For the study of Liberal, SDP and
Liberal Democrat history

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Journal of Liberal HISTORY

Great Liberals

Duncan Brack and York Membery
In search of the great Liberals You decide

Matt Watson
Learning the lessons of history Liberalism in the 1930s

Alison Holmes
L. T. Hobhouse and J. A. Hobson: New Liberal influence on Third Way ideas

John Greaves
Sir Edward Watkin and the Liberal cause in the nineteenth century

J. Graham Jones
Life with Lloyd George by his secretary, A. J. Sylvester

Liberal Democrat History Group

LETTERS

Geoffrey Mander's legacy

The articles on Geoffrey Mander and Wolverhampton East in *Journal of Liberal History* 53 deserve a short postscript.

I recall travelling to Walsall North when its then Labour MP John Stonehouse disappeared in the mid 1970s, and discovering that although the Liberal Party nationally had long since lost touch with them, Liberal councillors had been in control of the pre-1974 Willenhall UDC in the quite recent past. We managed to track down former leading councillors Reg and Ada Wrighton (both of whom had local streets named after them), who played an active part in the 1976 by-election campaign, although they felt themselves less comfortable in the national Liberal Party of 1976 – which they perceived as left-wing compared with the party of the 1950s.

The old Wolverhampton East wards of the current Walsall Metropolitan Borough – Willenhall North, Willenhall South and Short Heath – all became Alliance-held in the 1980s, and all the members of the current Walsall MBC Liberal Democrat group are elected from this area. While a Liberal presence may not have survived in Wolverhampton, perhaps part of Geoffrey Mander's legacy was more durable.

Andy Ellis

Scottish corrections

Alun Wyburn-Jones in his analysis of Liberal candidatures in post-war by-elections, with the 1954 Inverness by-election as a 'Turning Point' (*Journal of Liberal History* 53), might have mentioned that Tom McNair, the Inverness Labour candidate in 1951, subsequently returned to the Liberal Party and, as a retired export manager, was our candidate for Banff in 1964 and for Moray & Nairn in 1966.

As for 'Inverness – fifty years on', while it is true that parts of the Inverness constituency of 1954 fell within Charles Kennedy's seats of Ross, Cromarty & Skye (1983–97), Ross, Skye & Inverness West (1997–2005) and Ross, Skye & Lochaber (from 2005), most of the 1954 constituency now falls within the new constituency of Inverness, Nairn, Badenoch & Strathspey, which also elected a Lib Dem MP (Danny Alexander) in 2005.

In the review of Haus Publishing's *Balfour* (*Journal* 54), I am not sure if the reference to Arthur *Balfour* 'as Britain's [meaning the UK's] first Scottish Secretary' was a mistake by Ewen Green (the author) or Bob Self (the reviewer). The office of Secretary of State (for Scotland) continued off and on after the Parliamentary Union of 1707 and was only suspended after the Jacobite rising of 1745–46. The office was revived, as Secretary (not Secretary of State) for Scotland in 1885, with there being three such Secretaries before Arthur Balfour's appointment in 1886–87.

The revived office did not always involve Cabinet membership even after it again became Secretary of State for Scotland in 1926. For example, Sir Archibald Sinclair, the last Liberal holder of the office from 25 August 1931, did not enter the National Government Cabinet until *after* the 27 October general election, and the reconstruction of the government on 5 November 1931.

Dr Alexander (Sandy) S. Waugh

FEEDBACK

Thanks to all those – almost fifty readers, about a tenth of our total subscribers – who completed the feedback form distributed with the September *Journal* last year. The results were similar to those from previous exercises, in 2000 and 1996.

Feedback on the *Journal* itself indicates a high degree of satisfaction, with 'overall impression' rated at 4.50 (out of a total possible of 5.00), and 'value for money' at 4.62. Most people thought the overall length, mixture of contents and length of pieces was about right. The numbers thinking the Journal was 'too academic' and 'not academic enough' almost exactly balanced each other, and in fact almost everyone thought that the balance was about right!

Respondents gave us a long list of periods of history, and specific subjects, they'd like to see covered in future *Journals*; we'll do our best, but suggestions for particular authors are always welcome.

The History Group's website, www.liberalhistory.org.uk, was not used particularly frequently. We are aware that we need to devote more resources to extending its content, but at the moment we are constrained by a shortage of volunteers – see the note later in this issue.

About three-quarters of respondents did not attend History Group meetings, generally because they did not live in or near London or attend Lib Dem conferences. We can't realistically organise meetings elsewhere, but clearly we need both to recruit meeting attenders as subscribers, and publicise the meetings more outside our own subscriber list.

Other suggestions for activities include joint meetings with other History Groups, and a brief history for newcomers to the party – all currently under way.

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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 historical commentaries, details of publications, back issues of the _Journal_, and archive and other research sources, see our website at: **www.liberalhistory.org.uk**.

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

IN SEAR GREAT

H. H. Asquith, William Beveridge, Violet Bonham Carter, Henry Campbell-Bannerman, Richard Cobden, Millicent Garrett Fawcett, Charles James Fox, W. E. Gladstone, Jo Grimond, Roy Jenkins, J. M. Keynes, David Lloyd George, John Locke, John Stuart Mill, Lord John Russell – or someone else: who was the greatest Liberal? In 2002 the BBC conducted a search for the greatest Briton of all time (Winston Churchill won). Now, the Liberal Democrat History Group is offering *Journal* readers the chance to decide who is the greatest British Liberal of all time. You will find here concise summaries of the lives of fifteen potential candidates, selected by the Liberal Democrat History Group's executive committee and written by **Duncan Brack** and **York Membery**.

Enclosed with this *Journal* is a ballot paper, through which you can vote for your choice of the greatest Liberal (naturally, by the single transferable vote).

The top four candidates selected through *Journal* readers' votes will be presented at the History Group's fringe meeting at the autumn Liberal Democrat conference in Brighton. Leading politicians and historians will make the case for each one of the four, and *Journal* readers and conference participants will be able to vote for the final choice of the greatest Liberal.

At this stage, write-in candidates are not only allowed, but welcome. As you can imagine, it was not easy to choose the fifteen presented below, and we considered several other candidates, including Charles Bradlaugh, John Bright, John Burns, George Cadbury, Winston Churchill, Charles Dickens, W. E. Forster, L. T. Hobhouse, Lord Palmerston, Samuel Plimsoll, Lord Rosebery, Joseph Rowntree, Nancy Seear and Adam Smith.

Feel free to write in your own suggestions, and vote for them, on the enclosed ballot paper. The only rules for inclusion are:

- The individual must have been active in the Liberal Party, or its predecessors (Whigs, Radicals, etc.) or influential on Liberal thinking.
- They must have been British, or active in Britain.
- They must be dead.

Inclusion in the *Dictionary of Liberal Biography*, or *Dictionary of Liberal Thought*, is a good guide, but is not a prerequisite.

H. H. Asquith (1852–1928)

Herbert Henry Asquith was not just one of the longest-serving Prime Ministers (1908–16) of the twentieth century, he was premier of one of Britain's greatest reforming governments.

The Yorkshire-born barrister was elected Liberal MP for East Fife in 1886 and soon impressed party and Parliament with his remarkable debating powers. An able Home Secretary in 1892–95, he went on to become a leading

RCH OF THE LIBERALS

Liberal Imperialist, but really made his name arguing the free-trade case against Joseph Chamberlain's championing of tariff reform after 1903.

As Chancellor of the Exchequer in 1906–08, Asquith began to lay the foundations of a redistributive welfare state, taxing unearned income more heavily than earned, and using budgets systematically for social expenditure. He was the obvious successor to the dying Campbell-Bannerman, becoming Prime Minister in 1908. As commanding a presence on the platform as in the House, he went on to win the two elections of 1910 after the Tory peers threw out Lloyd George's 'People's Budget', and finally broke the power of the House of Lords, which had for so long been an obstacle to Liberal aspirations.

Asquith's government continued to implement the New Liberal programme of social reform, introducing old age pensions, national insurance for periods of sickness, invalidity and unemployment, government grants for maternity and child welfare clinics, and much more. He might well have won the election due in 1915 had war not intervened. Instead, wartime difficulties forced him into coalition with the Conservatives and in 1916 he was ousted from the premiership by Lloyd George. The subsequent disastrous split in Liberal ranks enabled Labour to push the party into third place electorally.

Despite this unhappy end to his career, we should not forget his real achievements as Liberal Prime Minister, in some ways even more impressive than Gladstone's. Asquith's programme of social and fiscal reform changed the nature of the country – and of the Liberal Party – for good.

William Beveridge (1879–1963)

The welfare state that emerged in Britain after 1945 owed its foundations to Asquith and Lloyd George, and its implementation to Attlee – but its design and structure were overwhelmingly the work of the great social reformer William Beveridge.

Beveridge had impressive achievements before his famous Report. As a civil servant from 1908 to 1919, he helped draw up the Labour Exchanges Act of 1909, the second part of the 1911 National Insurance Act and the 1916 Unemployment Insurance Act, extending insurance to workers involved in war production. In 1919, he left government for academia, becoming Director of the London School of Economics and then, in 1937, Master of University College, Oxford. He also found time to participate in Liberal Summer Schools.

When war broke out, he was put in charge of an interdepartmental inquiry into the coordination of the social services. He knew ministers were trying to marginalise him, partly because of his abrasive style, yet it was the report arising from this inquiry that was to make his name as the father of the welfare state.

Social Insurance and Allied Services (1942) outlined a vision of society's battle against 'the five giants', idleness, ignorance, disease, squalor and want. The report proposed a system of cash benefits, financed by equal contributions from workers, employers and the state, together with a public assistance safety-net. Underlying this system were three assumptions, further developed in *Full Employment in a Free Society* (1944): a national health service available to all, tax-financed family allowances and a commitment to state action to reduce unemployment. These proposals were to form the basis of government policy for the next forty years.

In 1944, Beveridge was elected to the House of Commons as Liberal MP for Berwick-upon-Tweed but lost his seat a year later. Upon being made a peer in 1946 he went on to lead the Liberals in the House of Lords.

Lady Violet Bonham Carter (1887–1969)

Violet Bonham Carter was the daughter of Liberal Prime Minister H. H. Asquith and his first wife, Helen Melland. Despite the lack of a formal education, she was a woman of formidable intellect. She was a passionate Liberal, and her father's 'champion redoubtable' (to use the phraseology of Winston Churchill): she worshipped him and he depended upon her. After his fall from power she became his standard-bearer, discovering her own considerable gifts as an orator as she fought his election campaigns in Paisley. She continued after Asquith's death to be his most resolute defender, and the voice of Asquithian Liberalism.

She was also an important Liberal politician in her own right. She was a fervent believer in the League of Nations, an active member of the League of Nations Union, and a vigorous supporter of Churchill's anti-appeasement campaign, before embracing the European ideal after the war.

President of the Women's Liberal Federation in 1923–25 and 1939–45, in 1945 she became the first female President of the Liberal Party Organisation. She also stood unsuccessfully for Parliament twice, in Wells in 1945 and Colne Valley in 1951. In 1964 she entered the House of Lords and although by then seventy-seven, made an immediate impact.

A gifted orator, Lady Violet was a popular and charismatic speaker for Liberal candidates – including for her son-in-law, the Liberal leader Jo Grimond – throughout her long life. In the non-political sphere, she was a Governor of the BBC in 1941–46 and became a frequent broadcaster on both television and radio.

She had four children, including Mark Bonham Carter (himself later a Liberal MP) and Laura Bonham Carter (who married Grimond). The actress Helena Bonham Carter is her granddaughter.

Henry Campbell-Bannerman (1836–1908)

Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman owes his place here to his record as a party manager rather than to his achievements as a Liberal Prime Minister. Gladstone, Asquith and Lloyd George may have achieved more glittering legislative successes, but Gladstone left his party divided and exhausted; between them, Asquith and Lloyd George tore it apart.

By contrast, Campbell-Bannerman brought the party back from one of the lowest points of its pre-1918 history, healed the divisions between radicals and Liberal Imperialists, fought off constant sniping from his predecessor, Rosebery, constructed a political alliance stretching from the free-trade wing of the Conservative Party to the nascent Labour Representation Committee, faced down a Liberal-Imperialist plot to send him to the Lords and, in 1906, led his party to its greatest electoral success ever.

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First elected as MP for Stirling Burghs in 1868, Campbell-Bannerman held the seat for forty years and built a ministerial career of quiet competence. In 1901, as leader, during the middle of the Boer War, he bravely condemned the 'methods of barbarism' employed in the concentration camps of the Rand; denounced by the jingo press, and many in his own party, at the time, people gradually came to recognise that he was right.

Although as Prime Minister from 1905 to 1908, CB's legislative record was disappointing, with several initiatives destroyed by the Tory-dominated Lords, many of the foundations for later successes were laid by ministers in the cabinet he appointed and managed, by all accounts brilliantly. It may have been his successor who finally tamed the Lords, but it was Campbell-Bannerman's policy that Asquith adopted in place of his own original position.

Campbell-Bannerman was praised after his death for his courage, idealism, shrewdness and tenacity, and for his generosity and kindness; he was most frequently admired for his common sense. In holding his party together and holding it to Liberalism, he can be judged as one the best and most successful Liberal leaders.

Richard Cobden (1804–65)

For over a century, from the 1840s to the 1950s, support for free trade was virtually synonymous with support for the Liberal Party. It was Richard Cobden who first made it so.

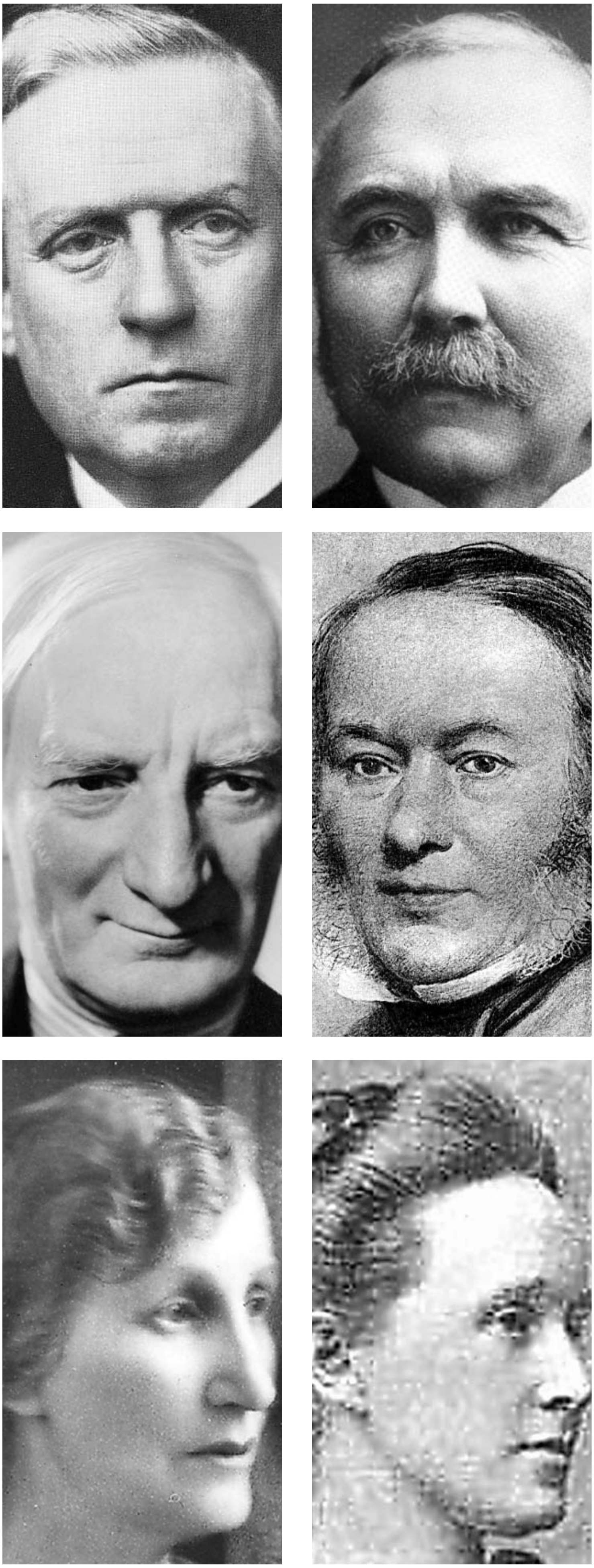
Cobden helped found the Anti-Corn Law League in 1839, in protest against the high duties levelled on imports of grain. Designed to protect British agriculture, the Corn Laws inhibited the growth of the new manufacturing industries, which were crippled in their ability to win export markets because of foreign grain-growers' inability to export to Britain. Employing lecturers, public meetings, pamphlets and direct electoral pressure, the League was in many ways the first modern pressure group. It was Cobden's genius that turned the economic arguments of Adam Smith and David Ricardo into a campaign for cheap bread, winning support from workers and manufacturers alike.

Cobden, however, always saw much more than economic justification for open markets. Abolishing protection for agriculture was part of the process of tearing down the remnants of the feudal order and putting an end to the special treatment enjoyed by the land-owners – part of the Liberal assault on privilege. Trade also promoted interdependence and a sense of international community, building links between peoples and nations and rendering conflict less likely.

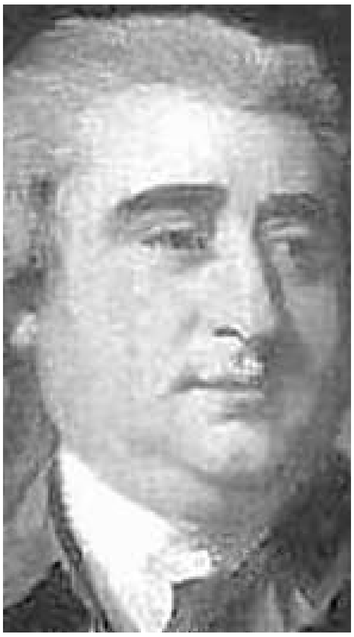
After the Corn Laws were repealed in 1846, Cobden continued to campaign for peace and free trade, and against high military expenditure and high taxes. Although he negotiated a key trade treaty with France in 1860, he always refused ministerial office, preferring to stick to his principles. The cause of free trade underlined the Liberal landslide victory of 1906 and reunited a divided party in 1923; the vision of a world governed by principles and rules rather than power is still held by Liberal Democrats today. Cobden, more than any other individual, laid the foundations for this continuing story.

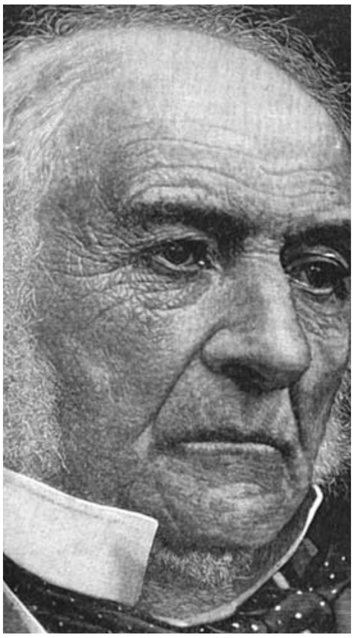
Millicent Garrett Fawcett (1847–1929)

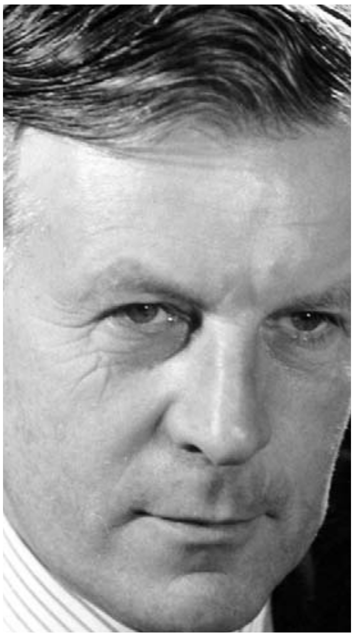
Millicent Garrett Fawcett was Britain's most important leader in the fight for women's suffrage. Although the militant Pankhursts are more generally identified with the struggle,



Right, from top: Asquith, Beveridge, Bonham Carter
Far right, from top: Campbell-Bannerman, Cobden, Fawcett







From top: Fox, Gladstone, Grimond

Fawcett contributed more than anyone else to British women obtaining the right to vote. Valuing rational thought and her own privacy, she rejected the cult of personality that surrounded more dramatic and emotional leaders.

Fawcett began writing and speaking on the education of women and women's suffrage in 1868. Although only a moderate public speaker, she was a superb organiser, and by the early 1880s had emerged as one of the leaders of the suffrage movement; she became President of the National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies in 1897. She ensured that the movement was active on a wide variety of women's causes, including campaigns against the white slave traffic, for better protection for low-paid women workers, and for the repeal of the Contagious Diseases Acts. Finally, in 1918, women over thirty were enfranchised; ten years later, women received the vote on a basis of full equality with men.

Fawcett was a Liberal until 1886, when she joined the Liberal Unionists, out of opposition to Irish Home Rule. She helped to lead the Women's Liberal Unionist Association until 1903, when she broke with the party over its support for tariff reform.

In 1919 Fawcett retired from active leadership of the suffrage union, and returned to writing. She published two books on economics, a novel and several biographies and books on the women's suffrage movement. She worked to promote higher education for women, and helped to found Newnham College, Cambridge.

There are very few women in this list of great Liberals because until the mid-twentieth century, at least, politics was overwhelmingly a male preserve. Fawcett's career demonstrates a rare degree of commitment, perseverance and personal courage – and furthermore, she achieved her aims.

Charles James Fox (1749–1806)

Charles James Fox provides the link between the Whig inheritance of adherence to the supremacy of Parliament and the rule of law over the executive, whether monarchical or aristocratic government, and the Victorian Liberal belief in freedom and dissent. He had the courage to proclaim the freedom of the individual even in the depths of the French Revolution and Napoleonic Wars.

This is even more remarkable given Fox's aristocratic upbringing, early conservative attitudes and generally dissolute behaviour; although this left him with heavy gambling debts, on several occasions he refused offers of cabinet posts, with their accompanying salaries, out of principle. His adherence to the supremacy of Parliament, opposition to monarchical power and support for the rebellion of the American colonists were all decisive in developing a much more radical stance. By the late 1770s he was consistently one of the more radical Whigs, holding beliefs any modern Liberal would recognise – in power stemming from the people, in freedom of conscience and expression, in peace rather than war and in the possibility of reform producing progress.

It was Fox's misfortune to articulate these beliefs in an atmosphere of growing fear and repression, as the early ideals of the French Revolution gave way to the Terror and then to Napoleonic autocracy. Thus his periods in government were brief – he served as Foreign Secretary (Britain's first) in 1782, 1783 and 1806 – and his parliamentary motions were regularly defeated by large majorities. He achieved only two important parliamentary measures, a resolution pledging the abolition of the slave trade, and the 1792 Libel Act.

