime Minister from Sir Robert Walpole, generally considered the first to occupy the office, until the present incumbent, Tony Blair. Writing from the vantage point of the summer of 2005, the authors conclude, 'It is too soon to hazard a verdict on Blair's New Labour governments', although they admit that a risk exists that they may well 'be written down as the most disappointing governments of modern times' (p. 292).

Though Walpole never officially held the title of 'Prime Minister', his long tenure as principal minister of the Crown and the dominant figure in the House of Commons effectively established him as Britain's first Prime Minister. The circumstances of the Hanoverian succession left him and his successors more answerable to a majority in Parliament than to the King. Although George III sought a more active role in government, leadership of Parliament became the determining factor of who was Prime Minister.

The nineteenth century into the twentieth marked a new shift in emphasis. At the beginning of this period, Parliament was dominated by a land-owning oligarchy, but as the franchise was gradually extended to adult male and, finally female, suffrage, the Prime Minister became answerable to the democratic vote. The creation of the welfare state and management of the economy gave a different emphasis to the role in the second half of the twentieth century. These essays, revealing how each holder moulded the office in response to the situation of the time, make a valuable contribution to the current debate about the nature of the office.

The length and detail of the individual entries vary considerably. The average length is about 2,500 words. The longest are reserved for Walpole and Churchill, but several other premiers also receive extended treatments, among them William Pitt the Elder, Pitt the Younger, the Earl of Liverpool, Gladstone, Lloyd George and Margaret Thatcher. By far the shortest piece is on the little known Duke of Devonshire, who held office for just eight months in 1756–57. But there are also surprisingly brief articles on much more prominent individuals like Rosebery, Sir Henry Campbell Bannerman and Sir Alec Douglas-Home. Even Harold Wilson, who headed four Labour governments and dominated the Labour Party for a long time, is accorded no more than four and a half pages. The authors were no doubt constrained by considerations of space.

All the entries show evidence of wide, thoughtful and up-to-date reading, and the authors have skilfully woven their findings into a coherent narrative with a succinct, accessible style. Their assessments and conclusions are unfailingly judicious and penetrating. The seams of dual authorship are totally invisible, and it would be interesting to know the precise division of labour. Personal details and political history mingle freely. Most of the entries give information on the formative influences on their subjects,



their background, upbringing and education. Their hobbies, pursuits and interests outside politics are mentioned; Clem Attlee, we are told, exuded a 'homely style … He sucked at his pipe, did the crossword, was driven to his election meetings by his wife Vi in their small car' (p. 238). The authors also have an eagle eye for the short, apt quotation which does so much to enliven their writing (it would be interesting to know the source of some of them). It is notable, however, that the subjects' lives after their retirement from the premiership are given very short shrift. Jim Callaghan was defeated at the polls in May 1979, but lived on until March 2005, yet this lengthy period is dismissed in just five short sentences.

The preface by Lord Butler, who served Harold Wilson and Ted Heath as Private Secretary, and Margaret Thatcher, John Major and Tony Blair as Cabinet Secretary, adds insight into the current workings of the office of PM. A brief, thought-provoking introduction reflects on the changes which have taken place in the nature of the office of Prime Minister over the centuries. Each entry ends with a short list of the more significant biographies and there is a most helpful guide to further reading. The text is also enlivened with portraits and photographs of most of the more eminent and well-known Prime Ministers. The authors have quarried well in particular the magnificent resources of the National Portrait Gallery, but confine themselves to traditional head-and-shoulders portraits rather than family groups or pictures of significant political occasions and events. Some, such as the Karsh portrait of Churchill and the Bassano photograph of Baldwin, are already very well known and have been published many times before.

The general standard of accuracy throughout the volume is extremely high. It is evident that the authors have checked and counter-checked their facts with scrupulous attention to detail. It is not, however, true to say of Lloyd George that, in his Caernarvon Boroughs constituency, 'his political base was secure' (p. 194). It was anything but secure from his first election to Parliament in April 1890 right through until the general election of January 1906, and there was throughout this lengthy period a very real risk that he might have lost the seat to any one of his Tory opponents. Churchill returned to power in November 1951, not 1952 (p. 231). And is it really true to say that Harold Wilson was the only serving British premier in the twentieth century to retire voluntarily 'without the pressure of ill-health' (p. 254)? It is now widely believed that the cruel onset of Alzheimer's Disease had begun before 1976 and had begun to cloud his judgement and memory, and that he was aware of this. Hence his sensational announcement of his impending retirement in March 1976. Following on from this, was not Stanley Baldwin generally hale and healthy at the time of his voluntary retirement following the coronation of George VI in June 1937?

