

Journal of Liberal

HISTORY



Enemy of landlordism

Berkley Farr

James Wood East Down's Liberal MP

Mira Matikkala

William Digby and the Indian Question

J. Graham Jones

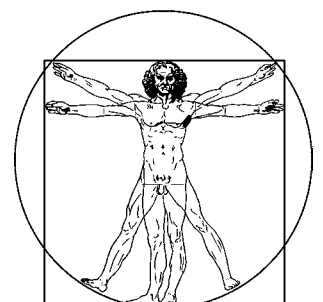
Thomas Jones's Lloyd George

York Mambery

A statue for Lloyd George

Report

Liberals and local government in London since the 1970s



TORRINGTON '58: LIBERAL SURVIVAL AND REVIVAL, 1945–1979

10.30–16.45, Saturday 14 June 2008

London School of Economics, S75 St Clements Building, Houghton Street, London WC2

On 27 March 1958, Mark Bonham Carter, Asquith's grandson, won the parliamentary by-election in the Devon seat of Torrington by a margin of just 219 votes. It was the first Liberal by-election gain since the 1920s. Although the seat was lost in the 1959 general election, it marked the beginning of the first major Liberal post-war revival, under the leadership of Jo Grimond.

To mark the fiftieth anniversary of the Torrington by-election, the Archives of the London School of Economics, the Liberal Democrat History Group and the Richard Scurrah Wainwright Trust are holding a seminar to investigate the post-Second World War experience of the Liberal Party – from the defeats of the 1945 general election to the general election of 1979, when 13 Liberal MPs were elected.

The keynote address will be given by **Lord Dholakia** and **Lord Wallace**, on Campaigning Liberals in the 1950s and 1960s. Other sessions during the day will include:

- Liberal campaigning: elections and by-elections
- Local government – grassroots survival
- Leaders and leadership
- Collaboration – pacts and other parties.

Speakers include **Lord Kirkwood**, **Lord Greaves**, **Michael Meadowcroft** and **Martin Wainwright**.

Cost: £10 (including refreshments)

To book your place contact:

Archives Division, London School of Economics
10 Portugal Street2
London
WC2A 2HD

Tel: +44 (0)20 7955 7223

Email: document@lse.ac.uk

Supported by the Richard Scurrah Wainwright Trust

Correction

In the report of the Liberal Democrat History Group's 'Great Liberals' fringe meeting in September 2007, included in *Journal of Liberal History* 57 (winter 2007–08), on page 13, Lord Morgan is reported as having said near the end of his speech: 'In my view, Lloyd George's career was Britain's moment of maternity'.

This was a transcription error: in fact, what Lord Morgan said was: 'In my view, Lloyd George's career was Britain's moment of modernity'. Our sincere apologies to Lord Morgan (and to David Lloyd George)

Anyone wishing to make jokes along the lines of 'Lloyd George knew my mother' should keep them to themselves; we've already heard them.

Journal of Liberal History

The *Journal of Liberal History* is published quarterly by the Liberal Democrat History Group.

ISSN 1479-9642

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An annual subscription to the *Journal of Liberal History* costs £20.00 (£12.50 unwaged rate). This includes membership of the History Group unless you inform us otherwise. The institutional rate is £30.00. Non-UK subscribers should add £5.00.

Online subscriptions cost £40.00 (individuals) or £50.00 (institutions). As well as printed copies, online subscribers will be able to access online copies of current and all past *Journals*.

Cheques (payable to 'Liberal Democrat History Group') should be sent to:

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6 Palfrey Place, London SW8 1PA;
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Payment is also possible via our website,
www.liberalhistory.org.uk.

Cover design concept: **Lynne Featherstone**

Published by the Liberal Democrat History Group, c/o
38 Salford Road, London SW2 4BQ

Printed by **Kall-Kwik**,
18 Colville Road, London W3 8DL

April 2008

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Liberal Democrat History Group

The Liberal Democrat History Group promotes the discussion and research of 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 of Liberal History* 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**

JAMES EAST D

Address and
Presentation to
James Wood Esq.
Member of Parliament for
East Down, 1902-06
from
his Late Constituents,



JAMES WOOD DOWN'S LIBERAL MP

'I thought you might be interested in this,' was the understatement from George Whyte of Crossgar, who had come across something of fascinating local interest at a Belfast auction.