Although one of the best orators of his time, Fox was not a profound political thinker. Nevertheless, his instinctive hatred of oppression, and his courage in sticking to his principles, left the Whigs with a clear legacy of belief in freedom and civil liberties which was to become a defining feature of the Liberal Party.

W. E. Gladstone (1809–98)

William Ewart Gladstone was the political giant of Victorian politics. He defined the Liberal Party of the second half of the nineteenth century: the party of peace, retrenchment, reform and – above all – trust in the people.

A minister by the age of twenty-five, he left office for the last time at eighty-five. He served as Prime Minister on no less than four occasions, three of them after his 'retirement' in 1875. He was the leading orator of his age, not only in Parliament but outside, regularly addressing audiences of 20,000 or more.

Originally a Tory, he was converted to the cause of free trade under Sir Robert Peel. As Chancellor of the Exchequer in the 1850s and 1860s, he abolished tariffs, simplified taxation, ended paper duties to facilitate the growth of the press and established the Post Office Savings Bank. With other Peelites, in 1859 he joined with Whigs and Radicals to create the Liberal Party, and nine years later became its leader. Under his four premierships, the Irish Church was disestablished, the secret ballot introduced, the purchase of army commissions abolished, state primary education established and the franchise reformed and extended. He pursued a foreign policy guided by the 'love of freedom' and action through a 'concert of nations'.

For Gladstone, politics was, above all else, about great moral issues rather than selfish interests. Hence his conversion to Irish Home Rule – which, despite two attempts, he never achieved, splitting his party in the process. His preoccupation with moral issues also explains his opposition to radical 'constructionist' legislation, which could too easily destroy incentives for self-help and voluntaryism. Yet he was always a government activist willing to expand the role of the state, as a regulator (for example, in railway regulation, or Irish land reform), or as a provider where voluntary means were inadequate, such as in education.

In the time left over from office, Gladstone collected china, wrote on Homer and participated in the religious controversies of his time. He was a man of immense physical and mental energy, chopping down trees and reading books (20,000 of them, according to Jenkins) for relaxation. He moulded and embodied Victorian Liberalism. He was not only a great Liberal; he was a great human being.

Jo Grimond (1913–93)

The most important post-war Liberal leader, Jo Grimond made a difference not just to the fortunes of his party but to British politics, helping to end the two-party mould into which it had settled. He took over an ailing party and transformed it into a formidable force. A figure of great magnetism and intellectual originality, he inspired a rare degree of affection amongst voters and activists alike.

Born in Fife, Joseph Grimond studied law and served in the forces during the war. Marriage to Violet Bonham Carter's daughter, Laura, gave a boost to his Liberal commitment; he was elected MP for Orkney & Shetland in 1950 and leader of the party in 1956. Despite the party's parlous condition – it sank to its lowest-ever level of five MPs in 1957 – he refused to accept that its long-term aim should not be power.

At this stage, write-in candidates are not only allowed, but welcome. Feel free to write in your own suggestions, and vote for them, on the enclosed ballot paper.

Grimond's idealism, ability to communicate and freshness appealed to the younger generation of voters, no longer deferential and class-conscious. He made the Liberal Party a respectable organisation to join, and attracted experts who contributed to a real renaissance in Liberal thinking – including entry to the Common Market, Scottish Home Rule, industrial democracy, and the abolition of Britain's nuclear deterrent. Pursuing the realignment of the left, he positioned the party as a radical non-statist alternative to Labour. The stunning by-election victory at Orpington in 1962 seemed to prove his strategy right, and at the subsequent general election of 1964 the Liberal vote topped three million for the first time since the war.

Although Labour's success in 1966 postponed this hope for fifteen years – and led to his resignation as leader in 1967 – Grimond sowed the seeds of the realignment of the 1980s. His leadership not only rescued the Liberal Party from seemingly inexorable electoral decline, but, as Paddy Ashdown put it, established it as the party of choice for 'the radicals and thinkers of British politics'.

Roy Jenkins (1920–2003)

Roy Jenkins was the great reforming Liberal Prime Minister Britain never had. A progressive and effective cabinet minister, he played a key role in taking Britain into Europe and then founding the Social Democratic Party. He also found time to write several elegant political biographies.

After wartime intelligence work, Jenkins was elected as a Labour MP in 1948. He took the revisionist social-democratic side in Labour's internal struggles, and became a leading figure after Labour's 1964 election victory. As Home Secretary (1965–67), he was responsible for reforming the laws on abortion, homosexuality, race relations and theatre censorship. In 1967 he became Chancellor of the Exchequer, where two years of tough measures restored economic stability.

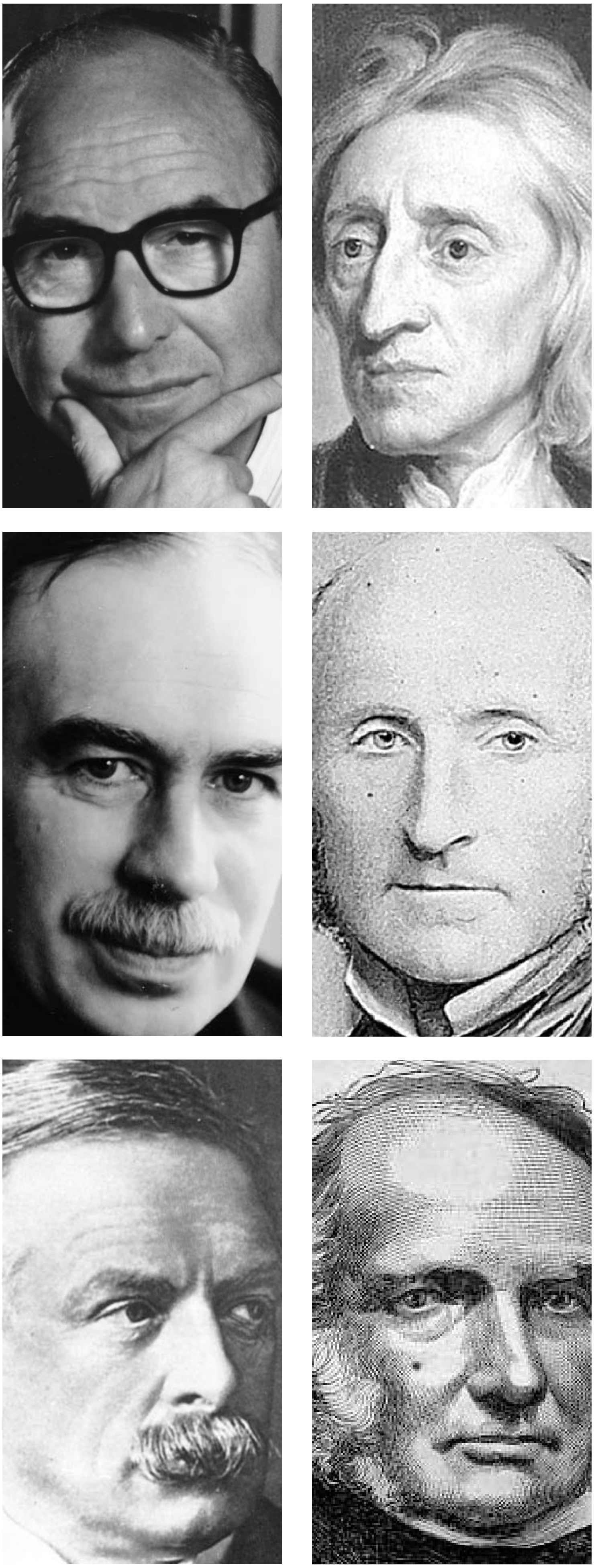
Jenkins was always a convinced European. In October 1971, defying a three-line whip, he led sixty-nine Labour MPs to vote for EEC entry; he was one of the leaders of the 'yes' campaign in the 1975 referendum. He served as President of the European Commission in 1977–81, where he played a leading role in establishing the European Monetary System.

In 1979, Jenkins's Dimbleby Lecture acted as a rallying cry for all those discontented with British politics. He criticised the false choices, see-saw politics and broken promises of the two-party system and advocated electoral reform. Most crucially, he called for a new grouping to strengthen the 'radical centre'. Eighteen months later, he founded the SDP, bringing thousands of new activists into politics, and was its leader in 1982–83. After he lost his seat in 1987, he strongly supported merger, and then led the Liberal Democrat peers (1988–98).

Jenkins had a glittering political career. He was a stylish and eloquent performer in Parliament, on television, and in print. Frequently described as 'grand', he saw himself as a 'perpetual radical'. He could have been a Labour Prime Minister if he had not stuck to his vision and principles; instead, he changed the political landscape of Britain.

John Maynard Keynes (1883–1946)

As well as Liberal politicians, Liberal thinkers have helped to shape government in twentieth-century Britain. Greatest among them was Keynes, the most influential and important economic thinker of the century, whose ideas came to underpin



Far left, from top: Jenkins, Keynes, Lloyd George
Left, from top: Locke, Mill, Russell

Western governments' post-war economic strategy.

Primarily a Cambridge academic, John Maynard Keynes worked for the government in both wars. During the First World War he advised Lloyd George on war finance and the Versailles peace settlement, resigning over its punitive terms. In the Second, he was the leading economic adviser to the Treasury (1940–46), and headed the British delegation to the Bretton Woods talks in 1944, which laid the foundations for the post-war international financial and trading system.

His economic works include his *Tract on Monetary Reform* (1923) and *On Money* (1930), still regarded as his major works by many monetary economists. His most famous work, *The General Theory of Employment, Interest and Money* (1936), effectively invented macroeconomics. He showed that the price system could not be relied upon to achieve an equilibrium that made full use of human resources, and argued that governments should manage the economy to eliminate unemployment, especially by running budget deficits. The book reads like a summary of all economics written subsequently though, like the Bible and the works of Karl Marx, its very richness has led to thousands of articles and books disputing its meaning.

Keynes was also an active Liberal. He was a pioneer of the Summer School movement, a member of the Liberal Industrial Inquiry, which produced *Britain's Industrial Future*, the famous 'Yellow Book' (1928), and part-author of the 1929 Liberal manifesto and of the accompanying *Can Lloyd George Do It?*, which explained the Liberal Party's plans to cure unemployment.

Like all great Liberals, Keynes was essentially an optimist. Through his brilliant insights he showed how economics could be used to help create and maintain the conditions in which human beings could live civilised, creative and passionate lives.

The top four candidates selected through *Journal* readers' votes will be presented at the History Group's fringe meeting at the autumn Liberal Democrat conference in Brighton.

David Lloyd George (1863–1945)

David Lloyd George is one of the greatest and, at the same time, one of the most controversial, politicians in the history of the Liberal Party. He played a central role in the great reformist administrations of 1905–16. As party leader (1926–31), he introduced Keynesian economics to the Liberal programme and to British politics. But his period as Prime Minister, from 1916–22, split the party into rival factions, presaging its catastrophic decline.

Lloyd George grew up in North Wales in humble circumstances, and qualified as a solicitor before winning election as MP for Caernarfon Boroughs in 1890. He rapidly earned a reputation as a radical, and was prominent in the opposition to the Boer War. He entered the cabinet first as President of the Board of Trade and then as Chancellor of the Exchequer. He established himself as a dynamic, radical force in the government, introducing the major Liberal social reforms, including old age pensions, National Insurance and the 'People's Budget' of 1909.

He served as Minister of Munitions and then Secretary of State for War in the first wartime coalition. In December 1916, after mounting concern over Asquith's ineffectual leadership, he found himself facing irresistible pressure to take office as Prime Minister. He proved an exceptionally able war leader, but the split of 1916 gravely wounded the Liberal Party and led to its eclipse by Labour.

Succeeding Asquith as leader in July 1926, Lloyd George used his famous Fund (accumulated from the sale of honours) to finance a series of policy committees. These produced, most famously, the 'Yellow Book', *Britain's Industrial Future*, which proposed a radical programme of state intervention in the economy to reduce unemployment. Under his inspirational leadership, the party enjoyed a new-found energy and vitality – but was too firmly established in third place to be able to break through the barriers of the electoral system.

One of the most dynamic and brilliant politicians ever to lead the Liberal Party and become premier, Lloyd George remains a figure of controversy; but his achievements, first in implementing the New Liberal programme of social reform, and then in ensuring that the Liberal Party remained committed to social liberalism, are real and lasting.

John Locke (1632–1704)

Often described as the patron saint of liberalism, John Locke's beliefs in the natural rights of individuals, limits on the powers of the state, and the rule of law, underpin all subsequent Liberal thought.

Born into a Puritan and Parliamentary family, in 1666 Locke became a protégé of the Earl of Shaftesbury, a leading opponent of Charles II and the succession of the Duke of York (later James II). Locke's early work set out the case for constitutional constraints on executive power, and the right to resist tyrannical government. After Shaftesbury was accused of planning revolution, Locke fled abroad to Holland in 1683. Six years of exile proved fruitful; he had time to complete the works published, after the overthrow of James II in 1688, as *A Letter Concerning Toleration* (1689) and *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (1693).

The most important statement of Locke's politics is contained in the *Two Treatises of Government* (1689). The first treatise argued that the doctrine of the divine right of kings had no Biblical warrant. The second described the emergence and limits of legitimate political authority, starting from the notion that all men were by nature equal. Given that God did not appoint human authority, there could be no rightful basis for political power other than consent. Unusually for his era, Locke also argued for religious toleration; since personal salvation was the result of belief, coercion could never lead to salvation as it was unable to generate genuine conviction.

Locke's faith in the ennobling powers of knowledge, and his belief in natural rights, toleration and the limits of legitimate authority justify his reputation as the first philosopher of the Enlightenment. In developing the Whig ideology of opposition to absolutism and defence of limited government, Locke formulated the classic expression of liberalism, which was to inspire not just generations of Whigs and Liberals, but also the shapers of the American and French Revolutions.

John Stuart Mill (1806–73)

Philosopher, economist, journalist, political writer, social reformer, and, briefly, Liberal MP, John Stuart Mill is one of the most famous figures in the pantheon of Liberal theorists, and the greatest of the Victorian Liberal thinkers.

Eldest son of the Scottish utilitarian philosopher James Mill, John Stuart's works have had far more lasting interest. In *Principles of Political Economy* (1848) he voiced his unease concerning the excessive power and influence of the state; people understood their own business better than government did. However, he acknowledged a clear role for the state, for example in regulating natural monopolies.

He is best known for his masterpiece, *On Liberty* (1859), which emphatically vindicated individual moral autonomy, and celebrated the importance of originality and dissent. Although generations of Liberals have used his arguments to oppose state authoritarianism, in fact Mill devoted most of the work to arguing against middle-class conformism, which stultified opposition and a critical cast of mind.

In *Considerations on Representative Government* (1861) Mill expounded his doctrine of democracy, emphasising the importance of local government. Putting his beliefs into practice, he served as Liberal MP for Westminster from 1865 to 1868, where he argued for proportional representation and the extension of suffrage to women householders – a stance he developed in *The Subjection of Women* (1869), which remains the only feminist classic written by a man. He maintained that social reform, rather than repression, was the cure for civil unrest in Ireland, and argued for the impeachment of the brutal Governor Eyre of Jamaica. Mill's defence of civil rights and racial equality helped to lose him his seat in 1868.

Mill's intellectual achievements were unmatched in Victorian England. His defence of individual liberty can still set the terms of debate today, for example over freedom of speech. This helps to explain why *On Liberty* is the symbol of office of the President of the Liberal Democrats and, what is more, the symbol of liberalism itself.

Lord John Russell (1792–1878)

Aptly described as 'the last Doge of Whiggism', Lord John Russell can equally be considered the first Liberal Prime Minister, embodying in his own attitudes the mid-Victorian transition from traditional Whiggery to Gladstonian Liberalism.

Born into one of the leading Whig dynasties, Russell entered Parliament in 1813 and remained active for fifty-five years, more than half of them as a cabinet minister, including two spells as Prime Minister (1846–52 and 1865–66). He also found time for many literary works, including biography, history and poetry.

Like his hero Fox, Russell believed that there was a greater threat to liberty from the abuse of power than from the masses. He led the reformist wing of the Whigs in the 1820s, and helped draft the Great Reform Act of 1832. He distrusted religious dogma, and was committed to a pluralist politics in which Dissenters, Catholics and Jews had full political rights.

Russell also saw the need for a bold and systematic social policy to tackle the problems of population growth and urbanisation. As Home Secretary (1835–39) he supervised key reforms of the criminal law, policing and prisons, cut stamp duty to a penny, introduced the penny post, and instituted state inspection and support of public education. As Prime Minister in 1846–52, he extended state support for education and passed important public health and factory reform measures.

Sometimes outmanoeuvred by his Whig colleague Palmerston, he shared with the latter a pride in British liberal constitutional traditions which convinced him that political leaders had a duty to promote Britain's libertarian values abroad. His support for Italian unification in 1859 provided the catalyst for the coming-together of Whigs, Radicals and Peelites to form the Liberal Party.

Russell was the archetypal Liberal of the mid-nineteenth century, imbued with Whiggish constitutionalism, a deep sense of Christian responsibility and the optimistic belief in progress that was such a hallmark of the Victorian Liberal outlook.

At this stage, write-in candidates are not only allowed, but welcome. Feel free to write in your own suggestions, and vote for them, on the enclosed ballot paper.

Remember to return your ballot paper by Friday 27 July. You can also submit your vote by email, to journal@liberalhistory.org.uk. For full instructions, see the ballot paper.

LEARNING THE LESSONS OF HISTORY: LIBERALISM IN THE 1930s

Ramsey Muir MP, 1931

'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? What do we need to remember? Articles are invited; they should be thought-provoking and polemical, and between 1500 and 2500 words in length.

In this first article in the series, **Matt Watson** contrasts Liberal policies of the 1930s with those of today.

Whilst, in the modern world of spin and media presentations, the publications of political parties are regarded with a healthy scepticism, at the turn of the twentieth century they were a decidedly more serious affair. As historical sources, they can be invaluable in determining the attitudes both of the parties themselves, and more generally, the feelings towards politics of the enfranchised, politically active public.

One such publication is *The Liberal Way,* produced in 1934. It was published, according to the foreword by Ramsey Muir, in order clearly to lay out Liberal policy, following a policy review in anticipation of the general election of 1935. What is most intriguing about the document is that there are striking similarities, in terms of policies, with the modern-day Liberal Democrats. This leads to the question: to what extent are the policies and attitudes of the 1930s Liberal Party similar to those of the party of today?

What first draws attention in *The Liberal Way* is the opening statement. It presents to the reader several questions which it believes are the relevant issues of the day, namely peace and the League of Nations; political liberty; free enterprise versus state control; and unemployment and poverty. In many respects, these questions are still relevant today.

International affairs

International conflict is as much an issue today as it was in the 1930s. At the time of the book's publication the League of Nations was beginning to decline. Events throughout the 1930s would remove any pretence that the League had any influence over nation states. At the same time, in Germany, Adolf Hitler was ascending to power and after only a year the Anglo-German Agreement was signed in an attempt to limit Germany's rapidly expanding naval power. The League was failing, as dictators ignored its pronouncements and member nations were unwilling to commit financial and military resources to the enforcement of its decisions. This international situation has parallels with today, when the United Nations is being increasingly sidelined, replaced by bilateral agreements and unilateral action.

Liberalism has always been an internationalist ideology willing to look for solutions beyond the confines of national boundaries. The policy laid out in *The Liberal Way* follows in this tradition, arguing that Britain, as an influential and powerful nation, should use its authority on the world stage to encourage diplomacy and discussion – for example with Russia, which by 1930 had become hostile to many values of liberal democracy. This follows trends within modern liberal thought which argue for the engagement at the discussion table of various world powers. One important line from the book should ring true with Liberals today: 'we *cannot* make ourselves safe by means of armaments', although this doctrine would later be set aside in the world war that was to follow. This attitude is prevalent throughout the modern-day Liberal Democrats, where there is a reluctance to sanction the use of military action. The central policies, discussed in 1934, to combat international conflict – interaction with the League and reduction in arms trafficking – were replicated in the 2005 Liberal Democrat manifesto under the headings 'reforming and strengthening the UN' and 'tackling the arms trade': a clear example of a continuing tradition.

There is also discussion in *The Liberal Way* about tariff reform. Free trade was often considered the central principle that united the Liberal Party in a 'coalition of convenience' so it is unsurprising that it features in a policy document. The argument about free trade is similar today. Back in the 1930s the case was that free trade would boost the economy of the UK and that tariffs would destroy world trade, something that the UK was reliant upon. However, today the discussion has gained an ethical dimension, regarding how free trade might benefit developing nations. Liberal Democrats have argued that development can best be promoted by opening up the EU's markets to African agriculture. The ideas that Liberals espoused in the past have not disappeared but have assumed a different form, through intergovernmental organisations such as the European Union, the largest free market in the world.

Liberalism has always been an internationalist ideology willing to look for solutions beyond the confines of national boundaries.

Political reform

Political liberty is an important theme in the book and one central to Liberalism. The words of the 1930s' Liberal Party have an eerie ring to them; discussions of 'party dictatorship', and freedom from arbitrary arrest are relevant today. Modern-day Liberals argue that we need protecting from authoritarian governments or, in Lord Hailsham's words, 'elective dictatorship'.

In the past the Liberal Party identified a challenge to parliamentary democracy from both the left and the right: 'Socialism and Fascism'. They feared a 'party dictatorship' both from a socialist Labour Party as well as from Oswald Mosley and his Fascist movement. This concern was undoubtedly influenced by events in Russia and Mussolini's rise in Italy. It can be argued that the conditions for a 'party dictatorship' exist today as governments elected with massive parliamentary majorities can override the safeguards that are currently in place. Many of the 1934 criticisms of the UK's constitution are the same criticisms levelled now simply because many of the key reforms that Liberals have proposed have not been introduced.

The first shortcoming is the electoral system under which they claimed 'every election is a gamble'. It is unsurprising that this is the main problem the Liberals highlight. During the 1920s the party had suffered heavily at the hands of the electoral system; when it polled more than a quarter of the votes in 1929 it was rewarded with less than a tenth of the seats. This was used by Herbert Samuel to account for the decline of the Liberal Party when he was writing his memoirs. It is interesting to note the length of time that demands have been made for proportional representation – going back to John Stuart Mill's *Considerations on Representative Government* in 1861. *The Liberal Way* describes a system closely resembling the single transferable vote. It also answers one of the charges critics of proportional representation often raise, which is that it produces a weak executive. The answer is simple: it is 'absurd to contend that an executive cannot be strong unless it is in a position to force through Parliament whatever it thinks fit.' The Liberal Party has consistently argued for a Parliament that could act as a more effective check and balance upon the executive.