These essays, revealing how each holder moulded the office in response to the situation of the time, make a valuable contribution to the current debate about the nature of the office.

This volume has been most attractively produced by its publishers who are to be warmly congratulated on its appearance. It provides the ideal, introductory sketch to the lives and carers of all British Prime Ministers. The study succeeds in being comprehensive and detailed without being at all superficial. It is certain to appeal to academics, college and university students and the general reader alike and will undoubtedly stand the test of time.

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Churchill reinterpreted

Richard Holmes, *In the Footsteps of Churchill* (BBC Books, 2005)

Reviewed by **Dr J. Graham Jones**

'Without Churchill, Britain might have been defeated. I do not say we would have been defeated. But we might have been. He was so perfectly suited to fill a particular need; the need was so vital; and the absence of anybody of his quality was so blatant that one cannot imagine what would have happened if he had not been there.'[1]

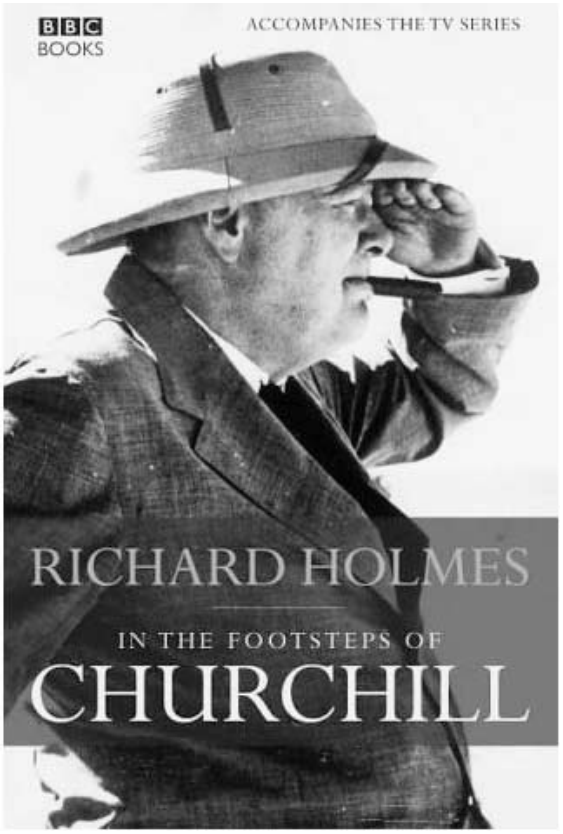
Attlee's graphic words are a sharp reminder of Britain's debt to Winston Churchill. But given the spate of biographies and other works covering Churchill and related themes which have poured from the presses over the years, one might justifiably question the need for yet another biography. Any doubts are, however, at once dispelled by a perusal of this magisterial, highly readable tome – one of many published to coincide with the fortieth anniversary of Churchill's death in January 1965. The present volume was originally produced to accompany an eight-part BBC television series broadcast during the spring of 2005. Its author, Richard Holmes, is Professor of Military and Security Studies at Cranfield University and the Royal Military College of Science, a prolific writer with more than a dozen books to his name, and also a well-known

presenter of several BBC television series. His predilection for military history, and immensely detailed knowledge of its minutiae, are at once apparent from the present tome, with its immensely searching analysis of military developments during the Boer War, the First World War and the Second World War. But he also has a good awareness of the political history of these years and of his subject's personal and family life. All three are intermingled to great effect to produce an unfailingly stimulating read.