Auctions provide much television entertainment, but they can also be a valuable source of local history, and this find was to shed new light on an episode in Irish history a hundred years ago.

Berkley Farr looks at the history behind the auction-house find.

Title page and page 2 of the *Address and Presentation to James Wood*

THE OBJECT of our interest was a thick leather-bound book covered in embossed decoration and measuring twelve inches by fourteen inches in size. The title page, in richly-decorated lettering of gold, red and green, interwoven with flax flowers, read, 'Address and Presentation to James Wood, Esq., Member of Parliament for East Down, 1902–06 from His Late Constituents.' Another page contained a sepia photograph of a serious-looking James Wood in a high collar and cravat, surrounded by a decorated motif of shamrock, flax, roses and thistles.¹

In Victorian and Edwardian times, illuminated addresses were a popular way of expressing esteem for a person, particularly as a form of recognition for public service. The one presented to James Wood contains the signatures of twenty-two prominent local people, who collected money to pay for the presentation. The address, in copperplate handwriting, is forthright in

its expression of praise of James Wood and the political stand he took.

It reads:

Dear Sir

After your contest at the late General Election to remain Liberal Representative of East Down in the Imperial Parliament, your supporters in that Division, and numerous friends elsewhere, are anxious to express to you in tangible form their admiration for the gentlemanly manner in which you conducted your part of the contests in the interests of Reform, Sobriety, Equal Rights and Goodwill among men – as against the successful calumny, intemperance, and organised violence of your opponents who have always sought to maintain their own private interests and class ascendancy under the cover of false and selfish Unionism, which has so long embittered and kept Irishmen apart.

Your election for East Down in 1902 virtually turned the

scale in favour of an extended Land Bill, which was passed the following year, and which with some compulsory amendments will settle for ever the tragic history of Landlordism in Ireland.

As a Tenants' Advocate in the Courts of Law, on the Public Platform, and in the High Court of Parliament, your practical knowledge, zeal and perseverance have been invaluable; so that we are proud to reckon you among the great Land Reformers of your country. For without efforts such as yours thousands of Tenants, who are now the happy owners of their farms, would have been ground to poverty under the old rack rents, or ejected from their holdings, and driven with their starving families into foreign lands like so many of their countrymen.

You have sympathised with every Reform for the emancipation of Labourers in town and country; and with the New Democratic Movement in Ulster for Independent thought and action among the sons of daily toil; and you have always aimed at the Co-Operation and Union of all creeds and classes for the improvement of their common country.

Your geniality, your buoyant temperament, and the unselfish devotion of yourself and your distinguished Partners to the interests of others have won you innumerable friends all over Ireland.

And with you we here associate Mrs Wood, who has borne her share in the turmoil of your elections; and now at this great Banquet given in your honour, while we beg to present to you this Bank Cheque, we also beg Mrs. Wood to accept this solid Silver Tea and Coffee Service which may remain, along with this Address and Illuminated Album, as a visible token and heirloom in your family.

And we pray that you may long be spared in health and

happiness to support, on the Platform and again in Parliament, the great principles of Reform, Temperance and Charity in all things.

Signed on behalf of the Subscribers

Gawn Orr M.D., Ballyleson Chairman

William Carse B.A., Magherahamlet Secretary

Belfast 28 September, 1906

The pages containing the signatures are decorated with charming watercolour miniatures by J. Carey of scenes from the constituency, including the Ballynahinch Mountains, Killinchy village, Dundonald, Dundrum Castle, the Giant's Ring and Scrabo.

~

Inevitably the discovery of any historical item, such as the illuminated address, raises many questions. Who was James Wood? How did he become the Member of Parliament and what were the causes he espoused? Who were his supporters, particularly those who signed the address? What was his historical legacy and how did these events relate to the wider context of the Edwardian period?