This leads on to the book's second criticism, the relationship between Parliament and the government. The writers contend that a government would not have to fear free parliamentary discussion if the House of Commons was properly representative. They argue that those who reject proportional representation are in fact rejecting parliamentary democracy. Interestingly, some of the book's proposals, such as proportional representation, reduction of the power of party whips and the recasting of the relationship between executive and Parliament, have featured in the Power Inquiry, which set out a number of reforms concerning how to improve democracy in the UK. However, some of the reforms that were being called for in 1934 have been implemented, including the creation of departmental select committees, which were introduced in 1979, and devolution to Scotland and Wales, brought in in 1999. It seems from this that the Liberals were ahead of their time, but it should be noted that many of the reforms that Liberals have been calling for since the early 1930s have yet to be fully addressed and so form part of modern manifestos.

The role of the state

One of the central conflicts in economics ever since Adam Smith's *Wealth of Nations* is the extent of state intervention in the economy. This has been increasingly relevant in recent years since the main 'socialist' party rejected its central pledge to nationalise industry, in the form of Clause IV, and thereby created a political consensus over the economy.

In 1934 the UK had seen its first Labour governments, and the Liberals were being forced into the tricky position of maintaining their radical, progressive edge whilst distancing themselves from socialism. The way the Liberals of the 1930s attempted to do this was by coupling the Liberal ideology of individual freedom, liberty and equality to their industrial and fiscal policy. The distinction that they made was between state regulation, where the state acts to secure and protect individual liberty, and state management or socialism. The Liberals recognised that state monopoly constituted another form of tyranny; they had the experience of Soviet Russia as a point of reference. Parallels can be drawn with the economic policy of many of today's parties. All three main parties have adopted the idea that the state should act as a regulator but not a manager as their conventional wisdom. The beginning of this thinking can be seen in the literature of the 1930s Liberal Party.

Poverty and unemployment

One of the duties of the state that the Liberals were clear upon was the tackling of poverty, especially in urban areas. They rejected the notion that their social reform was a 'kind of socialism', stating that they aimed to improve the existing social order without changing it. They asserted that many who claimed to be socialists were actually social reformers, Liberals under another name. Nowadays, this position on social reform has been broadly accepted by all three main parties – this is 'centre ground' politics as often referred to in the media. The ideas presented by the Liberals in 1930 to relieve poverty, including the universal provision of health care and access to education as well as means-tested social security, have now become part of this political consensus.

It is interesting to note, however, that one of the primary methods for relieving poverty, redistribution of wealth, has slipped from the modern political agenda. This is likely to be due to the idea that redistribution of wealth involves a high tax burden, something that, for political reasons, modern governments are reluctant to impose. However there was a proposition discussed in *The Liberal Way* that has not been implemented, yet acts as a redistributive tool without the need for higher tax rates: making workers shareholders in their company. Hence, they would be able to receive a share of the profits that it was acknowledged they had helped to create. This plan avoids the public ownership of socialism and replaces it with 'popular' ownership, similar to the modern co-operative movement. This relates back to the Liberal principle of property being the basis for personal liberty and independence. It is ironic that business owners might attack this idea today when it actually constitutes a massive expansion of the idea of private ownership.

Conclusion

By looking at contemporary materials it is easy to see that many of the ideas once proposed by a declining Liberal Party have since formed the basis of much of the consensus in politics today. This may, in part, explain the decline of the party; many of the founding principles of Liberalism were increasingly becoming accepted as the norm in society. Sources such as *The Liberal Way* show the extent to which the modern Liberal Democrats follow their predecessors in terms of policy. However, what is lacking, indeed from all modern parties, is the robust ideological justification for their policies and ideologies that characterised early twentieth-century politics. The Liberal Democrats are often charged with lacking a coherent ideology and yet by looking at previous Liberal publications an ideology emerges centred on the protection of the individual from the abuses of both the state and poverty. This points towards a consistency within Liberal thinking and demonstrates how, even as socialism is moving towards New Labour's 'third way' and Conservatism is changing from Thatcherism to 'modern compassionate Conservatism', Liberal ideas remain solid.

Dangerfield argued that Liberalism was not relevant to the modern world. He was wrong; despite the Liberal Party being sidelined, its ideas have permeated the political narrative of much of the twentieth century.

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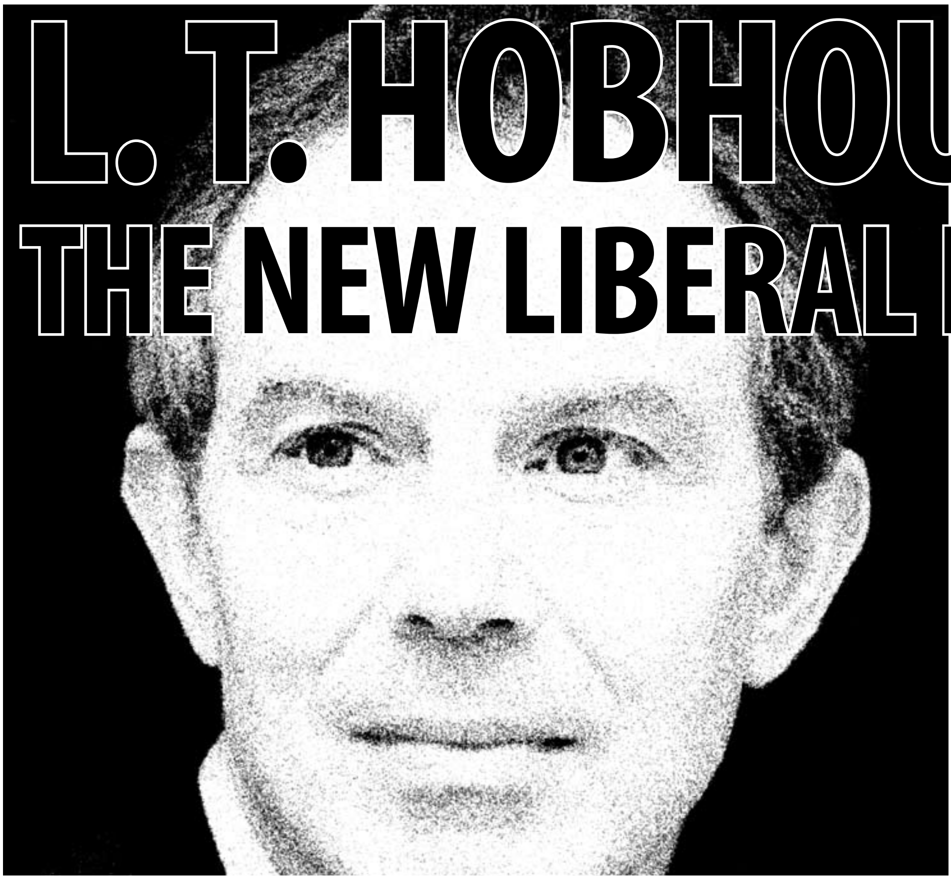
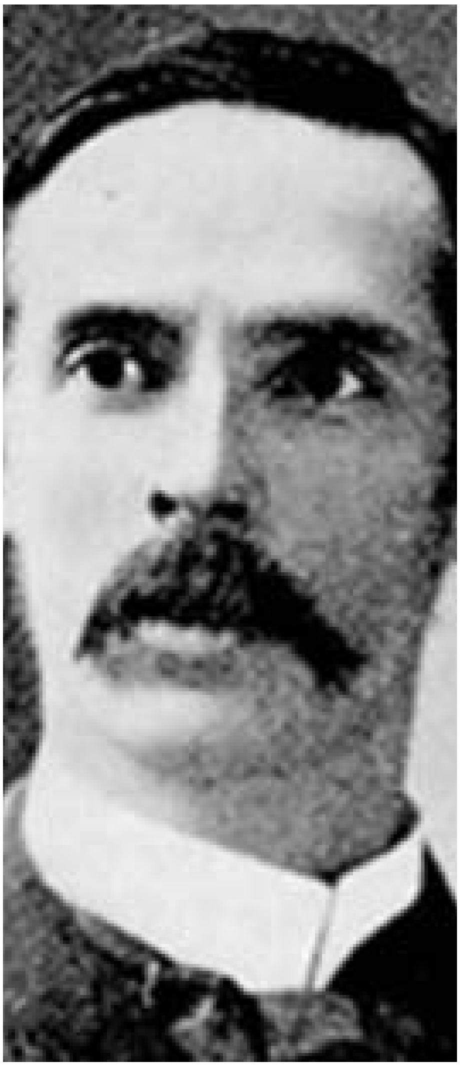
L. T. HOBHOUS THE NEW LIBERAL INF

Two years before the Labour Party victory of 1997, Tony Blair made a seminal speech to the Fabian Society in celebration of the fiftieth anniversary of the 1945 Labour election victory. The speech was a major media event because it was a defining moment for New Labour 'modernisers'. They were seeking to move the party from its socialist history on to 'new' political and ideological ground – as well as reap the tactical electoral benefits they felt could be gained by such a shift. Blair used the speech to pronounce himself 'proud' to be a 'democratic socialist' while redefining socialism to create 'social-ism'. More relevant here, as seen above, was Blair's reiteration of British political history from this revised New Labour position. **Dr Alison Holmes** examines New Liberal influences on Blair's 'Third Way'.





E AND J. A. HOBSON:
FLUENCE ON THIRD WAY IDEAS

Blair listed both L. T Hobhouse and J. A. Hobson amongst the intellectual cornerstones of both New Liberalism and New Labour – later termed the Third Way:

> The 'progressive dilemma' is rooted in the history of social and economic reform in Britain. Up to 1914 that history was defined by the Liberal Party's efforts to adapt to working-class demands. This involved the gradual replacement of the classical liberal ideology based on non-intervention and 'negative freedom' with a credo of social reform and state action to emancipate individuals from the vagaries and oppressions of personal circumstance … The intellectual bridgehead was established by Hobhouse and others. They saw the nineteenth-century conception of liberty as too thin for the purposes of social and economic reform, so they enlarged it. They realised that theoretical liberty was of little use if people did not have the ability to exercise it. So they argued for collective action, including state action, to achieve positive freedom, even if it infringed traditional laissez-faire liberal orthodoxy … They did not call themselves socialists, though Hobhouse coined the term 'liberal socialism', but they shared the short-term goals of those in the Labour Party … The New Liberals were … living on the cusp of a new political age, transitional figures spanning the period from one dominant ethic to another … J. A. Hobson was probably the most famous Liberal convert to what was then literally 'new Labour'.[1]

As will be seen, both Hobhouse and Hobson were very much responding to their time. The context, timing and events surrounding their intellectual development were crucial to the evolution of what was called the New Liberalism. This article will outline the two main debates at the time, over evolutionary theory and the Manchester School, while looking for indications of the New Liberal ideas of writers such as Hobhouse and Hobson that were to carry through to the modern interpretation of the Third Way.

Top: Tony Blair; far left: L. T. Hobhouse; left: J. A. Hobson

J. A. Hobson

Hobson was born in Derby on 6 July 1858, seven years after Britain had hosted the Great Exhibition, nine years after the repeal of the Corn Laws and nearly ten years after the last Chartist demonstrations. As the son of the owner of the *Derbyshire and Staffordshire Advertiser,* perhaps journalism was an obvious option but he became a journalist only after studying at Lincoln College, Oxford, and teaching classics and English literature in Faversham and Exeter. It was only when he moved to London in 1887 and met William Clarke of the Fabian Society (also a co-founder of a progressive discussion group known as the Rainbow Circle) that he began his political and journalistic career.

London was just recovering from nearly a decade of depression caused by crop failure and international competition, particularly from Germany and the United States. The Third Reform Act of 1884 had extended the franchise while rising tariffs in other countries were creating structural unemployment with which the social fabric was ill-equipped to deal. The Social Democratic Federation had been recently formed and unions were gaining members; the Trades Union Congress called for an international conference of workers the following year. Hobson was fascinated, as well as appalled, by the conditions of the poor; the investigations carried out by Charles Booth and others, and the growing publicity surrounding their findings, made a profound impact on him.

Hobson joined a variety of social reform and political organisations in London though the Rainbow Circle and the South London Ethical Society were most important to him. Generally, Hobson was not overly impressed. He considered the Christian Socialists 'too sentimental' and the Social Democrats 'too inflammatory'.[2] Interestingly, he also 'found the manner and argument of H. M. Hyndman, the leader of the Social Democratic Federation, to be 'those of an oily-mouthed, half-educated, self-conceited Dissenting Minister'.[3]

In 1899 C. P. Scott, the editor of the *Manchester Guardian,* invited him to join the paper as a reporter from South Africa during the Boer War. While there, Hobson developed his ideas of imperialism and its relation to capitalism. His reputation was such that when he returned to England in 1900, it was David Lloyd George who hosted his welcome at the National Liberal Club. His experience led him to believe that imperialism was promoted by manufacturers who benefited from war and that if 'surplus capital' and 'surplus goods' could be more justly distributed it would expand the domestic market to absorb these surpluses. He felt that the success of trade unions in securing higher wages and of social reformers in achieving better conditions for the lower classes meant that eventually imperialism would be unnecessary.[4] As Freeden puts it:

His experience led him to believe that imperialism was promoted by manufacturers who benefited from war and that if 'surplus capital' and 'surplus goods' could be more justly distributed it would expand the domestic market to absorb these surpluses.

> Hobson was instrumental in reformulating liberalism and enabling it to emerge from a period of considerable self-questioning and of competition with rival solutions to pressing social and political problems, unscathed but stronger, more coherent and more relevant. In his productivity, consistency and range he was the leading theorist of new liberalism that began to take root in the late 1880s and that, gaining intellectual ascendancy within a generation, laid the ideological foundations of the modern British welfare state.[5]

L. T. Hobhouse

The other half of the New Liberal 'Gemini' was L. T. Hobhouse. He was born, the youngest of seven children, on 18 September 1864 in St Ives, near Liskeard, Cornwall, to the Rev Reginald Hobhouse. A rector of fifteen years' standing, Hobhouse senior was part of the rising Victorian middle class. Like Hobson, Hobhouse was an Oxford graduate, from Corpus Christi, and also started as a teacher. A fellow at Merton College in 1887, he then returned to Corpus Christi in 1890 and was elected a Fellow in 1894.[6] It was also in 1890 that he met Sidney Webb, founder of the Fabian Society and later instrumental in setting up the London School of Economics. It was a connection that would last the rest of his life.

Hobhouse arrived at Oxford during a time of intellectual upheaval. A range of thinkers had an impact on him, including Auguste Comte, John Stuart Mill,[7] Herbert Spencer,[8] Thomas Malthus and Charles Darwin,[9] Prince Peter Kropotkin[10] as well as others like Giuseppe Mazzini.[11] These reflect the fact that Hobhouse was interested in both philosophy and science – a duality that would colour his views throughout his career. As Ernest Barker notes, 'Hobhouse was also a scientist like Kropotkin, studying physiology with J.S. Haldane'.[12]

However, the most commonly noted influence was that of T. H. Green. Despite the fact that Green had died before Hobhouse arrived in Oxford, Green's legacy was the dominance of the Idealist tradition. Hobhouse is often considered to be a 'disciple' of Green's, and though he sympathised with Green's general social and ethical outlook, his scientific approach meant there were also significant differences. For example, as a Hegelian Green emphasised the 'spiritual' and tended towards a more religious interpretation of nature, as opposed to Darwin and Spencer who were arguing in favour of a secularisation of science. Both these strands were important to Hobhouse but his morality was combined with an insistence on what he believed to be the 'real world', be it science or policy. Thus, Hobhouse moved away from Idealism and even later attacked Green's approach for not closing what he saw as the 'gulf' between the ideal and the actual; he saw this as a flaw within Idealism itself.

While at Corpus, Hobhouse wrote two books, *The Labour Movement* (1893) and *The Theory of Knowledge* (1896). He became a temporary lecturer at the London School of Economics in 1896 and a year later C. P. Scott, who had been elected to the House of Commons in 1895, invited him to join the *Manchester Guardian* (in advance of the invitation to Hobson). Hobhouse was asked to help on the leader-writing team but when Scott was re-elected in 1900, he became a core part of the leadership. Thus, while Hobson was writing for the paper in South Africa, Hobhouse was writing comment back home.

The 'Social Contract' vs. evolution and mutual aid

The idea of a 'social contract' had become an underlying assumption of the Whig interpretation of history and an enduring part of the Liberal programme. The evolution of this 'contract' provides a thread through the development of political ideas right through to the current day. Concepts of duty, rights and responsibilities, and the reciprocal arrangement between the individual and the state, are constants of political debate. But it was the tension between the 'morality' of the individual and the traditional perception of a need for state coercion that provided the catalyst and acted as a point of departure for both Hobhouse and Hobson in their development of an opposing or 'organic' model of society.

The work of people like Thomas Malthus (1766–1834) and Charles Darwin (1809–81)[13] were challenging views as to the 'true' nature of the individual and the community. Herbert Spencer, a strong supporter of an atomistic view of nature, seized upon Darwin as scientific evidence of this approach to society. It was in fact, Spencer and not Darwin who coined the term 'survival of the fittest', thus tipping it towards his own view.

Hobhouse viewed Darwin's theory and surrounding comment as just the beginning of a debate that was inevitably played out in the natural sciences but, he believed, required a wider response.

> The conception of evolution is inseparably, and not unjustly, associated in our minds with the work of Darwin and the impulse given by him in the middle of the nineteenth century to biological investigation. As we all know, the conception of evolution is not confined to biology, nor in biology did it originate with Darwin … In this respect the work of Darwin may be said to have cut across the normal and natural development of sociological investigation. When a great impulse is given to one science by some epoch-making experiment or some new and fruitful generalisation, that science is apt to acquire a certain prestige in the minds of contemporaries.[14]

Prince Peter Kropotkin is particularly interesting in this context because, although not often mentioned, he was a significant influence on Hobhouse and Hobson as well as on other socialists at the time. Not only was his work read and considered, he travelled to London, stayed on occasion with Ramsay MacDonald and even lived there for some time. He engaged with social Darwinism, or at least its popularised version, by refuting the premise of 'all against all' and making a detailed biological argument for the survival of the species, not of individuals. His theories of 'mutualism' and 'mutual aid' provided a new view of the community crucial to both the New Liberalism and the Third Way as a kind of halfway house between the traditional Liberal night-watchman state and state control. However, they also put Kropotkin fundamentally at odds not only with Spencer and Darwin but with the Fabians, who were focused on a much more rational or mechanical top-down version of society. This division would continue throughout the century.

Kropotkin created, in effect, an early type of communitarianism, a term coined in 1841. 'Mutualism' - a term also used by Hobhouse – deliberately placed the individual within the context of the community. His ideas were based on his belief that each individual understands and respects their links with the larger whole.

Kropotkin created, in effect, an early type of communitarianism, a term coined in 1841. 'Mutualism' - a term also used by Hobhouse – deliberately placed the individual within the context of the community.

> Real humanity presents a mixture of all that is most sublime and beautiful with all that is vilest and most monstrous in that world. How do they get over this? Why, they call one divine and the other bestial, representing divinity and animality as two poles, between which they place humanity. They either will not or cannot understand that these three terms are really but one and that to separate them is to destroy them.[15]

John Owen described the development of the debate:

> The biological view presupposes that survival constitutes an end in itself. But if one type of social life is regarded as inherently higher and more developed than another, new questions arise which the biologist is not qualified to answer. Fitness to survive does not constitute evidence of superiority in other respects … Hobhouse also revealed the illogicality of the argument that mutual aid is the great enemy of progress. With Kropotkin, he observed that mutual aid is operative, even in the animal world, and that as the level of life is ascended and the human stage reached, mutual aid increases; certainly, for example, in the parent-child relationship. Since the highest human values are generally supposed to be those involving mutual sympathy and the most highly developed social life, two alternatives present themselves. These valuations are either absolutely false and concepts of higher and lower are meaningless, or progress does not depend on the unmitigated struggle for existence.[16]

New Liberals and organic community

Hobson took up the idea of the organic whole and was impressed with the theory of 'orthogenic evolution'.[17] He used this base to create a holistic approach to a study of human nature that encompassed not only psychology and biology but sociology and economics as well as ethics. However, as Freeden points out, 'Unlike Spencer … Hobson drew politically radical conclusions from the organic analogy through emphasising not the self-sustaining abilities of the parts but the capacity of the whole for self-regulation'.[18] This approach to human nature became the backbone of Hobson's work. It shaped his views not only of the individual, but also of the state. To him, the individual was an organism, but one placed within another organism, namely the state, which also operated as a system. Again Barker comments on this aspect of both Hobson and Hobhouse:

> The development of Liberalism, during the last few years, shows considerable traces of Fabian influence. Liberal writers like Prof Hobhouse and Mr J. A. Hobson have both argued in favour of the intervention of the State in the field of socially created values. Mr Hobson in particular has urged that the individual is not the only unit of economic production; that the community is itself a producer of values; and that the State, which is the organ of the community, may claim a special right to impose special taxation on such values. The old individualistic view of the State thus seems to be definitely shed by modern Liberalism; and Mr Hobson, in re-stating the Liberal case, can even enlist the conception of a social organism under its banner. That conception serves to justify the taxation of socially created values, which are argued to be the results of the growth of the organism; and the contention that the State is an organism which feels and thinks, and may claim the right to express its feelings and thoughts.[19]

Hobhouse sought to re-interpret the biological and evolutionary model for more humanitarian, collective aims and reclaim the state from a position of enforcer to supporter. Like Hobson, he examined the whole process of development and evolution simultaneously but he extended that organic view of liberty and justice while ensuring that he did not lose the practical policy or political aims in terms of the role of the state and individual welfare. Owen goes on, 'it may legitimately be claimed that Hobhouse's thought represents a systematic unity in which all the parts play an integrated role. The implication follows that no part can be taken out of its setting within the whole of his theory if it is to be thoroughly understood.'[20]

Hobhouse acknowledged the importance of Green's idea of the common good, then worked from that base to define 'organic' development. He argued that while the term was over-used it could not be avoided, as it captured the sense that to be organic the parts must depend on one another while retaining their distinct identity. Further, using the analogy of the human body, the parts are destroyed when taken from the whole. He extended this view to include all of society and suggested that individuals are like those parts in that while they may be taken from society they cannot thrive.[21]

Having defined the term, he then applied the duality of primacy that both freedom and community held, in his view, to the social structures around him:

> These things are applicable to society, from the widest to the narrowest form thereof. If there is ever to be a world state, and if such a state is to be reconciled to permanent progress, it is to be achieved not by the suppression of nationality, but by the development of national differentiation; not by the suppression of political freedom, but through the spontaneous movement of self-governing communities.[22]

Building on the organic view of the community and mutual aid, Hobhouse finally created what he called a 'theory of harmony'. If both freedom and the role of the community could be nurtured and even encouraged in their differences as a contribution to the life of the whole, this would produce social harmony despite the profusion of loyalties such an understanding would necessarily create:

> Society, and particularly civilised society, is a very complex structure. We have not to do with one society, the political community standing over against a number of individuals who are its component members. Each individual is a member of many societies. He is one of a family; he belongs to a church, to a corporation, to a trade union, to a political party. He is also a citizen of his state, and his state has a place in the commonwealth of states. In so far as the world becomes one, that is to say, as social relations arise which interconnect human beings all the world over, Humanity becomes the supreme society, and all smaller social groupings may be conceived as constituent elements of this supreme whole.[23]

This brings the discussion back to the notion of the common good. In Hobhouse's view, the common good is served by individuals having the freedom to develop themselves to their full potential, both as separate entities and within their chosen communities. Individuals are only less of what they can be if

Hobhouse sought to re-interpret the biological and evolutionary model for more humanitarian, collective aims and reclaim the state from a position of enforcer to supporter.

taken from their community, of whatever size or at any level.