Here we have two books rolled into one: a full, thoroughly researched, well-written biography, and an in-depth study of the character of a truly extraordinary man. Richard Holmes goes right back to basics, looking at the early formative influences which shaped Winston Churchill – his parents, upbringing and education at Harrow School. As a soldier in the Boer War at the turn of the century, Churchill was twice recommended for the Victoria Cross. As a politician, his career straddled more than the first half of the twentieth century; he first entered the House of Commons as the Conservative MP for Oldham in the 'khaki' general election of 1900, twice changed parties, serving as the Liberal President of the Board of Trade (as successor to David Lloyd George) and Home Secretary and later as Baldwin's Conservative Chancellor of the Exchequer, 1924–29, and as wartime premier from May 1940 until July 1945 and later peacetime Prime Minister from 1951–55. He remained the Tory MP for Woodford until October 1964, within weeks of his ninetieth birthday and subsequent death.

Readers of this *Journal* will perhaps be most interested in the period after 31 May 1904 when Churchill crossed the floor of the Commons to sit on the Liberal benches. Holmes provides his readers with sparky accounts of such episodes as the famous siege of Sydney Street (pp. 106–07) and the 1910 Tonypandy Riots (p. 105), when the belligerent Home Secretary sent in the troops to smash strike action in the Rhondda valleys. In his brief concluding chapter, 'Death Shall have no Dominion' (pp. 347–55), the author concludes, 'The explanation is that Winston was a natural liberal forced by circumstances to join the Conservative Party, which only grudgingly accepted him' (p. 354).

The outstanding characteristic of the text is the author's uncanny knack of rolling out an array of absorbing historical facts and details about his subject's life and times, all of which are apparently at his fingertips, seemingly subject to effortless recall. We can read fascinating detail of the construction of the Churchill family's ancestral home at Blenheim Palace (p. 27), while at school the young Churchill, we are informed, was 'beaten for stealing sugar from the pantry' and 'took the headmaster's favourite straw hat and kicked it to bits, knowing very well that he would be flogged again' (p. 36). As Home Secretary, Churchill's civil uniform had 'more gold lace (and of course more medals) than anyone else's. Always a fastidious man, Winston bathed at least once a day and exuded the mingled odours of clean linen, cigar smoke and … cologne. He was every inch the young man who had arrived.' (p. 102) As Chancellor after 1924, he proudly donned his father Lord Randolph Churchill's official robes which had been carefully preserved in tissue paper and camphor for more than thirty years (p. 40). His ever-devoted wife, Clemmie Churchill, we are informed, continued to vote Liberal throughout her life (p. 165), while her husband lost his substantial life-savings in the Wall Street crash of 1929 (p. 186). As one of his many leisure interests, Churchill was well capable of laying a brick a minute



(caption to picture between pp. 240–41), while during the war years he and President Franklin D. Roosevelt exchanged more than 1700 letters and telegrams, on average almost one per day (p. 286). In 1951 he shuffled around noisily in his seat in the Commons during a speech by the Labour Chancellor Hugh Gaitskell, proclaiming to bemused fellow-MPs, 'I was only looking for a jujube' (p. 338). Extra fascinating facts and delightful snippets of information are presented in the footnotes which are genuinely helpful and informative.

Nor does Professor Holmes always stick to the accepted wisdom. He challenges the accepted view that Lord Randolph Church fell victim to syphilis in 1895, suggesting instead that he probably suffered from a left brain tumour (p. 38). Whereas most biographers point up the long-term close friendship between Churchill and Lloyd George, Holmes quotes his subject's private opinion of LG in a letter written in December 1901, 'Personally, I think Lloyd George a vulgar, chattering little cad',

then commenting bluntly, 'It is unlikely that his assessment ever really changed' (p. 94). He also later comments, 'His [Churchill's] letters to Clemmie reveal rising impatience with Lloyd George' (p. 164). He revises, too, the traditional view that Churchill was 'in the wilderness' politically during the long 1930s (pp. 222–23), and underlines the considerable long-term reluctance within both the Conservative Party and the civil service to accept Churchill as party leader in 1940–41 (p. 239 ff). The accepted view of Churchill's rule is also questioned; far from being 'the Dictator', he generally 'refus[ed] to exercise arbitrary power', insisting that none of his orders was valid unless committed to writing (p. 249).

Generally, the book is detailed for a single-volume biography, with the author skilfully cramming in as many points of detail as possible, but the discussion of the post-1945 period, including the coverage of the Conservative government of 1951–55, is much more cursory. These years, according to Holmes, saw 'replays of familiar themes' (apart from a marked development of Churchill's skill as a painter (p. 336)). He also protests (p. 342) his anxiety not to 'duplicate the details of Winston's physical decline' already delineated so evocatively in the monographs by Lord Moran, his medical adviser, and Montague Brown, his last private secretary.