In the middle of the nineteenth century the Liberals and Conservatives were the two dominant parties in Ireland, and a significant number of Irish Liberal MPs were returned to Westminster. The last general election with these two parties as the sole players was in 1868, when the Liberals won 65 of the 104 Irish seats. The subsequent rise of the Home Rule Party, however, decimated the Liberals, particularly in southern Ireland, and by 1874 only nine were returned. By 1880, the number of Liberals elected had increased to fourteen, but Gladstone's Reform Act of 1884 extended the franchise in the counties and at the election in the following year the newly-enfranchised

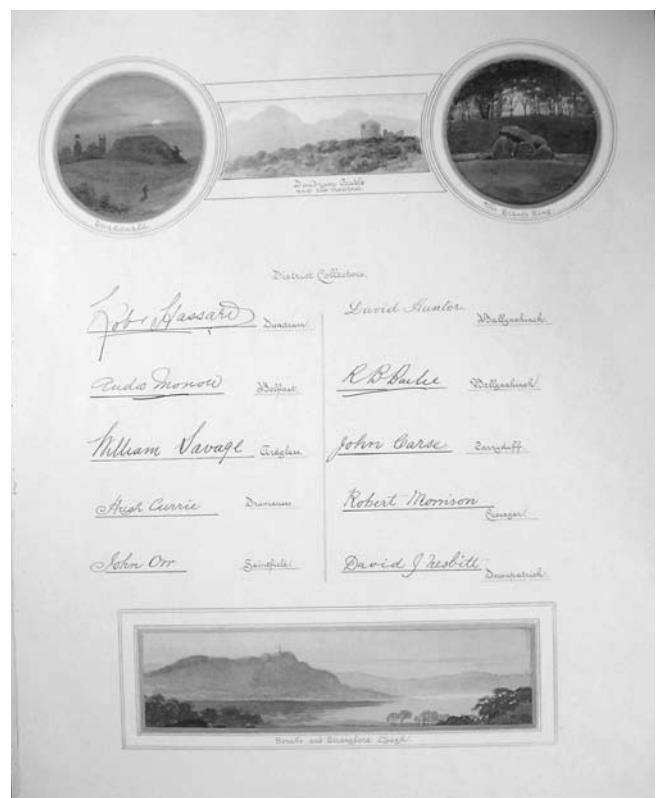
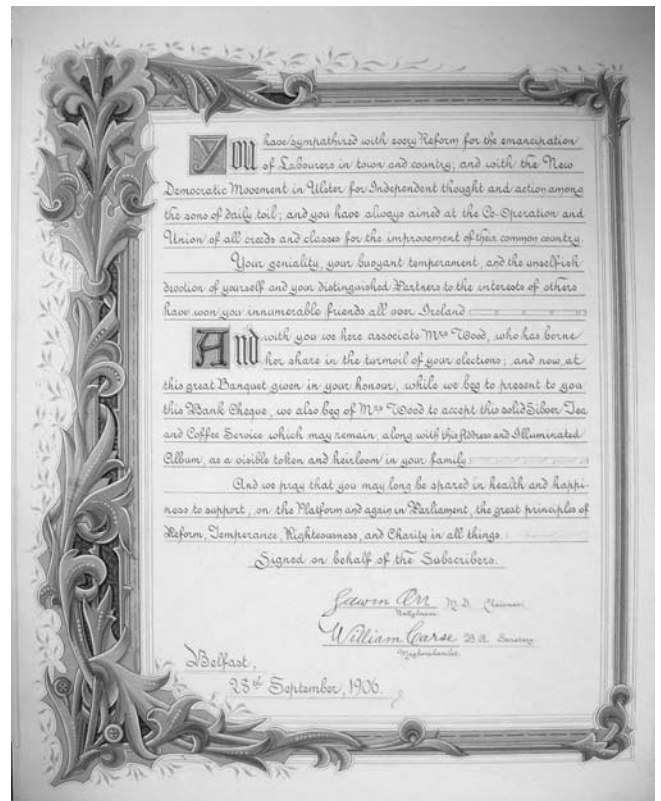
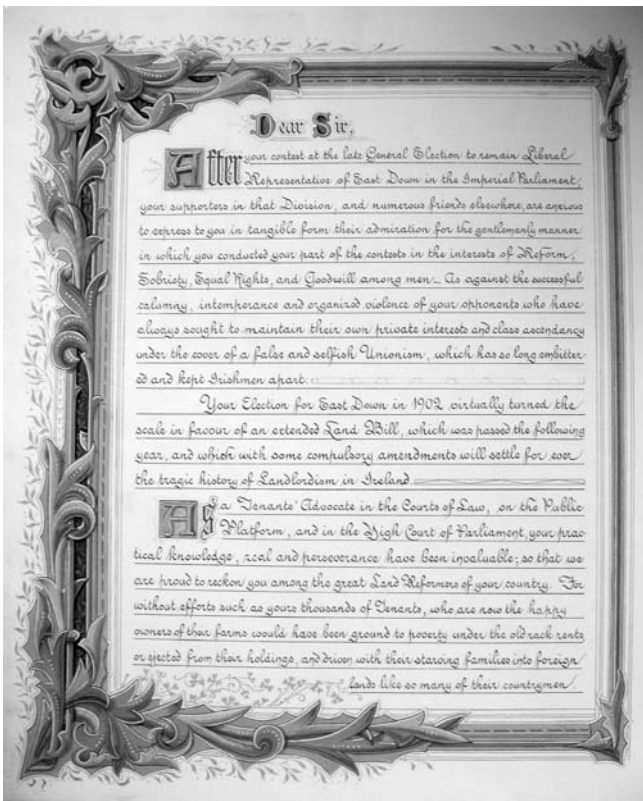
farm labourers tended to support Unionist or Nationalist parties and Liberal representation was wiped out. Gladstone's conversion to Home Rule further divided the weakened Ulster Liberals, with the majority becoming Liberal Unionists. It was 1895 before another Liberal was elected, and although representation remained until 1918, no more than three were returned at any general election.