In essence, Hobhouse and Hobson developed an approach that 'humanised' or 'collectivised' the traditional atomistic liberal view by arguing that the state has a function in the welfare of its citizens. This approach to community, its rights and responsibilities, even to the language of 'mutualism' and 'mutual aid', became a major theme of the Third Way.

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Role of the state and the Manchester School

The second main debate with which the New Liberals engaged was that surrounding the Manchester School. This approach was embodied in the attitude of laissez-faire or 'let things alone', or 'set things free to take their own course', or 'enlightened self-interest', to use the phrase of Jeremy Bentham (1748–1832).[24] It served as the key to the individualistic model of nature and concepts such as property, self-possession and the social contract, and crucially, freedom from interference by the state.

Between 1848 and 1880, as Barker points out, the 'general tendency is towards individualism'.[25] The laissez-faire approach was the basis for both the domestic and foreign policy agendas through the belief that free trade and commerce not only supported good internal practice but also promoted peace among states. However, information about social deprivation was beginning to move opinion away from what was perceived as the atomistic view of society and towards more of a community approach. Barker goes on:

> By 1880 the doctrine of *laissez-faire* – the preaching of non-intervention as the supreme duty of the State, internally as well as externally – seems to have passed … its doctrine of a foreign policy based on pacific cosmopolitanism, steadily lost ground … After 1880 the bankruptcy of the old Benthamite Liberalism was beginning to be apparent. New ideals were needed for the new classes which had won the franchise.[26]

The demise of the Manchester School was not unanticipated and not overly mourned as international tariffs were suffocating British trade. Though politicians had been confident that free trade was on the rise indefinitely, the rise in manufacturing power as well as trade tariffs in Germany and other European countries meant that England was forced to re-examine both its state welfare and industrial support.[27] Domestically, even those who felt a sense of loyalty to these older ideas could see that a new basis had to be found for economic development and social legitimacy. As many Liberals evolved into New Liberals, they developed a new narrative, which accepted that laissez-faire economic theory had played its part but that it was time to move on and to develop a new understanding of the state's role in social welfare.

It is perhaps ironic that the Manchester School or laissez-faire ideas are believed to preclude state activity of any kind. However, economic liberalism of this kind requires state action to, in effect, protect it from incursion. State action remained 'offstage' as Helen Merrell Lynd puts it,[28] and therefore the ability of the state to act 'for good' was not fully recognised. She also points out that it was the shift in emphasis from preventing bad government to planning good government that brought the state out from the wings and enabled a new kind of philosophy to take hold. Francis Hirst also points to this important observation in terms of the move from negative freedom to a positive notion of state and government:

> Perhaps the favourite misapprehension about the Manchester School is that in its anxiety to enlarge and secure the freedom of the individual it was not merely jealous but entirely hostile to the activity of the State. This vulgar error may be referred to two main causes. First, the work of the School in the thirty years following the Reform Act was mainly a work of emancipation. The prime necessity of progress was to destroy bad laws and to free society from the chains which fettered moral and economic development. The second cause was the action of a slow and rather dogmatical section of wealthy adherents, who, after the death of their leader [Cobden], displayed a real, but narrow and unimaginative, devotion to his principles by persistently marking time when they should have been pushing forward to the solution of new problems.[29]

'Old' vs. the 'New' Liberalism

Hobhouse's most quoted text is *Liberalism*. Written in 1911, it was designed as the companion book to *Conservatism* by Hugh Cecil MP and *The Socialist Movement* by Ramsay MacDonald. The series set out to address the confusion in political debate at the time, although Hobhouse also wanted to reflect the optimism of the government of 1906 and the reforms undertaken by the combined progressive forces. As Alan Grimes points out in his 1964 introduction:

> *Liberalism* was written at a time in English politics when there was a fundamental division between the old liberalism, which was defined, doctrinaire, and dying, and the new liberalism, which was aspiring, amorphous, and still largely inarticulated. On the one hand there was a clear-cut body of doctrine and a decimated political following; on the other hand there was a growing political movement

> which lacked a defined social doctrine.[30]

It was in *Liberalism* that Hobhouse set out his case that the old Liberalism had completed its mission, and laissez-faire doctrines were no longer required, but that liberalism needed a firmer philosophical base. In that precarious balancing act, he was reluctant entirely to cast off the traditions of Liberal thought and sought instead to rehabilitate the older thinkers and reformulate their work in a more sympathetic light. Richard Cobden, for example, might have been left behind as one of the mainstays of the Manchester School. However, Hobhouse notes that despite the fact that Cobden was often set up as the anti-collective villain and the father of free trade, he also supported reforms in areas, such as child labour, where conditions of true freedom did not apply and could be said to have agreed that the state needed to take a role in protecting children from market forces.[31]

> Rightly understood, therefore, this kind of socialistic legislation appears not as an infringement of the two distinctive ideals of the older Liberalism, 'Liberty and Equality'. It appears rather as a necessary means to their fulfilment. It comes not to destroy but to fulfil. Similar reasoning explains the changed attitude of Liberals to trade unionism.[32]

Basically, Hobhouse argued that the development of the mercantilist state had shackled the individual to an aggressive and externally expansionist regime that had harmed individuals both literally and in terms of their freedom. These circumstances had required opposition to fight for the rights of the individual against the overweening state and church – although this had resulted in a form of negative freedom. Hobhouse recognised that those circumstances had fundamentally changed and understood the need for development in ideology, but he also encouraged caution because he felt equally that there were still tasks to be done that could only be dealt with by a firm notion of liberty and sense of the individual.

It was in *Liberalism* that Hobhouse set out his case that the old Liberalism had completed its mission, and laissez-faire doctrines were no longer required, but that liberalism needed a firmer philosophical base.

> The old Liberalism, we thought, had done its work. It had been all very well in its time, but political democracy and the rest were now well-established facts … The old individualism was standing in our way and we were for cutting it down. It was this mood … that disposed many people favourably toward imperialism as a 'positive' theory of the State … In this mood many men of strong popular sympathies were for kicking down the ladder by which they had climbed to the point of vantage from which their social reforms had been possible. But apart from the question of gratitude, to which men allow no place in politics, it is well for a man to be sure that he has his feet firmly on the top of the wall before he kicks the ladder aside. That the work of the old Liberalism was done once and for all was a too hasty assumption.[33]

The case that Hobhouse and others such as Herbert Samuel (1870–1963), later an MP, and D.G. Ritchie (1853–1903), were building was simply that old liberalism had served a mission. The result was a move of liberal thought towards 'the thought of Mill and the politics of Gladstone'. Social justice at home and humanitarian foreign policy abroad were to become its cornerstones.[34]

New Liberalism

Combining his notions of harmony and the organic community, Hobhouse created a particular place for liberty. Freedom and harmony became one; he devised a 'positive' freedom that was not gained at the expense of others but that, 'under the principle of harmony' became 'the mainspring of progress and cultural advancement' and was ultimately, 'the condition of mental and moral expansion, and is the foundation of science and philosophy, religion, art and morals'.[35]

In his view, New Liberalism needed to understand its differences from socialist ideas and liberty vs. equality seemed to be the ground on which there would be the most distance between progressive ideas. Socialists, and particularly the Fabian strain of socialism, set out prepared systems for creating equality based on the older mechanical model of human nature. On the other hand, Liberals such as Hobhouse felt that that approach was not only unhelpful but counter-productive, because it went against what they believed to be the 'true' nature of the free man.

> The heart of Liberalism is the understanding that progress is not a matter of mechanical contrivance, but of the liberation of living spiritual energy. Good mechanism is that which provides the channels wherein such energy can flow unimpeded, unobstructed by its own exuberance of output, vivifying the social structure, expanding and ennobling the life of mind.[36]

However, Hobhouse also insisted that this liberty should not be gained at the expense of others. To that end he agreed that there was a system of rights and responsibilities incumbent on liberty. So, even as early socialists were developing state mechanisms that held equality as the main driver, liberals were shifting from their atomistic view of individuals to place them within the community – but with that liberty came responsibilities.

This tension between freedom and equality has remained to the current day, with progressive parties differing on the right balance.

Finally, the state, in this organic view, was not about coercion or control of the aggressive individual but could be used to support the individual and enhance their social welfare. In another echo of the wider individualist/anarchist debate of the time and the modern debate as to the role of the state, Hobhouse reached two conclusions. The first, on moral philosophical grounds, was that state coercion did not benefit man, and second, that obedience not to his own will but to the state's did not expand the individual's own morality or conscience:

> Now when a man overcomes a bad impulse by his own sense of right and wrong his will asserts itself, and it is by such assertions of the will that personality is developed. If by the action of others he is persuaded or stimulated to an act of self-control, if conduct is set before him in a new light, if wider bearings of action are seen or dormant feelings evoked … But where he is merely coerced no such development takes place. On the contrary, so far as coercion extends there is a certain moral pauperisation, the exertion of will is rendered unnecessary and is atrophied.[37]

The state, looked at from this new perspective, can be an instrument of social justice rather than one of social control. Society can be based on the 'self-directing power of personality', and liberty – the crucial factors for Hobhouse – becomes a necessity instead of a luxury:

> Liberty then becomes not so much a right of the individual as a necessity of society … The rule of liberty is just the application of rational method. It is the opening of the door to the appeal of reason, of imagination, of social feeling; and except through the response to this appeal there is no assured progress of society.[38]

While Hobhouse focused on the old vs. new debate and questions of social philosophy, Hobson took on the economic constructs of the 'rational actor' or economic man' as incomplete descriptions of the person. He concentrated on pointing out the weaknesses in the capitalist system. Working through his long-standing interest in issues such as unemployment and poverty, Hobson argued that the free enterprise system did not operate well in the longer perspective because it was based on a 'false assumption' that resources would tend to be fully employed. However, as he demonstrated, instead of fully employing available resources, uncontrolled capitalism tended to create cycles of under-consumption and mass unemployment.

This line of argument went completely against the grain of the Manchester School and the classical doctrine of laissez-faire, not least in that it supported state intervention to correct the excesses of capitalism, both to enhance its long-term efficiency and in its claim that the surplus did not belong to the capitalists but to the wider population.[39]

Also core to this view of the state was that it became the 'prime ethical agent of the community'.[40] A 'benevolent' and 'impartial' state was required if it was to be handed more power in the form of a more collectivist vision of society, but would nevertheless still safeguard the ends of both society and the individual.[41]

Hobson was suggesting that the New Liberalism was a kind of 'socialism in liberalism'.[42] Their vision looked more like a welfare state and called for the state to provide at least the basic necessities. They argued society was more than just a collection of individuals, but was made up of individuals as part of a community. New Liberals aimed for a more substantial form of equality by creating an environment conducive to exploring individual potential.[43]

The 'progressive dilemma' was, and remains, essentially how to apply this approach to liberty and community to the area of social reform.

Conclusion

Blair's Fabian speech was central to what he believed to be the core of his Third Way project: the possible reconciliation of the 'progressive' forces of British politics. The 'progressive dilemma' was, and remains, essentially how to apply this approach to liberty and community to the area of social reform. Hobhouse and Hobson are at the heart of this project because they were dealing with the issues upon which progressive forces find that they divide: the nature of the individual, the role therefore of that individual in their community, and subsequently the role of the state in relation to that individual in terms of support and/or control.

The two debates outlined here revolved around the specifics of evolution vs. mutualism and the Manchester School vs. state support but they were essentially about the fundamental balance of freedom and equality and the moral obligations of the individual and the state within that balance.

The New Liberals, and Hobhouse and Hobson in particular, sought to create effectively a new 'social contract' between the individual and the state. However, theirs was not based on the 'negative' freedom that had prevailed but on an understanding of the individual in light of scientific advance as well as economic reality. Theirs was a systems model in which each player was both a system in their own right and, together with others, formed new and different systems. The issue was then about the balance of freedom.

Today, while Darwin and Kropotkin sound dated and ideas such as laissez-faire and Manchester School are far behind us in terms of economic theory, the underlying political debates remain much the same. For the Third Way the economic realities of globalisation and the role of the state in the international environment bring us back to the state's role in protecting its citizens against the deprivation caused by external trends, while Blair's promotion of both rights and responsibilities within the community are direct descendents of the debates around the common good, 'mutualism' and the 'theory of harmony'.

The progressive forces of British politics remain divided because they disagreed then and continue to disagree today. As David Marquand points out:

> The New Liberals of the turn of the century sought to reconcile capital and labour, to moralise market relations, to achieve a just distribution of resources within a capitalist framework. Their project was based on the premise that this attempt was feasible as well as right, that capitalism was sufficiently flexible and productive for it to be reformed in such a way.[44]

He goes on to argue that the idea that liberalism can be reconciled with socialism may be simply incorrect. In his view, the basic problem is: 'If socialism was right, New Liberalism was wrong; if New Liberalism was right, socialism was unnecessary.'[45] This rather depressing conclusion does not, however, capture the essence of what could be said to be the real point behind Hobhouse and Hobson's approach. For the New Liberals the foundation was indeed freedom but rational thought was its tool. Thus, it is suggested here that this continuous process of debate between progressive forces will not result in proof of 'right' or 'wrong' but that it is only through discussion of these timeless issues that there can be any development of political thought.

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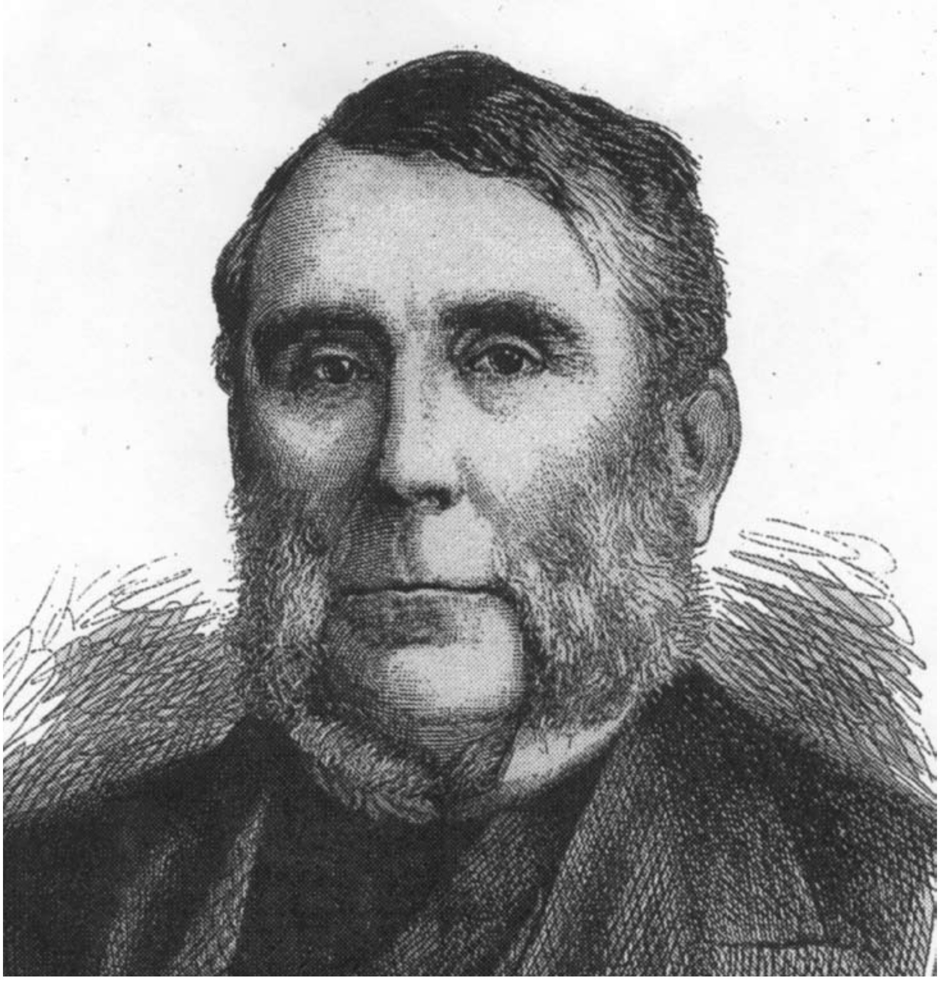
Edward William Watkin, born in Salford, Lancashire in 1819, was an exact contemporary of Queen Victoria; he exemplified the Victorian spirit of global awareness, pride in a British civilisation with the intention of sharing its benefits with others, and the excitement of participating in the development of new technology and scientific advancement. **John Greaves** examines his life.



Edward Watkin c.1874

SIR EDWARD WATKIN AND THE LIBERAL CAUSE IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

Edward William Watkin, born in Salford, Lancashire in 1819, was an exact contemporary of Queen Victoria; he exemplified the Victorian spirit of global awareness, pride in a British civilisation with the intention of sharing its benefits with others, and the excitement of participating in the development of new technology and scientific advancement.

Because of his success in the sphere of railways, he was seen as having a sound grasp of the financing and administration of the new engineering and commercial projects of the day. In particular his thinking was informed by the emergence of the world's first industrial city, Manchester, and by the first wholesale application of Adam Smith's theory of free market capitalism. The main economic issue in his early days was the Corn Laws – the imposition of tariffs on corn imports to protect or benefit sectional interests, which was creating great hardship for the poor. The organising of a free trade campaign was to give rise to a new political party, inspired by Christian ideals of fairness and compassion.[1] Watkin was one of those who quickly grasped the economics of the capitalist system, and was instrumental from time to time as an MP in bringing in regulations and safeguards against its abuse.

Watkin's father was a Manchester cotton merchant, a Methodist lay preacher who had a committed involvement in the fecund social and political life of Manchester. Absolom Watkin (1787–1861) was the 'scribe' of several groups in the town, and, so tradition has it, the author of a Loyal Address to the Queen on the occasion of her marriage, and of a petition in favour of the Reform Bill of 1832. Edward became involved very early in this social idealism. He helped the Liberal cause in the election of 1837, when Gladstone was standing in the Manchester constituency as a Conservative. 'We beat him by two or three to one' said Watkin in a speech in 1885. He was prominent in the advocacy of public parks for the recreation of the urban working classes, publishing a pamphlet, *A Plea for Public Parks*, in 1843; and he agitated at about the same time for the provision of public baths and wash-houses, and for a Saturday half-day holiday each week for the hard-worked 'operatives' in the mills. In all these endeavours he was successful. In the Anti-Corn Law riots and street demonstrations, he and his brother John (who later became an Anglican priest) were engaged in battles against the Chartists and the Irish protesters against the Corn Laws, whose demands were far more radical than those of the Cobdenite Liberals.

Watkin's work as Secretary of the Trent Valley Railway (1845–47), a position he gained because of his financial wizardry as a director of the Manchester Athenaeum, brought him into prominence in Liberal circles in Stafford. He campaigned there for the election of 1846, securing popular acclaim as the free trade candidate, only to reveal that he did not fulfil the conditions for nomination – the ownership of land producing £300 per year. He was elected as Liberal MP for Great Yarmouth in 1857, but with his Liberal colleague was declared unseated on the grounds of bribery. A House of Lords committee absolved them both of personal involvement in paying money for votes (their agents having misapplied the funds), but his enemies kept the affair rumbling for over ten years. He served on Manchester City Council, representing the Exchange Ward, from 1859 to 1862. For the election of 1859, Watkin refused nomination to represent his native seat, Salford, half hoping that he would be asked to stand again for Great Yarmouth, but in the event he was not.

Watkin claimed that he always 'voted for what he saw as right, without caution for the official party line'.

However, in 1864 he was returned for Stockport, with his fellow Liberal John Benjamin Smith, serving there for four years through a subsequent election. He was narrowly defeated in the campaign of 1868, after the constituency had been enlarged following the Second Reform Act to include an area of 'staunch country Toryism'. Watkin did much good in his Stockport incumbency, and was highly esteemed. In 1866 and 1872 he became the chairman of two additional important railway companies, the South Eastern and the Metropolitan; he had been Chairman of the Manchester, Sheffield and Lincolnshire Railway since 1864. Nevertheless, when the Liberals of Exeter asked him to be their candidate in the December 1873 by-election, he accepted, and worked hard to win what had been for years, until 1868, a Conservative stronghold. In the event, he was defeated, but Exeter praised him for his efforts, and he later spoke in the House on the town's behalf.

In his Stockport campaign in 1864, he had been described as an 'independent Liberal Unionist', and he claimed that he always 'voted for what he saw as right, without caution for the official party line'. He admired Gladstone, he said, for 'his moral courage to change his opinions'. After Gladstone's surprise dissolution in 1874, Watkin was approached by the Hythe and Folkestone Liberals to be their candidate in the election of that year. Because his position was, in his own words, that of a 'Conservative Radical',[2] and because of his record, he was returned unopposed, being of a sufficiently conservative nature to satisfy the Tories of the constituency. This position was maintained through the elections of 1880, 1885, 1886, 1892 and 1895. However, he was consistently in favour of electoral reform, and the extension of the franchise to working people. He spoke to, and voted in favour of, John Stuart Mill's amendment to the Reform Bill of 1867 to include votes for women, and later provoked Parliament by commending to its attention the Canadian Act of 1886, and that of the Manx House of Keys, for the enfranchisement of women.