The volume is enhanced by liberal quotations from Churchill's many volumes (several from his *My Early Life* (1930, reprinted 2002)) and by the inclusion of maps and a marvellous selection of illustrations and photographs. Richard Holmes's mastery of his sources and knowledge of his subject and his times are awesome. But he is probably wrong to assert that Lloyd George by December 1916 had 'felt strong enough to make a deal with the Tories to replace Asquith' (p. 156). And there was certainly no general election during 1920 (p. 335).

'The explanation is that Winston was a natural liberal forced by circumstances to join the Conservative Party, which only grudgingly accepted him'.

But the volume is a marvellous, captivating read from beginning to end, scholarly, engaging, well written, balanced in its judgements, scrupulously fair in its assessments, a really sound reinterpretation of a great man, warts and all. This book has earned its place among the many volumes of Churchilliana and will surely stand the test of time.

Dr J. Graham Jones is Senior Archivist and Head of the Welsh Political Archive at the National Library of Wales, Aberystwyth

1 Lord Attlee, 'The Churchill I knew' in Charles Eade (ed.) *Churchill, by his Contemporaries* (London, 1953), p. 35.

ARCHIVES

Project to catalogue the papers of Richard Wainwright (1918–2003) and Lord David Steel (1938–)

by **Becky Webster**

The collections held by the Archives Division at the British Library of Political and Economic Science at the LSE include a wealth of information regarding modern British political, economic and social history. The material dates mainly from the last quarter of the nineteenth century to the present day and is accessible to all. As part of a drive to improve access to Liberal collections held by the Archives Division an externally funded project to catalogue two major collections commenced in September 2006.

The project began with the listing, sorting and re-boxing of the papers of Richard Wainwright, Liberal MP for Colne Valley 1966–70 and 1974–87. This catalogue will now be made available via the Archive's online catalogue. The collection comprises fifty boxes covering aspects of Wainwright's political career, as well as some interesting files regarding his education, personal interests and non-political work.

Papers regarding the administration of the Liberal Party refer to central policies, annual assemblies and Wainwright's work for the Liberal Party Organisation. A significant part of the collection relates to Wainwright's work as spokesman for the party on key subjects including finance, trade and industry, the economy and employment. Speech texts, press releases and articles written by Wainwright on these and other subjects, including local government, electoral reform and devolution, provide a real insight into Liberal policy during this period. There are also some smaller series of files regarding the alliance of the Liberal Party and the Social Democratic Party, and the subsequent formation of the Liberal Democrats, with particular reference to the leadership of the new party.

Another large series relates to Wainwright's work within his own constituency. There is a wealth of information regarding his general election campaigns

David Steel and Richard Wainwright

in both Colne Valley and Pudsey, a seat which Wainwright fought but never gained early in his political career. Further papers relate to the work of the Colne Valley Division Liberal Association and local elections. There are also papers regarding Wainwright's wife, Joyce, who was active in the promotion of the work of women Liberals. These interesting papers relate to the work of the national Women's Liberal Federation, the Yorkshire Women's Liberal Federation, where Joyce served as President and Chairman, and Colne Valley Women's Liberal Council, where Joyce served as Chairman between 1959 and 1987, and largely comprise minutes of meetings and publicity material.

Throughout his political career Wainwright was an active member of a number of organisations both nationally and within Yorkshire, the most prominent being the Joseph Rowntree Reform Trust, where he worked between 1959 and 1984. The collection houses a wealth of information regarding the work of the Trust, including correspondence, some minutes and publications, and Wainwright's personal papers. There are a number of valuable files regarding a trip made by Richard and Joyce to Guinea-Bissau and Cape Verde in Africa in November 1972, as part of his work for the Trust. Papers include a detailed account of the visit, publications by and correspondence with the Party for the African Independence of Guinea and Cape Verde (PAIGC), led by Luiz Cabral, with minutes and correspondence by the Trust.