I first heard of James Wood on 15 March 1962, while visiting James Barnes and his sister Jean on the night of the famous Orpington by-election. They came from a Liberal family in Greyabbey, and their dining room was dominated by an enormous portrait of Gladstone. As a boy, James recalled how his father took him to look across Strangford Lough to see the bonfires burning on the hilltops of Killinchy to celebrate the victory of James Wood in the 1902 by-election.

James Wood was born on 17 July 1867 in Co. Monaghan. He came from Clones to Belfast at an early age and began his education at Mountpottinger National School. He was an apprentice with the legal firm of Messrs H. and R. J. McMordie, Lombard Street, Belfast and qualified as a solicitor in 1893. He entered into partnership with John Moorehead who later became the first Chief Crown Solicitor of Northern Ireland.² He lived at Mount Salem, Dundonald, Belfast where he also farmed.

In his professional and political careers, James Wood played a prominent role in the struggle for tenant rights at the time of the fight against landlordism in Ireland. One of his earliest memories of that grim period was of his own parents being evicted from their holding in Co. Fermanagh because his father would not vote for a Tory candidate at an election.³ Gladstone had begun the process of tackling the Land Question in his Land Acts of 1870 and

'Your election for East Down in 1902 virtually turned the scale in favour of an extended Land Bill, which was passed the following year, and which with some compulsory amendments will settle for ever the tragic history of Landlordism in Ireland.'