In 1886, Watkin became an open Liberal Unionist in opposition to Gladstone's Liberal whip on Irish Home Rule. His position on Ireland was, and always had been, one of concern for the Irish economy and the rights of her people rather than the imperialist one of persuading a recalcitrant part of the Empire. He maintained that there was no reason to cast off the island in its poverty, but every reason to improve communications with it (through a railway tunnel from Stranraer to Larne), and to invest in its infrastructure (such as by creating a ship canal between Dublin and Galway), which would attract English investment and encourage industry and employment on a mainland scale. He saw it as anomalous that part of the British Isles should not share in its general prosperity, and in 1869 he invested in Irish railways and cross-channel traffic; but his enlightened views were not heeded, even though he pleaded with his friend Gladstone to set up, with Mr Parnell, a Royal

Commission on Ireland with a view to encouraging unity.[3]

Watkin's chairmanship of the Manchester, Sheffield and Lincolnshire Railway led to the development of Grimsby from a tiny and declining fishing village to one of the great harbour towns. In 1831 the population of Grimsby numbered 3,054; it had increased to 4,048 by 1841, but then expanded quickly to 24,000 by 1871, 64,000 by 1891 and 73,000 by 1901. It was not quite a 'pocket borough' of the MS&LR, but it was, from 1857 to 1895, solidly Liberal or Liberal Unionist except for six years, and for those the Member was the Conservative Chairman of the MS&LR, John Chapman. For seventeen of those thirty-eight years the town's MP was a director or a shareholder of the railway company, including Sir Edward's son, Alfred Mellor Watkin.

Watkin has never had the credit due to him either from the writers of railway history or from the City of Manchester. This has been, perhaps, largely due to two things: his autocratic manner, fuelled by vision and energetic enterprise, alongside an aggressive competitiveness and determination; and because of the prominent failure of two bold enterprises upon which he had set his heart – an 'Eiffel Tower' for London, set in parkland at Wembley with a large exhibition hall and sports facilities (only the Tower of which was unsuccessful), and a tunnel under the English Channel, which was thwarted in the end by the army and Joseph Chamberlain.

His greatest work was in helping the different provinces of Canada towards unity as a 'Commonwealth'. He was asked by the Colonial Office to take over the project, as President of the Grand Trunk Railway of Canada, the management and finance of which were in a sorry state, so as to make it the nucleus of a transcontinental railway.[4] The Confederation agreement was made in 1867, facilitated by Watkin's negotiations to purchase the Hudson's Bay Company, across whose vast territory a transcontinental railway would have to pass. The last spike of the railway was struck on 7 November 1885, though the Grand Trunk, by that time out of Watkin's hands, had by then excluded itself from the project.

Watkin was immediately awarded a knighthood, and later (in 1880) a baronetcy for his efforts; and whatever the discussion of the importance of his contribution, it is certain that unification could not have taken place without the commitment of the French Roman Catholic provinces, and the leader of that constituency – George Etienne Cartier – had been the solicitor of the Grand Trunk Railway and a colleague and friend of Edward Watkin.

Watkin described himself as 'A Politician with Railway Interests', but his speeches in the House on railway matters were far less numerous than those on economics and social justice. In one of his first speeches after his election in Great Yarmouth he supported a motion for the abolition of the slave trade, and he spoke several times on behalf of individuals who had suffered injustice at the hands of various authorities, and for the progressive extension of the franchise of working people, both men and women.

Towards the end of the century the first signs of 'robber capitalism' had begun to emerge. As the influence of a Christian conscience waned, individual greed and self-aggrandisement emerged on a significant scale: accumulation of private wealth and opulent lifestyles were perceived as normal by those tempted to play the system without regard for others. From this arose exploitation of the workforce in terms of pay and conditions – abhorrent to Watkin – which encouraged the rise of organised labour and eventually the emergence of a 'Labour Party' as a significant force in British politics. Watkin and his friend W. E. Gladstone remained among the few who maintained a balance between wealth creation and social conscience on an openly theological base: by the end of the century there had developed a far more 'secular' and pragmatic form of political and social theory, which was strengthened by two devastating world wars.

Watkin and his friend W. E. Gladstone remained among the few who maintained a balance between wealth creation and social conscience on an openly theological base.

John Greaves, after leaving school, began work as a Clerk/Trainee Manager on the London and North Eastern Railway in 1945, when his childhood enthusiasm for railways kindled into commitment. In the late 1950s he was ordained into the Church of England, and his main theological interest has been the relationship between political theory and theology, the subject of a post-retirement Masters degree. His book Sir Edward Watkin: Last of the Railway Kings, *based on a doctoral thesis completed in 2002, is published by The Book Guild. He now lives in partial retirement in South Shropshire.*

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1 John Vincent, *The Formation of the Liberal Party, 1857–1868*, pp. xvi and xvii.

2 'I am a radical, but I am a Conservative Radical. I want to see everything reformed that ought to be reformed in order to preserve the fabric of the State. I am strongly for reform. I am totally opposed to revolution', he said in a speech at Hythe in 1885. It was said about him that '[despite being] a Cobdenite, he was not a robust Liberal [for] there was more of the old Whig than the new Radical in his political leanings'. [*Blackburn Telegraph*, 15 April 1901].

3 In a letter dated 28 April 1888.

4 Such a railway, he had argued in an article in *The London Illustrated News* (of which he was editor for a short time), would enable 'A great outspread of solid prosperity and … rational liberty … the diffusion of our civilisation and … the extension of our moral empire.'

LIFE WITH LL

Even today, more than thirty years after its appearance, *Life with Lloyd George* (1975), by A. J. Sylvester, Principal Private Secretary to David Lloyd George from 1923, remains a valuable and unique source of information for students of Lloyd George, his life and times – particularly the so-called 'wilderness years' of the last phase of his life – and for those interested in his family. **Dr J. Graham Jones** examines the preparation, publication and impact of the book, drawing on extracts from Sylvester's diaries between 1931 and 1945.

OYD GEORGE

Albert James Sylvester (1889–1989) served as Principal Private Secretary to David Lloyd George from the autumn of 1923 until Lloyd George's death in March 1945.[1] A native of Harlaston in Staffordshire and the son of a relatively impoverished tenant farmer, he perfected his shorthand and typing skills by attending evening classes when still in his teens, while he spent his days as a clerk at Charrington's breweries. In 1910, like so many of his generation, he moved to London to seek his fortune, holding a variety of jobs before in 1915 securing appointment as a stenographer in the office of M. P. A. Hankey (later Lord Hankey), who at the time was Secretary to the Committee of Imperial Defence. In 1921 he left Hankey's employ to become Private Secretary to Lloyd George, still Prime Minister of the post-war coalition government. A short spell under Conservative premier Andrew Bonar Law preceded his return to work as PPS to Lloyd George for an unbroken twenty-two-and-a-half years. Sylvester was thus in a unique position to view Lloyd George's public and private life throughout the so-called 'wilderness years'.

Very early in his career A. J. Sylvester realised that he was in an immensely privileged position. By nature he was a compulsive, habitual note taker, a practice much facilitated by his proficiency in shorthand. From about 1915 onwards he took to recording in some detail the seminal, often momentous events which he witnessed at close quarters. Sometimes he kept a diary. He went to great pains to record the moves which led to the selection of Stanley Baldwin, rather than Lord Curzon, as Conservative leader in the spring of 1923, and he chronicled in some detail the tempestuous course of Ramsay MacDonald's first minority Labour government of 1923–24.

During these years, however, his diary keeping was at best spasmodic; there were lengthy periods during which no diary entries were made. Some years afterwards, however, newspaper proprietor Sir George Riddell (later Lord Riddell) impressed upon Sylvester that his unique status and position demanded that he should record in detail the events which he was privileged to witness. It was an argument, buttressed by many others, which the devoted PPS readily accepted. Consequently from 1931, Sylvester's diary is more or less continuous for the next fourteen years. It is an extremely valuable record of all that Lloyd George and his immediate family did and said. Originally, Sylvester kept his diary in a group of relatively small notebooks with black covers, which he crammed with shorthand. Only members of his closest family were fully aware of the nature of their contents and the secrets which they contained.

A. J. Sylvester and Lloyd George

The detail of the diary is amazing. It became A. J. Sylvester's practice to write up his diary late at night as his last task before retiring to bed. This was an undertaking which could be achieved at great speed because of his use of Pitman's shorthand, which also provided the diarist with an element of security. His mastery of shorthand enabled Sylvester to record speeches, debates and conversations fully verbatim. So, too, did he note the gist of the numerous telephone conversations which he had and even the small-talk which took place during meals in the Lloyd George household. This penchant for minutiae sometimes extended to noting what Lloyd George's guests wore, ate, drank and smoked. Inevitably much of the information which Sylvester recorded in his diaries was highly personal and private. It would seem that, as he made his meticulous record of all he saw and heard in Lloyd George's milieu, Sylvester displayed no inclination of making it available to the world. It was simply his own private record.

Lloyd George died on 26 March 1945. Within days of the old man's death, his widow Frances, now the Dowager Countess Lloyd-George of Dwyfor, made it clear to Sylvester, the ever-loyal, utterly discreet employee for more than two decades, that she had now resolved to dispense with his services. Although the terms given to Sylvester were by any standards exceptionally generous – he was given a full three years' salary as severance pay, and he also inherited the sum of £1,000 under the terms of Lloyd George's will – the course of events still came as a complete shock to him. Any hope which he could reasonably have had of being kept on by Frances to collaborate with her in perpetuating Lloyd George's good name and memory (in particular by assisting in the researching and writing of a full biography), and in working with her on the massive archive of papers which Lloyd George had bequeathed to her in his will, had been cruelly dashed. For the first time in his life, at fifty-five years of age, A. J. Sylvester, a proud man, was unemployed. Consequently, the latent antagonism between him and Frances, which had existed from the beginning, was unleashed. As long as Lloyd George, a notoriously difficult man, lived, and both Frances and Sylvester remained in his employ, they were forced to work in harmony to preserve the peace and mollify the old man. The harsh course of events of the spring of 1945, however, meant that Sylvester subsequently felt no loyalty whatsoever to the Dowager Countess, although he still felt some affection for the Lloyd George family and he certainly showed no inclination to bring Lloyd George's name and reputation into disrepute.

First, he needed a new job, if not a new career. For three years until 1948 he worked for Express Newspapers on a short-term contract with Lord Beaverbrook. At the same time he now felt relatively free to quarry his extensive diary material and the more modest personal archive of correspondence, papers and documents which he had carefully accumulated over the years, in order to piece together a semi-biographical volume about his former employer. This was eventually published as *The Real Lloyd George* by Cassell and Co. in the autumn of 1947.[2] This rather dramatic title was not reflected in the book's contents. Although it included a revealing account of Lloyd George's visits to Hitler at Bechtesgaden in the autumn of 1936 and some other episodes of interest, much of the volume consisted of domestic trivia. Above all, the portrait of Lloyd George which emerged from a perusal of the book's 322 hastily penned pages was distinctly unflattering. In his later years Sylvester's employer had become a soured, peevish and autocratic old man, increasingly cantankerous and ever more prone to vicious temper tantrums which deeply upset all those in his inner circle. Most of the sensational revelations about Lloyd George in the original diaries had been either omitted or toned down in the published work. Just one or two warts remained. Even so Frances Lloyd-George was incensed that *The Real Lloyd George* had seen the light of day before the 'official biography' of Lloyd George by Malcolm Thomson, a work which was then being prepared with her full approval and co-operation and unrestricted access to the papers in her sole possession.

In 1948 Sylvester's contract with Lord Beaverbrook came to an abrupt end, and he again found himself searching for remunerative employment. He failed, and spent the period of 1948–49 working as an unpaid assistant to the Liberal Party leader E. Clement Davies who was a personal friend and whose work on behalf of the party he greatly admired. During these months he drew on his savings, but such an arrangement could not continue indefinitely. When the Liberal Party hierarchy was unable or unwilling to create a paid position for A. J. Sylvester, and no other suitable position was available, he and his wife Evelyn moved from their home at Putney in London to Chippenham in Wiltshire, where he had already purchased a substantial piece of agricultural land during the war years. Here he was to remain until his death in October 1989, just over forty years later, farming on a fairly extensive scale, while retaining his avid interest in Lloyd George and in contemporary political life. He battled courageously to overcome the trauma of Evelyn's death in 1962 and a succession of serious health problems.

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Lloyd George received a consistently bad press during the twenty years following his death, a practice which Sylvester himself had to some extent initiated with the publication of *The Real Lloyd George* in 1947, and which was perpetuated by Richard Lloyd-George (the second earl, who had been disinherited by his father) in his hostile biography published in 1960 and in works like Donald McCormick's *The Mask of Merlin*, published in 1963. More balanced Lloyd George biographies by Sir Alfred Davies (1947), Dr Thomas Jones (1951) and Frank Owen (1954), although arousing considerable interest and some acclaim, failed to stem the generally bad press which Lloyd George attracted. This trend was enhanced still further by the general works of historians like A. J. P. Taylor and Trevor Wilson. 'Lloyd George's reputation in 1966, therefore', wrote Kenneth O. Morgan, 'was at its lowest ebb.'[3]

From that point on, however, a dramatic transformation took place, partly the result of the appearance of a spate of important publications which took a more detached, even sympathetic, view of Lloyd George (the work of historians such as Martin Gilbert, Cameron Hazlehurst, Robert Skidelsky and Peter Clarke), partly the outcome of the availability of a wide range of new archival sources. In 1967 the magnificent archive of papers which Frances had sold to Lord Beaverbrook became available to the public for the first time at the Beaverbrook Library; they were to be transferred to the custody of the Record Office at the House of Lords in 1975. These were the major source for the period after Lloyd George's assumption of the premiership in December 1916. Then, in 1969, the National Library of Wales at Aberystwyth was able to purchase from the estate of Lady Megan Lloyd George (who had died in May 1966) a substantial collection of correspondence and papers running to almost 3,500 items which had been assembled at the Lloyd George family home at Brynawelon, Criccieth. Most of this priceless material had once been owned by Dame Margaret Lloyd George and included a run of more than 2,000 letters written by Lloyd George to her, spanning the period from 1886 to 1936.[4] They constituted a vital new source for Lloyd George's early career and family life.

The availability of such sources made possible an array of exciting new publications. In 1971 there appeared in print the diaries of Frances Stevenson, edited by A. J. P. Taylor, honorary librarian of the Beaverbrook Library. In 1973 John Grigg published, to universal acclaim, his monumental *The Young Lloyd George*, the first instalment of a projected multi-volume biography which was substantially enriched by access to the correspondence at Aberystwyth. In the same year the availability of the same archive led to the publication of *Lloyd George: Family Letters, 1885–1936*, edited by Kenneth O. Morgan, a ground-breaking work which gave much wider currency to the riches of the Lloyd George Papers recently acquired by the National Library. (It should still be noted, however, that there are many valuable letters within the archive which have not been included in this volume.) A. J. P. Taylor also began to edit the correspondence between Lloyd George and Frances Stevenson, a work which eventually saw the light of day as *My Darling Pussy* in 1975.

Sylvester considered the book grossly over-romanticised, incomplete and sometimes factually inaccurate. He was at once spurred to action in defence of the good name of his 'old chief'.

All this activity, and the new, more charitable attitude to Lloyd George which had emerged as a result, clearly spurred A. J. Sylvester to consider making his own diary material available in print. He had published nothing of substance since *The Real Lloyd George* back in 1947, simply contributing occasional columns to newspapers and magazines and making a few radio broadcasts. He still felt deeply resentful that Frances Lloyd-George had deliberately prevented him from contributing in any way to the 'official biography' of Lloyd George written by Malcolm Thomson in 1948. Then, in 1967, Frances published her own autobiography, *The Years that are Past*, a somewhat cautious, guarded account of her long relationship with Lloyd George. Sylvester considered the book grossly over-romanticised, incomplete and sometimes factually inaccurate. He was at once spurred to action in defence of the good name of his 'old chief'. He opened up his old notebooks containing the shorthand diary material, some of which he had not looked at for more than forty years. Some of the contents he had more or less forgotten. Re-reading them came as a pleasant surprise to him.

In September 1971, Sylvester was approached by Colin Cross and Observer Newspapers to consider the publication of extracts from his diaries as a single monograph. Cross, a native of Cardiff, educated at Portsmouth Grammar School and the University of Cambridge, was by the end of the 1960s a member of staff of *The Observer*. Ever since 1950 he had earned his living as a journalist and had travelled extensively in Africa, Asia and the Middle East. His published works included *The Fascists in Britain* (1961), *The Liberals in Power, 1905–1914* (1963), a biography of the first Labour Chancellor of the Exchequer, *Philip Snowden* (1966), *The Fall of the British Empire, 1918–1968* (1968) and *Adolf Hitler* (1973). At a meeting between Sylvester and Cross at the former's home in September 1971, Cross soon became convinced that the diary material constituted 'the basis of an excellent book'. It was recognised from the outset, however, that the original diaries would have to be ruthlessly edited down to some 80,000 words, and The Observer Ltd. agreed to provide the ageing Sylvester with secretarial assistance to facilitate the task of transcribing some of the diary material which remained only in shorthand.[5] He stubbornly refused the offer, determined to undertake all of the remaining transcription work himself. Before the end of the year, Sylvester had made contact with Lady Olwen Carey-Evans, by this time Lloyd George's only surviving child, and Owen, the third Earl Lloyd-George of Dwyfor. Both were immediately supportive, the earl enthusiastically commenting, 'your material is unique and … you should make the maximum use of it'.[6]

Sylvester laboured away with the diligence which had characterised the whole of his working life, so that a full typescript transcript of all the diary material was available before the end of the following January. It was a task he found compelling: 'I have just lived again through those periods of time and the events. I have found it all deeply interesting; it had been fun and fascinating. For it SPEAKS.'[7] Further meetings, which both men found very rewarding, took place between Cross and Sylvester at the latter's home, Rudloe Cottage, Corsham, in Wiltshire. Although both Colin Cross and his editorial colleagues at The Observer Ltd were immediately highly impressed by the quality of the diary material, the problem of its inordinate length was immediately apparent. The original typescript text produced by Sylvester ran to more than a million words, fully capable of filling more than half a dozen printed volumes! Drastic pruning could not be avoided.[8] Several important considerations had to be borne in mind: the careful selection and editing of the material, the choice of the most suitable publisher, the financial arrangements, and the advance publicity for the book. 'I am enormously encouraged', wrote Cross enthusiastically to Sylvester, 'this book is going to be dynamite in several senses'. Noting that *The Observer* was anxious to publish gossip column paragraphs about Sylvester's life and the significance of the diaries, Cross went on, 'I think we need to watch this with care in relation to possible reaction from the Dowager Countess who must realise exactly what cat you have to let out of the bag.'[9]

The Dowager Countess was clearly in the forefront of Sylvester's mind, too, at this time and central to his calculations:

> My approach to the whole project is: I thought that my massive and vital material would be incapable of being published for many years, if indeed at all. Now, however, the chief obstacle to publication has been removed by the fact that the Dowager has published her own memoirs, and an edited edition of her diaries. I feel that I have a duty to provide a more balanced picture for history than that provided by the Dowager.
>
> It is fascinating: it is written at the time from my own knowledge: it is dynamic! I have the most amazing evidence.
>
> LG is the genius; with some of his warts, his great and fascinating personality looms large.
>
> My desire is to put Dame Margaret and the family in their rightful place and perspective. Dame Margaret was LG's foundation: his ROCK AND HIS REFUGE: she kept him in public life: she could have brought him crashing at any moment; but always she remained loyal to him. It was always 'to the "old gell" he went in the end'. I know: I was there.[10]

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The enterprise was soon to receive the enthusiastic support of both A. J. P. Taylor and David Jenkins, the Librarian of the National Library of Wales. It was agreed that the royalties from the sale of the book should be divided on a 70:30 basis between Sylvester and Colin Cross. Public interest was stimulated by the news that the publication of *Family Letters*, edited by Kenneth Morgan, was now imminent. The Sylvester camp hoped that the appearance of his diaries should precede the publication of the Morgan volume, but such an aspiration was unrealistic.

By the high summer of 1972 it was agreed to aim for a volume of about 110,000 words, to be published some time during the following year. The book was to include an introductory general essay of about 10,000 words by Colin Cross on Lloyd George, to be followed by some 100,000 words of annotated extracts from Sylvester's diaries.[11] In the following October, a contract was signed between Sylvester and Macmillan publishers (rather than Chatto and Windus, who had also been sent the material for consideration). Macmillan were prepared to pay a royalty advance of £1,500, a substantial sum in 1972, and to pay a royalty rate of 17½ per cent (rather than the customary rate of 12½ per cent) on any sales in excess of 4,000 copies. It was then anticipated that the volume might sell for £4.95, that a sale of some 2,500 copies to libraries was guaranteed, and that some copies would sell in the USA.[12] During the winter of 1972–73 Colin Cross worked at breakneck speed in preparing the volume for the press and drafting the introduction and explanatory notes.

In December 1972 the Dowager Countess Lloyd-George of Dwyfor died at her Surrey home. Shortly afterwards A. J. Sylvester wrote to Lady Olwen Carey-Evans confirming that the planned publication of his diaries was indeed going ahead:

> It is likely to be dynamic. It will seek to present another and a balanced view compared to that presented by the Dowager and destroy the image which she has endeavoured to build up for herself in the eyes of the public. Thus, I hope that Dame Margaret and her family will be seen in a very different and in their true light. I am very sorry personally that the Dowager has died. I should have been very pleased for her to have read what I have to say.[13]

A few weeks later, in the wake of the publication of the pioneering volume *Lloyd George: Family Letters*, he participated, together with Kenneth O. Morgan, W. R. P. George, and A. J. P. Taylor, in a St David's Day broadcast on the BBC. This gave him an opportunity to underline Dame Margaret's sterling assets, 'the outstanding qualities of one of the greatest ladies I have ever known':

> I then explained how LG hated letters: how difficult [it] was in getting him to deal with them;

> and how surprised I was that in those days he wrote so many.
>
> In recent years I have felt concern about the way the late Dowager has behaved towards the family, and particularly towards Dame Margaret, in her books and in her TV appearances. She has built up an image of herself which she wishes the public to believe: I know that this is wholly untrue. Whatever I do will be to present another view, in which I hope Dame Margaret will stand out as THE one person who, by her loyalty and devotion to a difficult husband, was ever his tower of strength and THE one to whom he always went in times of stress and real trouble. But for her LG would have been out on the political flagstone with his mistress, and the country would have been poorer, and history changed.
>
> As for LG himself, with all his private entanglements which would have crushed most men, with amazing audacity, he handled successfully the most momentous issues, thus making him an even greater man than ever – an amazing achievement. Then, he was a genius.[14]

Interest in Lloyd George had been much stimulated by the publication of *Lloyd George: Family Letters* and by the knowledge that the publication of John Grigg's pioneering *The Young Lloyd George* was now imminent. When Grigg's book did indeed appear in the summer, Owen, the third Earl Lloyd-George of Dwyfor, expressed to Sylvester the view that Grigg had 'made an absolutely first-class beginning of what I clearly believe will be a masterpiece: he was certainly working on it long enough!'.[15] (John Grigg had in fact spent the whole of the 1960s undertaking the research for this first volume.)