Further papers relating to Wainwright's non-political life include a fascinating insight into life and work during the Second World War. After registering as a conscientious objector at the outbreak of the war Richard joined the Friend's Ambulance Unit (FAU), a Quaker organisation, first founded during the First World War to provide a voluntary ambulance service across Europe. Wainwright served with the Unit throughout the war, taking him to France, Holland and Germany. Papers include an interesting collection of correspondence from friends, family and colleagues regarding life during the war, and papers regarding the work of the Unit with issues of the FAU's publication 'The Chronicle', weekly information sheets and some central administration papers.

In addition to the completion of the catalogue of Richard Wainwright work has now commenced on the listing of Lord David Steel's papers. This collection comprises some 250 boxes relating largely to Lord Steel's work as Liberal Party leader (1976–88), and covers the period c1976–99. The collection includes important papers regarding the Lib-Lab Pact (1977–78), the Liberal-SDP Alliance and the subsequent merger between the two parties to form the Liberal Democrats. There are also papers and correspondence regarding the work and policies of the Liberal Party on a wide range of subjects including agriculture, housing, defence, the environment, education and transport. Further papers relate to Steel's constituency of Tweeddale, Ettrick and Lauderdale in the Scottish borders and Scottish home affairs. The catalogue will be added to a smaller collection of Steel's papers that were deposited at the BLPES in 1989 and should be completed and available online by October 2007.

The completion of this project will complement the recent introduction of the catalogue of the Liberal Party papers to the online catalogue. Other significant collections held by the LSE Archives relating to Liberal history include the papers of:

- Paddy Ashdown (1941–)
- William Beveridge (1879–1963)
- Leonard Henry Courtney (1832–1918)
- Frances L. Josephy (1900–84)
- Liberal Democrats
- Liberal Movement
- Sir Andrew McFadyean (1887–1974)
- Juliet Evangeline Rhys Williams (1898–1964)
- David Vasmer (fl 1971–)
- Graham Robert Watson (1956–)

To view the catalogue of Richard Wainwright's papers please visit our online catalogue at: http://www.lse.ac.uk/library/archive/Default.htm (ref no: WAINWRIGHT R).

More information regarding this project can be found on our projects page at: http://www.lse.ac.uk/library/archive/projects.htm. For further information regarding the Archives at LSE please have a look at our website at http://www.lse.ac.uk/library/archive/ or contact us directly either by email at Document@lse.ac.uk or at the following address: Archives and Rare Books Library, London School of Economics and Political Science, 10 Portugal Street London WC2A 2HD

Becky Webster is Assistant Archivist, Steel and Wainwright papers, London School of Economics.

A Liberal Democrat History Group evening meeting

LIBERALISM AND BRITISH NATIONAL IDENTITY

When people are asked what makes up Britishness, they often give the notions of 'fair play', 'tolerance' or 'personal liberty' as part of the answer. Liberals regard these concepts as elemental to liberal philosophy, but just how far has liberalism informed the construction of British national identity in the last hundred years and how liberal will new British identities emerging in the Britain of devolution, European Union enlargement, multiculturalism and the 'war on terror' be?

Speakers: **Robert Colls**, Professor of English History at Leicester University, and **Professor John Solomos**, Head of Sociology at City University. Chair: **Nick Clegg MP**, Liberal Democrat Shadow Home Secretary.

7.00pm, Monday 5 February 2007 (after the History Group AGM at 6.30)
Lady Violet Room, National Liberal Club, 1 Whitehall Place, London SW1

A Liberal Democrat History Group fringe meeting

THINK LIBERAL:
THE DICTIONARY OF LIBERAL THOUGHT

'If I have seen further, it is by standing on the shoulders of giants'. Locke, Bentham, Mill, Hobhouse, Keynes, Rawls … Liberalism has been built on more than three centuries' work of political thinkers and writers, and the aspirations of countless human beings who have fought for freedom, democracy, the rule of law and open and tolerant societies.

Now, in the first-ever such publication, the History Group's *Dictionary of Liberal Thought* provides an accessible guide to the key thinkers, groups and concepts associated with liberalism –not only British but also European and American. The essential reference book for every thinking Liberal.

This meeting will launch the new *Dictionary of Liberal Thought*. Speakers: **David Howarth MP** and **Michael Meadowcroft**. Chair: **Steve Webb MP**, Liberal Democrat manifesto coordinator.

8.00pm, Friday 2 March 2007
Charter Suite, Holiday Inn Hotel, Harrogate