Owen Lloyd-George, Lady Olwen Carey-Evans and Jennifer Longford (daughter of the recently deceased Dowager Countess, born in 1929) all took a keen and supportive interest in the progress of Sylvester's pioneering volume. The Earl offered Cross and Sylvester the use of his extensive photograph albums to illustrate the diaries. He had inherited from his uncle Gwilym Lloyd-George, 1st Viscount Tenby, who had died in 1967, many albums dating mainly from the 1930s and covering many of Lloyd George's trips to deliver speeches in various parts of the UK. Some of these also featured Sylvester.[16] By the end of October 1973 the complete text of the diaries was ready to be delivered to the publishers. The original diaries had been pruned substantially in the rigorous editorial process. 'It is such a pity that such a lot of fascinating material will be left out', wrote Sylvester to Lady Olwen, 'and this is just sacrilege, but it cannot be helped.'[17] In fact a great deal of material had been cut out in the editorial process: all repetitive material was eliminated, general political accounts and descriptions of Sylvester's private life with his family were banished from the text (with the exception of a handful of brief extracts) and trivia, too, was removed from the edited version.

Interest was increased still further by A. J. P. Taylor's revelation that he planned to edit and publish the correspondence between Lloyd George and Frances held at the Beaverbrook Library as part of the Lloyd George Papers, and by repeated conjecture that Councillor W. R. P. George of Criccieth was preparing a volume on his uncle's early life, to be based on the huge archive of papers which he had inherited from his father Dr William George (Lloyd George's younger brother) who had died, aged almost 102, in January 1967. These included a magnificent run of no fewer than 3,292 letters from Lloyd George to his brother and a host of other riches. These were carefully guarded at Garthcelyn, Criccieth; other writers, John Grigg among them (much to his intense annoyance), were banned from consulting these treasures. (They did not eventually come into the public domain until 1989 when they were purchased by the National Library of Wales.[18])

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During 1974 the editors insisted that *Life with Lloyd George* had to be reduced still further in length, and Colin Cross faced the unenviable task of again editing the text by eliminating further passages. A. J. Sylvester reluctantly approved these eleventh-hour changes, painful though they proved. By December 1974, however, the final page proofs had been corrected and a detailed index compiled. After a succession of minor hiccups, plans were finalised to launch the book on 20 May 1975. On 30 March *The Observer Magazine* published an article by Colin Cross on the Sylvester diaries – to whet the appetite of the British reading public, and at the same time to mark the thirtieth anniversary of Lloyd George's death. The articles included brief extracts from the diaries and ran to five and a half pages in the magazine: three and a half pages of text and two of pictures. The cover of the magazine carried the same picture as the dust-jacket of the final published volume. By the middle of April copies of the book had arrived at Macmillan's warehouse at Basingstoke, and a delighted A. J. Sylvester was the proud owner of six complimentary copies. Further free copies were sent to Lady Olwen Carey-Evans, Owen, the third Earl Lloyd-George of Dwyfor, and Jennifer Longford. Just before publication extracts from *Life with Lloyd George* were also published in the *Liverpool Daily Post* and the *Western Mail*. As he sent Lady Olwen her complimentary copy of the book, Sylvester wrote as follows:

> When you have read it I should value enormously your candid reaction including your criticisms. What is in the book is what was written at the time: it is a pen picture of just what happened: you play an important part and will know the truth of what I have written: it was in events in which I played my part: an impossible position, because I was always between so many fires. But I have always felt, after many years of close observation, and I will never cease to proclaim, that the woman who made LG great and preserved his national and international image, was Dame Margaret, who was his rock and his refuge, and not, as she claimed, his self-confessed Mistress, with her other and secret lover. That story is told by Colin Cross with delicacy, taken from the diaries. The facts are given: the reader is left to judge.[19]

Lady Olwen was considered by Sylvester and Colin Cross to be 'by far the best living witness' to the events recorded in the diaries. Her opinion and reaction were thus eagerly awaited. They also wondered whether they would receive any response from Muriel Stevenson, Frances's younger sister (to whom she had always been very close), and by 1975 'the best witness' 'from the other side'. They regretted that delays on the part of Macmillan meant that the volume had failed to appear during Frances's lifetime, and feared that the British reading public would assume that its publication had deliberately been delayed until after her demise – which was certainly not the case. They also looked askance at the eventual publication price of £7.50, which had escalated as a result of increased printing costs and other overheads, but they still remained convinced that the original print-run of 3,000 copies would be sold quickly.[20]

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The final product was a handsome hard-bound volume running to 351 pages. The published diary entries were divided into sixteen chronological chapters with occasional explanatory sections and footnotes. The volume also included fifteen attractive photographs, most previously unpublished, a short introduction by Colin Cross and a detailed index. The launch party at Macmillan was a great success. Although her advancing years prevented Dame Olwen from attending, both Owen Lloyd-George, the third earl, and Lloyd George's biographer John Grigg (formerly Lord Altrincham) were present. Sylvester delivered a sprightly, amusing address and began to consider the future custody of his own extensive archive of papers. The book was certainly much more revealing than *Life with Lloyd George* back in 1947, but was not in any sense sensational or likely to cause offence. 'Your diary is a major historical source', wrote John Grigg appreciatively following the launch, 'and I was glad, indeed, to hear that there is no question of your destroying what has not been published.'[21]

At the launch party A. J. Sylvester felt obliged to explain to the assembled guests why he had changed his mind in relation to publication:

> What fired me to publish was the publication in 1971 of the diary of Frances Stevenson, Lloyd George's mistress and eventually his second wife. She and I were good colleagues for more than twenty-five years. But she entirely changed her personality when she became the countess. Her account of Lloyd George in her autobiography and her diaries is incomplete, over-romanticized, and in parts incorrect and false.
>
> She wanted to put across a sympathetic public image. For example, she wrote that in those days it was not 'done' for unmarried women to have children, and that was why she had none. In fact at that date she was already the mother of Lloyd George's daughter.
>
> Another example: Frances Stevenson stated that in 1926 Lloyd George's wife and children sent him a letter demanding that he should dismiss her from his secretariat; and that he replied with 'a terrible letter' offering a divorce.
>
> Mr Sylvester, who handled all Lloyd George's affairs, public and private, believes that no such correspondence took place. He allows that Lloyd George may have caused Miss Stevenson to think it had.[22]

It was reported in the press that Sylvester, who would be eighty-six years of age the following November, 'positively crackled with energy' as he told his audience that Lloyd George was 'the greatest man I have ever known, and I knew them all'. He lavished praise on Colin Cross for his work in editing the diaries for publication: 'It was like trying to get thirty-six gallons of beer into an Imperial pint mug.'[23] The press reviews were generally highly complimentary and appreciative, particularly those by John Grigg in the *Times Literary Supplement* for 30 May 1975 and Lord Boothby in the *Guardian* the previous day. In an admirably judicious review, Lady Antonia Fraser, while recognising that there was 'much … of sheer political interest in this diary', rightly emphasised that the book had impressed her because it had 'less to do with the archival side of politics than with the human, the very human, side of it all.'[24] In the *Church Times*, Martin Fagg applauded Sylvester who 'seem[ed] to have got everything down. … But he was not just a walking tape-recorder. He registers times, meals, expressions, dress, mannerisms. His book is a deep enrichment of the LG archive.'[25] Members of the Lloyd George family greeted with relief what they regarded as a much-needed corrective to the view of Lloyd George propounded by Frances in her 1967 memoir, *The Years that are Past*, and in her 1971 diaries. Both of these works, they felt, had presented a sugary, idealised view of the author's relationship with Lloyd George and had shied away from discussing the many skeletons in the family cupboard, not least the affairs in which both actors had engaged. With the publication of Sylvester's volume, Dame Margaret, they felt convinced, had now been restored to her rightful place in history.

In late June of the same year A. J. Sylvester was taken on a week's tour of north Wales by his daughter Maureen and her husband. It was a highly-valued opportunity to renew his links with many members of the Lloyd George clan. On the return journey Mr David Jenkins, Librarian of the National Library of Wales, sacrificed his Sunday morning to provide the family group with a tour of the Library: 'It was a thrilling experience: it was a joy for me to see just where one day my manuscripts will be kept in safe custody for the benefit, I hope, of history. For LG was a very, very great man.'[26] A few months later there appeared the volume *My Darling Pussy*, a selection of the letters between Lloyd George and Frances Stevenson, again edited by A. J. P. Taylor. Sylvester, predictably, was unimpressed by the book: 'I am surprised that so distinguished a historian should have made so many misstatements and mistakes; they are vitally important.' Dame Olwen Carey-Evans, too, was, claimed Sylvester, 'shocked at the publication of these letters from her Father, SOLD by Frances Stevenson and for publication, as she says, for filthy lucre. Frances Stevenson betrayed LG.'[27]

By October 1975 1,680 copies of *Life with Lloyd George* had been sold, and Sylvester began to enjoy a modest income (and much publicity) from its sales. An approach was made to Penguin to consider the publication of a paperback edition, but this eventually came to nothing.[28] But sales of the original book continued to be buoyant, and by 1978 it was difficult to find a new copy in a bookshop.

A. J. Sylvester eventually survived until 1989 – within a month of his hundredth birthday. During the years following the publication of *Life with Lloyd George*, Sylvester, encouraged by its reception, became something of a national celebrity, appearing fairly often on television and radio programmes, and winning an array of prizes and awards as a competitive ballroom dancer, a new hobby which he had taken up after 1964, following his enforced retirement from the bench. It was most unfortunate that his plan to publish a full-length autobiography, upon which he was actively engaged almost to the end of his exceptionally long life, sadly never came to fruition.

Even today, more than thirty years after its appearance, A. J. Sylvester's *Life with Lloyd George* remains a valuable and unique source of information for students of Lloyd George, his life and times and for those interested in his family. Sylvester's unfailing closeness to Lloyd George throughout the so-called 'wilderness years' of the last phase of his life underlines the importance of the work. In this respect, his only rival was Frances Stevenson. Moreover, by the 1970s he felt more able to speak out than in 1945–46 when he wrote *The Real Lloyd George* during the period immediately following Lloyd George's death. In *Life with Lloyd George* its subject, at times at least, comes through as an increasingly mean, unpleasant and rather vindictive individual. Even so, the constraints of space imposed by the publishers, and the necessity to leave out some highly personal and sensitive material, mean that much of importance has still been omitted from the final published volume. In the full, original diaries Sylvester is rather crude and frequently critical of Lloyd George, especially from 1935 onwards. Certainly, the dedicated researcher should still make the journey to the National Library of Wales at Aberystwyth, where the full typescript texts of the diaries are held. It would prove a highly illuminating and rewarding experience.

Sylvester's unfailing closeness to Lloyd George throughout the so-called 'wilderness years' of the last phase of his life underlines the importance of the work.

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

1 A helpful, brief account of A. J. Sylvester's life and career is now available in John Grigg's article in the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Vol. 53 (Oxford, 2004), pp. 566–67. See also J. Graham Jones, 'Keeper of Secrets', *Journal of Liberal History* 44 (Autumn 2004), pp. 24-29. A much fuller account by the same author is available in J. Graham Jones, '"Keeper of Secrets": Albert James Sylvester CBE (1889–1989)', *National Library of Wales Journal* Vol. XXXIII, no. 2 (Winter 2003), pp. 169–99. There is also much helpful material in Colin Cross (ed.), *Life with Lloyd George: the Diary of A. J. Sylvester, 1931-45* (Macmillan, 1975), pp. 11–18 (introduction to the volume).

2 J. Graham Jones, '*The Real Lloyd George*', *Journal of Liberal History* 51 (Autumn 2004), pp. 4–12.

3 Kenneth O. Morgan, 'Lloyd George and the historians', *Transactions of the Honourable Society of Cymmrodorion*, Session 1971, part 1 (1972), p. 72.

4 J. Graham Jones, *Lloyd George Papers at the National Library of Wales and other Repositories* (National Library of Wales, 2001), p. 9.

5 National Library of Wales (hereafter NLW), A. J. Sylvester Papers, file D8, Colin Cross to Sylvester, 15 September 1971.

6 Ibid., Owen, third Earl Lloyd-George of Dwyfor, to Sylvester, 5

January 1972.

7 Ibid., Sylvester to Cross, 20 January 1972 (copy).

8 See the introduction to Colin Cross (ed.), *Life with Lloyd George*, pp. 11–20.

9 NLW, A. J. Sylvester Papers, file D8, Cross to Sylvester, 11 February 1972.

10 Ibid., Sylvester to Lady Olwen Carey-Evans, 16 February 1972 (copy). See also ibid., Sylvester to Owen Lloyd-George, 17 February 1972 (copy).

11 Ibid., Cross to Sylvester, 17 July 1972.

12 Ibid., Cross to Sylvester, 11 October 1972.

13 NLW, A. J. Sylvester Papers file C56, Sylvester to Lady Olwen Carey-Evans, 20 December 1972 (copy).

14 NLW, A. J. Sylvester Papers file C63, Sylvester to Dame Olwen Carey-Evans, 7 March 1973 ('Private') (copy).

15 NLW, A. J. Sylvester Papers file D12, Owen Lloyd-George to Sylvester, 9 August 1973.

16 Ibid.

17 Ibid., Sylvester to Lady Olwen Carey-Evans, 30 November 1973 (copy).

18 Jones, *Lloyd George Papers*, pp. 32–46.

19 NLW, A. J. Sylvester Papers file C65, Sylvester to Lady Olwen Carey-Evans, 14 May 1975 (copy).

20 NLW, A. J. Sylvester Papers file D10, Colin Cross to Sylvester, 15 May 1975.

21 Ibid., John Grigg to Sylvester, 22 May 1975.

22 Cited in Philip Howard's account in *The Times*, 21 May 1975.

23 *Daily Telegraph*, 21 May 1975.

24 Antonia Fraser, 'Wizard bluff', *Evening Standard*, 3 June 1975.

25 Martin Fagg, 'Welsh charmer', *Church Times*, 13 June 1975. For further reviews, see *The Times*, 21 May 1975; *Daily Telegraph*, 21 May 1975; and the *Daily Express*, 22 May 1975.

26 NLW, A. J. Sylvester Papers file C96, Sylvester to Cledwyn Hughes MP, 10 July 1975 (copy).

27 Ibid., Sylvester to Mrs Sybil Hamilton, Leeds, 31 October 1975 (copy).

28 See the correspondence in NLW, A. J. Sylvester Papers file D13.

REPORTS

Yellow Book versus Orange Book: Is it time for a new New Liberalism?

Fringe meeting, 20 September 2006, Brighton, with Paul Marshall and Ed Randall; Chair (Lord) Wallace of Saltaire

Report by **Lynsey Groom**

'The Yellow Book' (*Britain's Industrial Future*, 1928) and *The Orange Book: Reclaiming Liberalism* (2004) have both been seen as attempts to rethink the Liberal philosophy of their era. Written seventy-five years apart, how do they hold up to comparison? William Wallace oversaw the lively debate in a packed room in Brighton between Ed Randall, Professor of Politics at Goldsmiths, University of London, and Paul Marshall, one of the editors of the *Orange Book*.

The Yellow Book was something distinctive that the party could shout about. Randall suggested that this was not true of the Orange Book.

Ed Randall in essence argued that any comparison between the Yellow Book and the Orange Book was not a fair one. The Yellow Book was based on substantial research, and had a single purpose – outlining the means for national recovery. The Orange Book had no money behind it, no shared goal or single theme in its creation. Instead Randall suggested the consideration of a third book, written in 1995 by Ralf Dahrendorf (*Report on Wealth Creation and Social Cohesion in a Free Society*) which he felt made a fairer comparison with the Yellow Book.

For Randall, the 1928 book reflected on national recovery, was the product of a commission, and demonstrated the richness of intellect to be found both inside and outside the Liberal Party. The Yellow Book was a high-water mark in the history of the party. It was written at a time when there was a failure of economic demand, a fundamental flaw in market societies, and it took courage to produce. The Yellow Book was something distinctive that the party could shout about. Randall suggested that this was not true of the Orange Book which was, instead, a product of the need for media attention and was timid in its selection of social and economic problems to address, serving as a reclamation rather than a renewal of Liberal thought. It looked back, whereas the Yellow Book looked forward.

Randall reminded his audience of the traditional Liberal theme of balance. As Locke said, humans were entitled to God's bounty and had a responsibility to share it: 'As much and as good should be left for what comes later'. In present times, Al Gore has argued that we are on a 'collision course with the earth' and that 'civilised human life as we know it will become impossible if the temperature continues to rise'. In other words, the market alone cannot solve the problem of global warming – and, Randall argued, in 1928 the Yellow Book made a very similar point when it set out a plan to tackle the chronic unemployment of the era. Coming from a Liberal tradition, the books do have common ground, concerned with freedom, balance and democracy. Seventy-five years ago, the Yellow Book was questioning the balance of society, the widening gap between rich and poor, unequal exposure to damage to the environment, and the failure of democracy. The Yellow Book shows a lost opportunity to tackle problems that have come back to haunt us and which have been tackled again in the Orange Book, but less radically. The Yellow Book envisioned a new state with a broader role to balance against personal freedoms, whereas the Orange Book posed questions about humanity's impact on the environment. Randall finished by reflecting on the liberal genius to protect freedom and promote opportunity, to renew, refresh and reinvigorate. He concluded by challenging the Liberal Party with the need to renew, like the authors in 1928, rather than reclaim, as the authors of the Orange Book had.

Paul Marshall argued that the Yellow Book and Orange Book were two contrasting offerings from within the Liberal tradition, separated by seventy-five years, and offering very different policy prescriptions. Marshall admitted that he had not read the Yellow Book until asked to speak in this debate. Although not a fan of the Yellow Book he did feel that both books shared some common ground. They had both been written at times when there was a need for a renewal of Liberalism. But the challenge for the Orange Book was to pick up economic liberalism, which has been neglected in the Liberal Democrats, rather than to adapt a philosophy to a new world.

Seventy-five years on from the Yellow Book, Marshall argued that Liberalism has won the battle of political philosophies in the twentieth century.

He identified four freedoms that Liberals stand for, personal, political, economic and social, which can be seen in both books, and he highlighted the Liberal belief in social freedom, freedom of opportunity and equality regardless of wealth or birth, as the tenet that traditionally distinguishes Liberals from Conservatives. In our current age, he argued, neglecting economic freedom has led to economic illiteracy and the caricature of the Liberal Democrats as a high-tax party.

Seventy-five years on from the Yellow Book, Marshall argued that Liberalism has won the battle of political philosophies in the twentieth century. Socialism has been discredited, Fascism defeated, and Conservatism, according to Marshall, no longer influences David Cameron's party. For Marshall, the Yellow Book was a pragmatic book of its time. It showed a willingness to change ideas in the face of changing times, but its focus on industry gave it a narrow scope and it was an intellectual retreat from economic liberalism. It sought to explain the industrial welfare state and make a new Liberalism. It was responding to a different challenge from that faced by the Orange Book, which had a wider scope.

According to Marshall, the Orange Book did not need to make a new New Liberalism. For in the information age, when everything can be googled, the Liberal philosophy of freedom works. He finished by suggesting that for the Liberals to go on and think the unthinkable in the future they needed to take the first step and reclaim their heritage.

Lynsey Groom is a member of the History Group's executive committee.

Liberalism and British national identity

Evening meeting, 5 February 2007 with Robert Colls and Professor John Solomos; Chair: Nick Clegg MP

Report by **Graham Lippiatt**

Nationalities, as Benedict Anderson has pointed out, are imagined communities.[1] They exist not as natural entities but as a construct for cultural, social and political purposes. Thus, the way we have imagined and constructed our own nationality is vitally important to us. The pattern of media, academic and political debate around Britishness reflects this importance. When people are asked what makes up Britishness, they often cite the notions of 'fair play', 'tolerance' or 'personal liberty' as part of the answer. Liberals regard these concepts as fundamental to liberal philosophy but just how far has liberalism informed the construction of British national identity in the last hundred years, and how will new British identities emerging in the Britain of devolution, European Union enlargement, multiculturalism and the 'war on terror' be?

Robert Colls began his exploration of the subject in Newcastle-upon-Tyne in the year 1880, with the opening of the city's first free library. The chairman of the library committee, Joseph Cowen, Liberal MP for Newcastle, performed the opening ceremony. Cowen was well known for being a supporter of Irish, Polish and

Italian nationalism. It is possible he may have run guns for his friend Garibaldi. He was also a strong supporter of the trade union movement, in particular the Northumberland Miners' Federation and the Durham Miners' Association. Cowen had also recently become a convert to New Northumbrianism, an early version of English devolutionary politics. Cowen opened the library and was invited to borrow the first book. He chose J. S. Mill's *On Liberty*. In that moment and in that deed, High Liberalism clasped hands with populist liberalism just as it was embodied in Joseph Cowen, newspaper proprietor and brick maker, 'the Blaydon brick', as he was called. Here was a man who left £635,000 in his will but who deliberately dressed like a coal miner in his Sunday best and who retained or cultivated the Geordie accent for those who cheered him on.

Five years before, Joe Wilson, probably the first great music hall star, had died. Wilson was an early stand-up comedian, a singer and songwriter with a strong, populist Geordie or north-east identity. He was also a reformer, teetotaller and a Liberal who believed in improving the lives of working-class people. In the 1890s the Liberal caucus in Newcastle put Cowen's memory alongside Wilson's to create a vision of the people, an early version of being a Geordie. This identity bound the people to liberalism just as liberalism bound itself to the people. This deal between culture and politics lasted until at least 1926.

What happened in Newcastle also happened in other regions. From 1880 to 1920 liberalism managed to go beyond Nonconformity, free trade and J. S. Mill. It was able to reach into the interests and the identities of the English, Scottish and Welsh people. So much so that when socialism first came to these communities, it was seen as a kind of aberration of intellectuals. Thus one hundred years ago – apart from a few relics of national identity which were always associated with the Tory cause, such as the military, the monarchy and field sports – liberalism and Englishness (and Britishness, although this contains other nuances) were so close as to be synonymous.

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Liberalism had spent a century laying claim to the national personality and national history. This history was seen by liberals as a thousand-year struggle to claw back units of liberty from an unjust and arbitrary state. It later came to be called Whig history. This interpretation was essentially a liberal view of the English past; an English struggle that gave mission, purpose and meaning to the English people. It mixed English personality with English liberty, realised through history. This liberalism was not something worked out by philosophy, rather it was worked out in history, in common law, on the ground through cases, rather than through intellectual apparatuses. The rule of law, free speech, freedom of religion, free markets, free trade, freedom of the press and free libraries – these were the landmarks of English history.

Aspects of English history like Saxon moots, witans, the English language and English laws were mixed in with these ideas – King Alfred became an honorary liberal. From the thirteenth century were added Magna Carta and regular Parliaments, with Simon de Montfort signed up as another honorary liberal. In the sixteenth century came the Reformation and the birth of Protestant liberty; the seventeenth century delivered 'revolution' in 1642, regicide in 1649 and 'glorious' revolution in 1688; Oliver Cromwell and William of Orange also become honorary liberals, because they too had clawed back liberty from a state that was taking it away. The union with Scotland in 1707, retrospective union with Wales and union with Ireland in 1801 were all claimed as absorbing the margins of Britishness for liberalism and incorporating toleration and relief for Catholics and Nonconformists. To the Whig historians, the Industrial Revolution was to be portrayed as the economic result of the benefits of liberty with 1776 (Adam Smith) and 1846 (Repeal of the Corn Laws) as key dates. The gaining of political rights and the extension of the franchise from the Great Reform Act of 1832 through the later reforms of the nineteenth century – the march went on. Even the Empire could be accommodated into this Liberal-Whig view of history. After some early opposition from Cobden and Bright, by the 1880s even Liberalism could be imperialistic. Joe Chamberlain especially, but others like Dicey and Freeman – even Mill – accepted the virtues of Imperialism when the British imperial power was seen as a greater, more moral force than its rivals.

So, by 1907, flush with the great electoral and ideological victory of the previous year, Englishness stood synonymous with Liberalism and the future looked set fair for progress, more liberty, ever more liberty, ever more absorption into a British-Liberal world. Regicides had been absorbed, Cromwell's statue stood in the yard of the Palace of Westminster. The revolutionaries of 1688 had always been absorbed, celebrated as heroes of the founding of political liberalism. Nonconformists, Catholics and the labour movement had been absorbed by liberalism and even enjoyed their special support. This was particularly true of the labour movement with some astonishing legislation in the 1870s and around the turn of the century, notably the Trades Disputes Act of 1906, the extension of the franchise and the beginnings of the welfare state after 1908. Even the aristocracy, though naturally Tory, had accepted free trade in corn and extensions to the franchise. The House of Lords had yet to be dealt with but no one doubted reform would come. To women, the franchise would also come because to refuse it, as Millicent Fawcett kept telling her male Liberal colleagues, was a denial of liberal history.

The Empire was more problematic, depending on what exactly one meant by the Empire. The white Dominions were automatically capable of absorption. India would take longer, but the Indian National Congress looked hopeful with its liberal belief in a secular state. However the African and West Indian colonies were not in the picture and the experience of the Boer War had shown how divisive to Liberalism imperial questions could be and demonstrated the limits of liberal absorption in the Empire.

Then there was Ireland. Pacified by land acts and franchise reform and not yet willing in 1907 to vote republican, Ireland was still a problem waiting to happen, the issue of Home Rule dividing MPs north and south. Liberalism had of course tried to absorb the Irish question through the efforts of Gladstone in particular and as early as the 1850s there were attempts by Liberals to bring the bourgeois revolution to Ireland. In 1907 the problems still lay in the future.

What went wrong? What happened next was that Liberalism (with a capital L) became separated from liberalism (with a small 'l') and Liberalism stopped winning elections. Liberalism, the small 'l' philosophy, failed to absorb both Ireland and the Indian and African imperial domains. From the perspective of 2007, it may be that this failure remains a problem for contemporary liberals when confronting people from the ethnic minorities whose group identities do not square with the basic tenets of liberalism. The third thing that happened was that the Whig view of history as a journey or a mission to build up popular power and liberty started to falter from the 1930s and had broken down by the 1960s. This process occurred over a period which saw the second of two world wars, after which the planet was brought to the brink of nuclear destruction and which saw the rise of forms of reasoning such as structuralism and deconstructionism, which sought to destroy unities rather than build them. History ceased to be a journey or a mission and became in Oakeshott's words 'a predicament'. At the same time the world stopped being an English or British place. Western leadership was ceded to the USA, with its own interpretation of liberalism; Socialism collapsed and Conservatism too deferred to American leadership. In 1990, Francis Fukuyama pronounced the end of history as historical struggle had now been superseded by the triumph of American liberal capitalism.

British liberal reaction to these changes was to keep going, to continue to stand for Liberal ideas and policies and to continue to develop these through thinkers such as Keynes and Beveridge and through ideas and strategies such as community politics – democratic, local, an example of Burke's 'little platoons'. At the same time however, Liberals gave up a liberalism which had been strongly associated with the British nation state and its history in favour of a liberalism more based on human rights and universalism. In a nutshell, Liberals gave up the historians for the lawyers. As a reaction to electoral failure, Liberals also gave up on the British electorate and switched allegiance to Brussels, remote and seemingly undemocratic. The massive changes that have taken place since the 1950s, decolonisation, deindustrialisation, mass immigration, privatisation, the failure of civility and the threat posed to liberty have all left Liberalism behind. In conclusion, Professor Colls had to question the ability of contemporary liberalism to reconnect with the interests and identities of modern communities.

What happened next was that Liberalism (with a capital L) became separated from liberalism (with a small 'l') and Liberalism stopped winning elections.

John Solomos opened by remarking on the perceived difference between history as a study of the past and sociology as a study of the present. But issues around 'race', immigration and national identity have assumed great political importance in Britain since 1945 and the study of the history of those ideas since then has had a significant impact on the way these questions are understood today. The principal area of debate after 1945 was how Britain should respond to questions around immigration and ethnic diversity, especially colonial, non-white, immigration. This was important in the context of the debate about identity because the immigrants concerned were, at the time, not just imperial but British subjects with certain rights and entitlements in respect of citizenship and status in British society. This has altered since the 1980s and 1990s, with new debates about immigration centring on asylum and refugee status, but in the earlier period the debate was taking place in the slightly contradictory context of immigrants who were actually coming to the 'mother country'. This brought complex identity issues for the immigrants who had attachment to their home colonies and saw themselves at the same time as British, and for the host community who struggled with this contradiction and tried to resolve the questions it raised about their own identity. These issues gave rise to two debates, the first about how to regulate, control and eventually to stop immigration, the second about how British society responds to the realities of racial and ethnic diversity in terms of policy, structures and identities. Ever since the Commonwealth Immigrants Act of 1962, Britain has been considering whether it could declare itself to have a 'white Britain' policy while at the same time reconciling that desire with Britain's role as the mother country of a racially and ethnically diverse Commonwealth with a set of obligations towards the people who have come here and who are entitled to equal social and political rights with members of the host community.

Therefore, one way of looking at what happened to British national identity after 1945 is from the perspective of people who were strangers in the sense of being newly arrived in the country yet who, because of their upbringing in British colonies with all the political, social and cultural connections with the mother country, were not strangers in the traditional sense at all. Yet when they did arrive they were regarded as strangers and British society was forced to confront issues around integration, assimilation, cultural and ethnic diversity, how the newcomers could be accepted into public life in this country and what the reaction of central and local government and other public institutions should be. Institutions were forced to confront evidence of racial inequality, discrimination and bigotry and try to come up with policies which rectified or challenged these factors while leaving space for the new communities to be culturally different, to develop their own institutions and their own place in public life. Dealing with this dilemma has been at the heart of race relations policies since the 1960s. It has produced a situation where public policy has been to promote multiculturalism and diversity, to tackle inequality and yet at the same time encourage integration into a common British identity. Professor Solomos seemed to be concluding that this approach was essentially liberal in the promotion of diversity and in the introduction of laws and policies designed to tackle inequality and discrimination but met the limits of liberalism in the debates about integration or assimilation and over firm immigration controls.

Professor Solomos reminded the meeting that all debates around these issues are complex and it is important not to focus on one interpretation. In today's Britain, in our institutions, our education system, our welfare system, in features of our society such as urban life in London and across the nation and in policies for young people, it is clear that multiculturalism and diversity are indeed strongly embedded in modern British life. This is not simply a question of demographics: in terms of social and cultural interaction, multiculturalism represents an important dimension of everyday life, youth culture being a clear example. What we call British culture today, again using youth culture as an example, is fundamentally very different from what it used to be and has clearly been shaped by multicultural influences. At the same time it is important to remember that it has not just been immigration that has changed and influenced perceptions of what it means to be British. The country has undergone huge social changes, such as post-industrialisation, dietary and medical improvement, and sexual liberation, and these influences too impact on how we see ourselves in society.

In terms of national identity it is clear that Britain has become much more culturally diverse and very ethnically and racially diverse since 1945. This has led to criticisms from people such as Trevor Phillips, who feel multiculturalism has gone too far, that we have entered an era of super-diversity, that society has been too liberal in allowing the growth of cultural diversity and that the process needs to be reined back to enable all British people to find more things in common which bind us together. While these arguments are often presented in a fashion that appears to be scaremongering, there is a legitimate concern underlying the debate that we need to find a common culture. The other side of the argument is that one of the strengths of Britain today is that we are a culturally and ethnically diverse people, which allows many different communities and identities to express themselves and support each other within society and not to believe that there is one true, common culture. What it has meant to be British has always been subject to debate and historically the notion of what Britishness is, what it has meant to be English or have a particular regional identity has constantly changed over the years.

In today's Britain, in our institutions, our education system, our welfare system, in features of our society such as urban life in London and across the nation and in policies for young people, it is clear that multiculturalism and diversity are indeed strongly embedded in modern British life.

The discussion over British national identity today is a continuation of that debate but the danger is that the debate encourages a view that it may be possible to move back to some idea of a mono-cultural Britain, that it is right to seek a common culture which is fixed and unchanging. It may be more useful – and more liberal – in taking the discussion forward to move away from notions of culture and diversity and focus more on obligations and rights, both the obligations and protection of rights which the state owes immigrants and minorities and the obligations immigrants and minorities owe to the state, to society and its diverse component parts. This approach takes account of the continuing pressures in the modern world on movements of peoples, those violent upheavals constantly producing refugee migrations.

These cause increasing numbers of strangers to seek protection abroad as well as occasioning the growth of societies containing many diverse communities. These trends are not slowing down or reversing and the idea that we can look back to a more mono-cultural model for society seems incompatible with them. The liberal question is not so much how do we retreat from diversity, but how do we accommodate diversity in such a fluid global environment? Not what uniform national identity should we be creating, but how we encourage different identities (for example, ethnic, cultural, regional, religious) within a common citizenship while still meeting the challenge of continuing to offer protection to minorities and honour our international and national obligations.

Nick Clegg, commenting on aspects of the presentations, drew attention to the central contribution of big and small 'l' liberalism to social and welfare provisions in contemporary Britain (often claimed or appropriated by other political parties), and pointed out how this aspect of British life informs how we think of ourselves as a society. He also rejected the idea that liberalism's defence of civil and human rights was somehow exotic and removed from mainstream perceptions of what constitutes Britishness. On the contrary, he felt that recent attacks on civil liberties could have been more skilfully presented by liberals as attacks on essential British freedoms and that opposition to these attacks could have been more successfully portrayed by liberals as patriotic defences of hard-won liberties. He suggested this had not been done because liberals felt squeamish about identifying themselves too closely with patriotism and wrapping themselves in the Union Jack as a reaction against the constant playing of the patriotism card by the right.

Nick Clegg felt that liberalism, while a tolerant philosophy, was not a value-free philosophy. Liberals can and perhaps should more often make judgements about cultures and structures, such as extreme forms of theocracy, which we believe are inimical to liberal democracy.

Liberalism as a modern movement was trying to grapple with the diverse and multi-layered nature of power in the contemporary world, which is spread locally, regionally, nationally and internationally. It is to liberalism's credit that it is trying to work out a coherent response to the realities of this complexity through local strategies such as community politics while at the same time embracing, for example, the supranational dimension of the European Union, however imperfect or remote its dealings may sometimes appear from everyday life, in an effort to make that power understandable and accountable to citizens. In the same way, Liberalism is well placed to absorb the growing interest in environmentalism and sustainable development and to champion remedies for environmental degradation from the local to the supranational level.

Nick Clegg felt that liberalism, while a tolerant philosophy, was not a value-free philosophy. Liberals can and perhaps should more often make judgements about cultures and structures, such as extreme forms of theocracy, which we believe are inimical to liberal democracy. We have failed to do so for fear of seeming intolerant and illiberal but liberals have to defend more often and with greater passion the essential elements of our own philosophy, free speech, due process and universal application of the law. Clearly liberalism has had a central influence on past perceptions of British national identity.

Professor Colls described the period between 1880 and 1920 as a time when Liberalism and Englishness were synonymous. It may never be possible to reproduce that exact match but while liberalism retains so many essential components of what it is that we feel makes us what we are today, it will continue to inform and influence the debate on national identity. Perhaps the lesson is that liberals should make more of an effort to promote the common themes between liberalism and Britishness in an attempt towards recapturing the political success of 1880–1920.

Graham Lippiatt is Secretary of the Liberal Democrat History Group.

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1 Benedict Anderson, *Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London, 1983)

Help needed!

The Liberal Democrat History Group was formed in 1988. Since then, we have organised meetings, starting at one per year and now usually holding four. We have published the *Journal of Liberal History* quarterly since November 1993. We have published four books, the *Dictionary of Liberal Biography* (1998), *Dictionary of Liberal Quotations* (1999), *Great Liberal Speeches* (2001) and *Dictionary of Liberal Thought* (2007). And we have established the website www.liberalhistory.org.uk as the web's premier source for Liberal history.

We have every intention of continuing and developing all these activities – and more! But we need help – with a few exceptions, all the History Group's activities are implemented by a very small group of individuals, most of whom also have busy professional and political lives.

If you are interested in helping with any of the activities above – meetings, the *Journal*, publications or the website – or with helping to run the Group more broadly, we'd like to hear from you. It is not necessary to attend meetings; many of our activities can be carried out from your own computer. Please email Tony Little, Chair of the Liberal Democrat History Group, c/o journal@liberalhistory.org.uk.

REVIEWS

Edwardian Liberalism: ideology and political practice

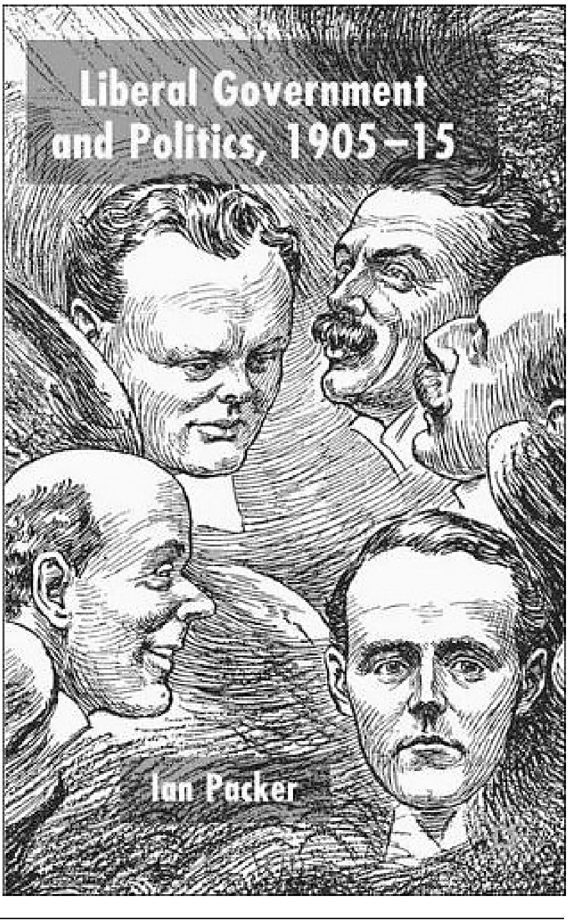
Ian Packer, *Liberal Government and Politics, 1905–15* (Palgrave, 2006)

Reviewed by **Paul Readman**

There is no shortage of scholarly literature on Liberal politics between 1905 and 1915. However, this slim yet thoroughly-researched book breaks significant new ground. As Ian Packer points out in his introduction, previous treatments of the Liberalism of this period have tended to focus on the adaptation of the party's policy and creed to accommodate a new collectivist agenda of social reform. This concentration on the politics and ideology of 'New Liberalism', Packer argues, has had the effect of giving us an unbalanced – or at least incomplete – understanding of the character of the last Liberal governments. *Liberal Government and Politics*, a book which devotes just thirteen and a half pages to social reform, is conceived as a corrective to this historiographical trend. Through a re-examination of the nature of Liberal ideology, and its relationship to the policy-making of Campbell-Bannerman's and Asquith's cabinets, Packer aims to present a more accurate picture of Edwardian Liberalism, one consonant with contemporary perceptions.

In this Packer largely succeeds, but what is especially satisfying about his account is his attention to the interplay between ideology and political practice. Although predominantly concerned with 'high' rather than popular politics, this is not a book which explains politicians' motivations simply in terms of personal ambition, tactical considerations or partisan calculations (though none of these are ignored). Neither, however, is it a book which simply describes the ideas of intellectuals or the rhetoric of stump orations without relating these to the nitty-gritty of parliamentary politics. Here, what Liberals said is not detached from what Liberals did; ideology is connected to political action, to bills introduced and laws passed. The treatment of Liberal Imperialism provides a case in point. Not only does Packer provide a good summary of Liberal Imperialist ideology, which, he convincingly argues, (*pace* Colin Matthew) occupied an important presence in political discourse after 1905, but he also illustrates how it impacted on the practical business of politics. In the account offered here, the commitment to 'continuity' in foreign policy and the hesitancy over Irish Home Rule provide two key examples of Liberal Imperialism's influence on government policy before 1914.

Packer's discussion of the relationship between ideology and policy-making is set out in a clear and admirably user-friendly way. The book is divided into seven main chapters, each dealing with a different theme. The first, on 'Government and Party' provides a survey of the structure and workings of Liberal Party politics, and while the account offered here will be familiar to specialists, it will be of considerable utility to students, for whom information such as the fact that the early twentieth-century National Liberal Federation was a 'talking shop' exerting no real influence on the leadership may come as something of a revelation. The next chapter is arguably the best in the book, developing a compelling argument that there was little that was distinctively 'Liberal' about foreign and defence policy before 1914. Packer claims that on the question of armaments, patriotism trumped retrenchment, even for many radicals, as shown by the ultimately weak opposition to *Dreadnought* building plans and in foreign policy, Grey essentially got his way. One quibble here, however, would be that Packer has perhaps exaggerated the extent of Liberal unanimity. Keith Wilson's work, especially his *Politics of the Entente* (Cambridge, 1985), has argued strongly that Grey was constrained by divisions of opinion within the Liberal Party – from



the Cabinet downwards – over the conduct of foreign affairs, and while Packer does cite some of Wilson's research, the latter's important *Primat der Innenpolitik* argument is left unexamined.

Two further chapters deal with the constitutional issues of Home Rule, the House of Lords, and female suffrage. Although not much of substance is added here to existing accounts, specialists will be interested in the able discussion of the so-called 'Ripon plan' for the reform of the House of Lords, while students will find the treatment of Liberal policy on Home Rule – for Scotland and Wales as well as Ireland – informative and concise. Packer emphasises the lack of appeal of Irish Home Rule for Liberals, going so far as to say that the electoral debacle of 1886 'convinced most Liberals that the issue had no appeal for the British electorate'. Yet while parliamentary support for Home Rule certainly declined over time, as Packer shows, 'no appeal' does seem rather strong: Home Rule remained a platform cause that could raise cheers among the Liberal rank and file well into the Edwardian period, and the reasons for this still remain under-explored by historians.

The next three chapters, before the epilogue dealing with World War One, concern Nonconformity, the economy and finance, and social reform. Packer has already published work on all three of these themes, as is demonstrated by his confident treatment of them. Fiscal and economic policy is discussed with great clarity, with appropriately strong stress being laid on the still-continuing importance of free trade to the Liberal creed. Free trade, of course, had been central to the political identity of the Gladstonian Liberal Party, as indeed had been the defence of religious freedom and the association with Nonconformity, and Packer underlines the persistence of these 'older' strands of Liberal ideology in the years before 1914. In his insistence on the continuing centrality of Nonconformity to Liberalism, Packer's line appears consistent with revisionist critiques of the Peter Clarke-inspired position that by the Edwardian period, social class had replaced religion as the primary determinant of political identity. But he adds a distinctive twist to his revisionism by arguing (as in a previous *Journal of British Studies* article) that new evangelical strands within Nonconformist theology, emphasising the value of 'good works', helped fuel the social reform agenda of the New Liberalism (the Rowntree family is the classic example here). Such a perspective helps us understand why the social reforms enacted by Liberal governments were, as Packer argues, unproblematically compatible with mainstream Liberalism.

Overall, the book does much to confirm the now-dominant argument that the Liberals were an effective, modern party of government in the Edwardian period; they were not in terminal or even in serious decline in 1914, and perhaps not even in 1915.

It is perhaps to be regretted that the book lacks a conclusion as such; we get, instead, an 'epilogue' on Liberal wartime policy in 1914–15. But readers will find it easy enough to draw together the main themes of Packer's study. Overall, the book does much to confirm the now-dominant argument that the Liberals were an effective, modern party of government in the Edwardian period; they were not in terminal or even in serious decline in 1914, and perhaps not even in 1915. (For Packer, the upshot of this is that the finger of blame is pointed squarely at Lloyd George.) Yet if the Liberals were in good shape before the First World War, the reason for this was in large part electoral, and it is a shame that this otherwise excellent book pays little attention to elections or popular politics: ideology mattered at the polls, as well as in Parliament. Notwithstanding this criticism (which some may think unfairly levelled at a study of government policy), this is a book that should appeal to anybody interested in the history of the Liberal Party, and one which will be of considerable utility in a teaching context. One must hope that the publisher sees fit to bring out a paperback edition, as the £45.00 price tag will surely deter.

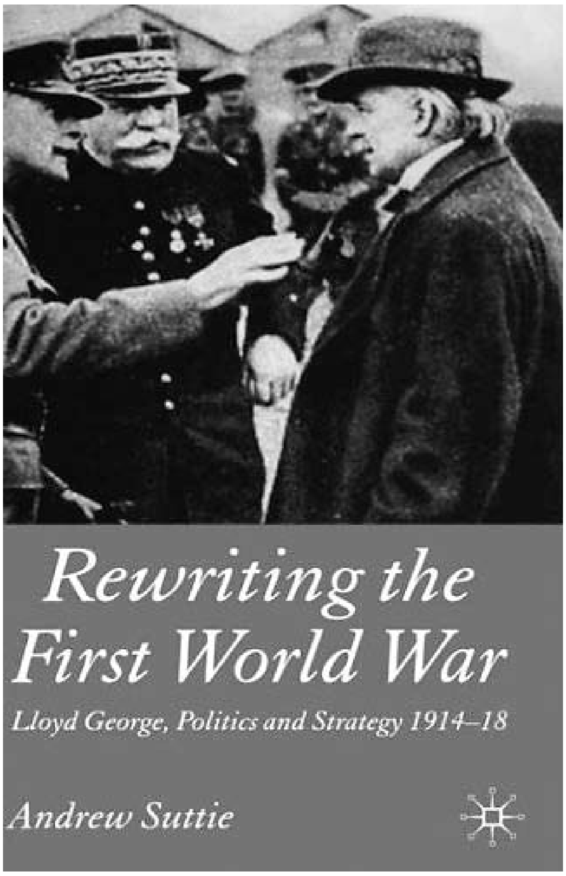
Dr Paul Readman is Lecturer in Modern British History at King's College, London.

War memoirs

Andrew Suttie, *Rewriting the First World War: Lloyd George, Politics and Strategy 1914–18* (Palgrave, 2005)

Reviewed by **Richard Toye**

Amidst the many dramatic changes in twentieth-century British politics, it is easy to overlook the significant shifts that occurred in the way that politicians wrote their memoirs. Typically, autobiographies of Victorian statesmen were discreet, worthy, and, consequently, dull. Since 1918 – perhaps in part as a consequence of new, less deferential habits of biographers and journalists – politicians have been inclined, if not always exactly to greater frankness, then at least to more active self-justification and score-settling. This has frequently necessitated putting previously confidential material into the public domain, albeit often in a misleadingly selective way. The typical politician's memoir has therefore


Rewriting the First World War
Lloyd George, Politics and Strategy 1914–18
Andrew Suttie

now become both more heavily documented and more 'controversial' than its predecessors. David Lloyd George's *War Memoirs* (1933–36) did not start this process – Winston Churchill's *The World Crisis* (1923–31) was arguably the real landmark work – but they were an important contribution to it. As such, they are certainly worthy of a book-length examination in their own right, and Andrew Suttie rises to the task with coolness and competence.

The *War Memoirs* are notable for their forthright and polemical attacks on the supposedly incompetent generals whom Lloyd George held responsible for numerous failed offensives, involving an appalling death toll, on the Western Front. Suttie demonstrates that this picture is highly unsatisfactory. As he puts it (p. 4), in spite of Lloyd George's 'determined attempt to avoid all responsibility for wartime disasters, he cannot escape the fact that, as he so proudly proclaims, he was the only statesman to see it through from beginning to end in a position of power and responsibility. His relentless attacks on the politicians, generals and their strategy and conduct of the war and military operations ultimately rebounds to his own discredit and cannot fail to detract from his own significant and genuine wartime achievements.' In other words, insofar as the memoirs helped cement the popular view of the war as futile, unnecessary and wasteful of lives, they correspondingly diminished Lloyd George's chances of being remembered as a great national leader. If the whole conflict had been pointless, then his own role was not much to celebrate, even if he had, as he claimed, in fact been right at every significant turn.

Suttie's book comprises one chapter on the process by which the memoirs were written, followed by a further eight on key episodes and themes with which they dealt. These range from the outbreak of war in 1914, to the third battle of Ypres (or Passchendaele), to the question of war and revolution in Russia. Suttie is at pains to show that the generals' conduct of the war was by no means as incompetent as Lloyd George claimed. In Suttie's view the war, if it was to be won, had to be won in France. Lloyd George's obsession, both during the war and in the memoirs, with 'knocking the props' from under Germany (by defeating her weaker allies) was misconceived. There were of course disasters, Passchendaele not least among them. But even the much-maligned Field-Marshal Haig was capable of learning, and by 1918, on the basis of new tactics, the British army was enjoying real success in the field. Suttie effectively exposes many of the evasions and inconsistencies in Lloyd George's account. For example, he notes that, having attacked Haig for continuing with offensives beyond the point where it should have been clear that they had failed, Lloyd George also criticised him for not having pressed forward further after his initial gains during the August 1918 Battle of Amiens. As Suttie puts it (p. 175), 'Earlier, one of Lloyd George's chief accusations against Haig had been that he did not know when to stop … But at Amiens Haig did just that, and turned his attention to a more promising sector of his front, thereby avoiding yet another costly Western Front offensive which failed to meet distant objectives.'

Suttie's analysis is thus in tune with the now well-established revisionist view of the war, but he is neither wholly condemnatory of Lloyd George nor uniformly exculpatory of the generals. He gives Lloyd George due credit for his performance as Minister of Munitions in 1915–16. He also takes a nuanced approach to Passchendaele, conceding that Lloyd George, who was by now Prime Minister, was right to oppose the offensive whereas Haig was much too optimistic about its chances. In Suttie's view, Lloyd George nonetheless held much responsibility for what went wrong, because at the time he was politically strong enough to have insisted on halting the offensive, even if that meant replacing Haig, but did not do so. The point about his political position is debatable, but it is certainly true that the explanations in the *War Memoirs* for his failure to take the risk are lacking in conviction.

This new volume, then, forms a valuable critical guide to the *War Memoirs*. It deserves to be read by anyone who is still in thrall to the *Blackadder* view of the Great War – that is, that British strategy consisted merely of a series of inept attempts to move Haig's drinks cabinet 'six inches closer to Berlin'. However, it is slightly disappointing that Suttie has not made a bit more of his material. He is of course right to conclude (p. 203) that 'the *War Memoirs* should not be regarded or used as a work of serious history', in the sense of a work that strives for objectivity, but this does not exactly come as a shock. As he acknowledges in the same passage, 'Most historians now approach the *War Memoirs* with extreme caution.' Indeed, many of the original reviewers of the memoirs, as quoted by Suttie, were themselves clearly aware that the book was marred by Lloyd George's self-evident desire for revenge on those who he thought had wronged him. This calls into question Suttie's assertions, which he makes little attempt to justify, about the subsequent influence of Lloyd George's account. Nor does he ask searching questions about the autobiographical genre, the processes of memory, or the degree to which Lloyd George may himself have been influenced by the 'literature of disenchantment' with the war that had already emerged by the time the *War Memoirs* were composed.

While Suttie does his best to be fair to Lloyd George, the catalogue of the (genuine) failings of his memoirs at times becomes somewhat relentless, and we do not really learn what led to them. In a rare moment of psychological speculation, Suttie suggests that Lloyd George's attacks on Haig and others reached 'a level of vituperation which must … have sprung from a deep sense of guilt at not having stopped the carnage' (p. 6). Perhaps, but no evidence is offered for this surmise. It seems just as plausible to suggest that Lloyd George, no matter what the topic, was driven by a near-pathological urge to justify himself. Frances Stevenson, his mistress, recorded in her diary as he was writing the memoirs that 'Some of his friends think he would do better sometimes to admit that he has occasionally made mistakes, and been in the wrong, but he seems incapable of doing this – possibly because he is able always to make out such a completely good case for everything – the instinct of the clever lawyer at all times.' If even Lloyd George's friends could see this, it is no surprise that the *War Memoirs*, in spite of the huge flurry of interest they attracted when published, never attained classic status, and failed to arrest the ongoing decline of his personal reputation.

Richard Toye is a Fellow of Homerton College, Cambridge. His most recent book is Lloyd George and Churchill: Rivals for Greatness *(Macmillan, 2007).*

This new volume, then, forms a valuable critical guide to the *War Memoirs*. It deserves to be read by anyone who is still in thrall to the *Blackadder* view of the Great War.

Theoretician of modernity

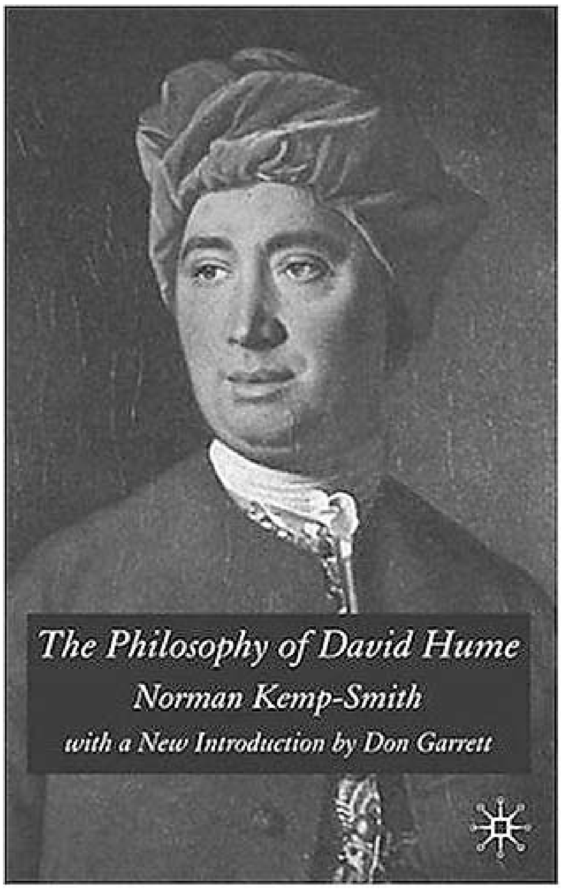
Norman Kemp-Smith, *The Philosophy of David Hume: A Critical Study of its Origins and Central Doctrines*, with a new introduction by Don Garrett (Palgrave Macmillan, 2005)

Reviewed by **Sylvana Tomaselli**

David Hume is one of the most acute theoreticians of modernity. Amongst other things, he understood how commerce had come to occupy the centre of modern politics; he was the first political commentator of note to examine the processes by which commerce had become a matter of state in modern nations. More interestingly still, and as Istvan Hont has argued in *Jealousy of Trade* (2005), Hume saw that while liberty had been the prerequisite of trade in republics, the causal relation between liberty and trade had become inverted in the large monarchies characteristic of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. From being dependent on liberty, commerce was now the agent of civil liberties in modern states. The depth of Hume's insights into the factors that made for this process, and hence moulded modern nations as well as international relations, place him at the heart of contemporary political theory today.

This was by no means always so. Indeed, not only was his importance to political thought very much underrated until relatively recently, but his place within the history of philosophy was also far from secure, certainly until the end of the nineteenth century or arguably even the first half of the twentieth. The Old Catalogue of Cambridge University Library (in full use until fairly recently) listed him as 'Hume, David, the historian'. Amongst those who contributed most to rehabilitating David Hume as not just 'the philosopher' he became principally known as in the latter part of the twentieth century, but as one of the greatest of philosophers, Norman Kemp Smith was one of the most significant.

As Don Garrett writes in a succinct new introduction to *The Philosophy of David Hume*, students of Hume and philosophers more generally are very much in Kemp Smith's debt; his seminal work kindled much scholarship on Hume himself and stimulated valuable philosophical enquiry into the various epistemological and moral issues the eighteenth-century Scot raised and tackled. Kemp Smith's sympathetic and lucid explication of Hume's philosophy as expounded principally in *Treatise of Human Nature* (1739–40) and the *Enquiries Concerning Human Understanding* and *Concerning the Principles*


The Philosophy of David Hume
Norman Kemp-Smith
with a New Introduction by Don Garrett

of Morals (1748–51) went a long way to counter the negative impact of T.H. Green's critical introductions to *The Philosophical Works of David Hume* which he co-edited with T. H. Grose and published in the 1870s. Garrett remarks how the principal aim of reading Hume according to Green seemed to be that one would never need to do so again. Green would have been pleased for students to skip Hume altogether and move straight on to Kant and Hegel, for in his view their philosophical approach wholly superseded the empiricist tradition represented by what is now recognised as the great British trio: Locke, Berkeley and Hume.

The Philosophy of David Hume was originally published in 1941. Norman Kemp Smith (1872–1958), a distinguished Kant scholar and the translator of the *Critique of Pure Reason* (1929) as well as a philosopher in his own right, took Hume as seriously as Kant had, but went further. Unlike Kant, Kemp Smith did not think Hume's philosophy ended in a debilitating philosophical scepticism from which his admittedly brilliant understanding of the limits of human understanding had to be rescued; he sought to demonstrate the cogency of Hume's philosophy and the relation between its sceptical and realist aspects; in fact, he wished he had been able to demonstrate the coherence of Hume's entire output, including his writings on politics and religion, but his competence did not extend that far, or so he modestly claimed.

Reflecting on the subject for much of the first half of the twentieth century, Kemp Smith placed Hume's assertion that reason 'is and ought only to be' the slave of the passions at the heart of his interpretation of the Scot's philosophy. This claim, Kemp Smith stated from the outset of his Preface, was the 'key to the non-sceptical, realist teaching' expounded in Book IV, Part I of the *Treatise* and reiterated in the concluding section of the *Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding*. Outside the philosopher's study, to put it crudely, our passions save us from the scepticism that cannot but reign within it, according to Hume. While this assertion might be intuitively appealing when speaking loosely, it is not so easy to maintain under closer scrutiny, that is, so to speak, if one were back in the philosopher's den.

Kemp Smith was the first to admit this. It was the aim of *The Philosophy of David Hume* to examine the difficulties raised by his endeavour to reconcile the two Humes, the sceptic and the realist. He thus sought to address the tension generated by, on the one hand, the denial in Book I of *Treatise of Human Nature* that we have an impression of the self in itself (i.e. as opposed to being aware that we are experiencing any given sensation, feeling or thought) and, on the other, his assumption that we do have just such an impression of the self, indeed an ever-present one, when he discusses indirect passions (e.g. pride, humility, ambition, vanity, love, and hatred; examples of direct passions being desire, aversion, grief, joy, hope, and fear) in Book II. In thinking about this and other problems that he first raised, Kemp Smith came to question the order in which the different parts of the *Treatise* had been conceived, and argued that Hume had come to his subject, not from the epistemological starting-point of Book I, but from the ethical considerations that are the subjects of Books II and III. However unsettling, but ultimately highly influential, his epistemological reflections were to be, especially if one thinks of the effect they had on Kant, Hume had been a moral philosopher in the first instance, and this was the perspective from which he could best be understood.

Kemp Smith was led to this view partly by placing Hume within his context, eighteenth-century Scottish philosophy, and thereby realising that Hume had been far more exercised by Francis Hutcheson's *Inquiry into the Original of our Ideas of Beauty and Virtue* (1725) and *Essay on the Nature and Conduct of the Passions and Affections, with Illustrations upon the Moral Sense* (1728) than had previously been thought. What Kemp Smith therefore produced was a study that combined the sharpened analytical skills of a practised philosopher with the historical sensitivity of a scholar deeply committed to understanding his subject as one would a fellow intellect one respects. He studied the text, paying heed to the precise meanings Hume gave to the words he used (e.g. 'Hume's Manner of employing the terms "Fiction" and "Illusion"'), and putting the whole against the background of the works we know Hume to have been reading (appendices include, for instance, parts of some of the less accessible works that Hume referred to in the *Treatise*). What is more, he also studied the manner in which others read Hume, and *The Philosophy of David Hume* therefore also serves as a contribution to the history of the reception of Hume. Kemp Smith thus set in motion some of the best practices that the history of political thought and intellectual history have come to enjoy. The re-issue of his work is wholly welcomed and Garrett's introduction is a very helpful addition to it.

Sylvana Tomaselli is a Fellow and Director of Studies in History and Social and Political Sciences at St. John's College, Cambridge.

Vacillating statesman

Arthur Aspinall, *Lord Brougham and the Whig Party* (originally published 1927; reprinted Nonsuch, 2005)

Reviewed by **Mark Pack**

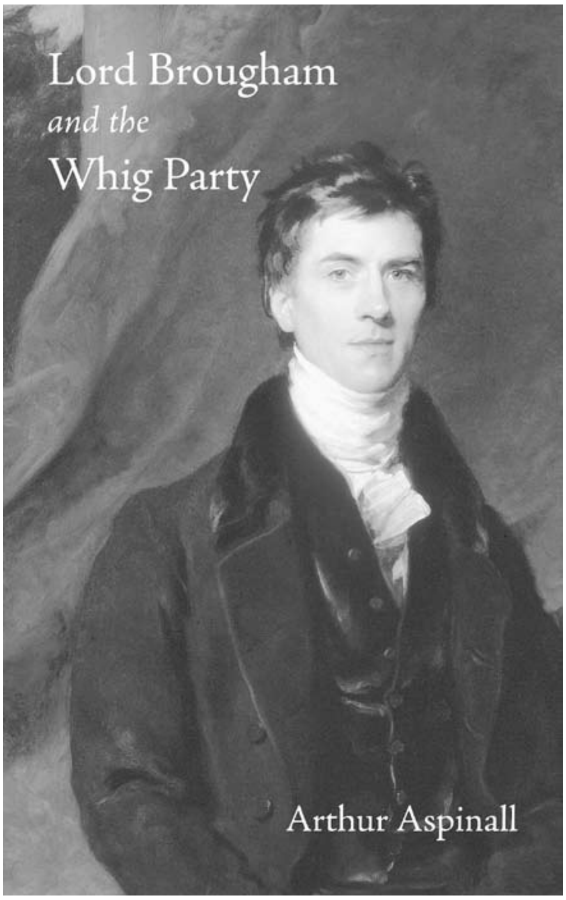
Lawyer, orator, politician and prolific writer of letters, articles, history and even a three-volume romance, Henry Brougham was a prominent advocate of parliamentary reform and a leading opponent of slavery (at least after his early years), who helped found London University and was a successful promoter of widespread education. His political career saw him serve as one of the leading Whig politicians in the long years of opposition before 1830, before the brief climax of a very high-profile election victory in 1830 in Yorkshire and then a short period as Lord Chancellor before he was retired off. Scornful and outspoken, he was one of the foremost political publicists of his day, but also frequently mistrusted by colleagues.

Understanding the importance and impact of Henry Brougham poses the same problems for historians as ascertaining the significance of London Mayor Ken Livingstone is likely to pose in the future. They have in common political careers containing many years in opposition, years in power in relatively peripheral posts, but notwithstanding that, a hold on the public imagination and political debate wholly disproportionate to an otherwise rather limited tally of actual policy achievement.

The detailed treatment of Brougham's life in Aspinall's extensive (480-page) volume helps explain the lack of trust he generated – the author frequently recounts Brougham's changes of position and flirtations with erstwhile opponents. As Aspinall summarises, 'His unwillingness to support all Whig policy unquestioningly, and his occasional support of Tory and Radical policies, led to conflict with his fellow Whigs and was, perhaps, the principal reason he failed to reach even higher political office.'

In his early years he had more Tory than Whig sympathies and toyed with such illiberal causes as support for slavery – even urging cooperation with the French to support slavery – and Aspinall makes a convincing case that, had the Tories tried to harness his talents, he might have ended up a Tory. This flirtation with the Tories hindered his desire to be an MP, for it meant many Whigs were reluctant to help find him a seat, an important consideration at a time when relatively few seats were open to genuine election and competition. Even when not flirting with the Tories, his favour moved back and forth between traditional Whigs and more radical reformers, leading Ricardo to say of him, 'A man who wishes to obtain a lasting name should not be a vacillating statesman, too eager for immediate applause.'

His eloquence and hard work, and his skill at attacking the Tories in public debate, gradually earned him over the years more support from his fellow Whigs, though often it was only granted grudgingly and it was frequently undermined by over-zealous and self-defeating attacks on poorly-chosen opponents in his speeches. Without these lapses in judgement, 'Blundering Brougham' – as he was sometimes known – might well have become the leader of the Whigs in the House of Commons, and as a result enjoyed a more senior role in Grey's 1830 Whig government. As it was, when power



A Liberal Democrat History Group fringe meeting

IN SEARCH OF THE GREAT LIBERALS

H. H. Asquith, William Beveridge, Violet Bonham Carter, Henry Campbell-Bannerman, Richard Cobden, Millicent Garrett Fawcett, Charles James Fox, W. E. Gladstone, Jo Grimond, Roy Jenkins, J. M. Keynes, David Lloyd George, John Locke, John Stuart Mill, Lord John Russell – or someone else: who was the greatest Liberal?

Based on the votes cast by *Journal* readers (see pages 4–12), four candidates will be presented at this meeting. Leading politicians and historians will make the case for each one of the four, and *Journal* readers and conference participants will be able to vote for the final choice of the greatest Liberal.

20.00, Wednesday 19 September 2007
Forest Room, Quality Hotel, Brighton

came, he was out-manoeuvred into a cabinet backwater – being made Lord Chancellor, so that his mercurial talents could not be deployed against the government, but without him gaining much power. He used his time in the post to introduce some important legal reforms, but his political career fizzled out and when he lost the position a few years later he then had a long period in retirement.

Given the date of Aspinall's book it is no surprise that it follows the traditional picture of Brougham as a highly talented and somewhat mercurial person whose contribution to the Whigs, whilst positive, was limited by lack of trust and teamwork. In this (and really only this) respect the book has dated somewhat, with the more recent William Hay book, *The Whig Revival* (2005) emphasising his positive contribution in building the party around the country. Aspinall touches on Brougham's belief in the importance of extra-parliamentary pressure, but does not give his achievements in this area anywhere near the same weight as Hay.

Although Aspinall explicitly decries any notion of his book being a biography of Brougham, writing instead that it is an account of his career as a politician, Brougham the person – the bombastic, outspoken, self-confident Brougham – comes through clearly in what is a clearly-written and enjoyable read. For book lovers, the good news is that the book itself has traditional good production qualities, with a decent spine, good quality paper, a meaningful index and, if not footnotes on each page, at least chapter endnotes.

Dr Mark Pack completed a PhD on nineteenth-century English elections, and now works in the Liberal Democrats' Campaigns Department.

L. T. Hobhouse and J. A. Hobson: The New Liberal influence on Third Way ideas (continued from page 24)

36 Hobhouse, *Liberalism*, p. 73.

37 L. T. Hobhouse, *The Elements of Social Justice* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1922), p. 67.

38 Hobhouse, *Liberalism*, p. 66.

39 Allett, *New Liberalism*, pp. 259–60.

40 Freeden, *J.A. Hobson: A Reader*, p. 12.

41 Ibid.

42 A phrase he used as the title of an article for the *Nation* in 1907, reprinted in *The Crisis of Liberalism* and later used by Ramsay MacDonald.

43 Ibid.; Freeden, *J.A. Hobson: A Reader.*

44 David Marquand, *The New Reckoning: Capitalism, States and Citizens* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1997), pp. 74–75.

45 Ibid.

Corrections

Unfortunately the gremlins were at work on issues 53 and 54 of the *Journal*. Our apologies to all readers, and the relevant authors.

In *Journal* 53, the lower cartoon on page 8, accompanying Patrick Jackson's article 'Gladstone and the Conservative Collapse', was not of John Morley, but of Joseph Chamberlain.

Also in *Journal* 53, the introduction to the article on 'Beveridge in Person' on pages 37–38 gives the impression that Ivor Davies wrote it; in fact it was written by his son, John Davies. Also, our software failed to reproduce Greek letters in the title of the Butler sonnet used by Beveridge, though the English translation is given accurately.

In *Journal* 54, a printer's error (not an editorial fault this time!) meant that page 63 failed to print correctly; several lines were omitted. A corrected version of page 63 is included with this issue.