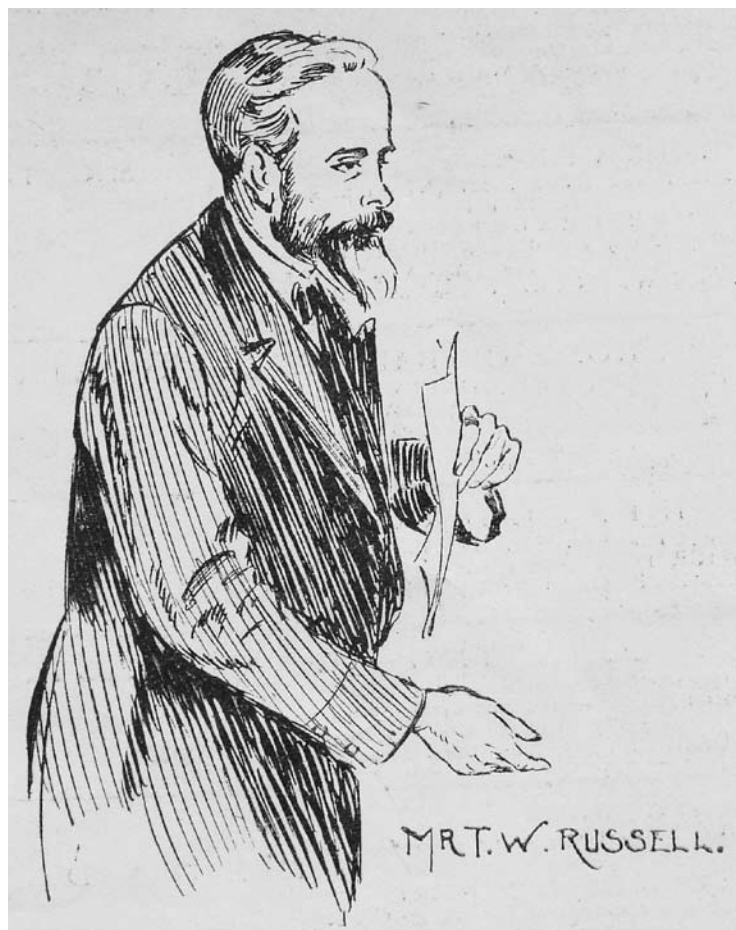


1881, but the conflict between landlords and tenants continued and resurfaced in 1894-95 with the tenants being led by T. W. Russell, the Liberal Unionist MP for South Tyrone. Despite a Conservative Act of 1896, landlords still refused to sell

and the demand for compulsory purchase of farms continued to grow. Russell began a new campaign, launching the Ulster Farmers and Labourers Union and Compulsory Purchase Association in the Ulster Hall, Belfast in June 1901.⁴

Pages 3-6 of the *Address and Presentation to James Wood*

In January 1902, J. A. Rentoul became a judge and resigned as the MP for East Down, causing a by-election. East Down was one of the four constituencies in the county between 1885 and 1918. It included Downpatrick and Ballynahinch and stretched from



T. W Russell, Liberal Unionist MP who broke with the party over land reform and finally joined the Liberals.

editorial strongly supported Col. Wallace and expressed concern that T. W. Russell was a friend of Redmond, the Nationalist leader.⁹ Despite attempts by his opponents to introduce other issues such as Home Rule, the Boer War and a Catholic university, James Wood insisted that the election was about the single issue of a permanent and final settlement of the land question.

The Executive of the East Down Division of the United Irish League met in the John Street Hall, Downpatrick, and unanimously decided to support James Wood as a champion of compulsory purchase and resolved 'that all Nationalist electors should register their vote in his favour and poll against landlordism'.¹⁰ Contrastingly, the Lecale District Loyal Orange Lodge No. 2 passed a resolution, 'That we, the Orangemen of Lecale, rejoice that an Orange candidate has solicited the suffrages of the electors of East Down, in the person of Brother Colonel R. H. Wallace'.¹¹

The by-election took place on Wednesday, 5 February 1902, a mild, dry, day, and out of 8,136 electors, 7,035 recorded their votes (an 86 per cent poll), and there were only thirty spoiled papers. The count took place on Thursday morning in Downpatrick courthouse and shortly before 11 o'clock the result was announced:

Wood	3,576
Wallace	3,429

Although Wood's majority was 147, the detailed breakdown from the polling stations is of even more fascinating interest for the psephologist. The *Down Recorder* listed the approximate returns for each polling district and also included the number of Nationalists (i.e. Roman Catholics)—see Table 1.¹²

Wood succeeded in combining strong support from Nationalists with a remarkable following in Presbyterian areas, notably Drumbo, Saintfield and

Dundrum and Ardglass north to Killinchy, Saintfield, Drumbo and Lisburn. It was regarded as a safe Unionist seat, having only been contested in one of the six previous elections, when in 1886 the Unionist polled 5,093 against a Nationalist 2,561.⁵ As most elections in the north of Ireland between Unionists and Nationalists are based on a religious head count, it was common, even as late as the 1960s, for seats to be unopposed where there was a clear religious majority for one side. While Nationalists could not win a constituency with a Protestant majority, a Liberal or a candidate with an appeal across the religious divide would have a greater chance of success.

The by-election created a great opportunity for Russell's compulsory purchase campaign, and James Wood offered himself as a candidate following the unanimous vote of support at a meeting of representatives in Saintfield. The Unionists picked Colonel R. H. Wallace of the

Fifth Royal Irish Rifles, who was serving in South Africa. The contest was to be between a Presbyterian solicitor with practical experience of supporting tenants, and a local landlord from Myra Castle.

Major J. N. Blackwood-Price DL, the High Sheriff of Down, received the nominations in Downpatrick courthouse on 29 January, 1902. Col. Wallace was proposed by W. Johnston MP, Ballykilbeg, who was the champion of the Orangemen's right to march.⁶ James Wood was accompanied by his agent, James Moorehead, and was proposed by J. Carr JP, Killyleagh, and seconded by Rev. W. Carse, Magherahamlet.⁷

Meetings in support of both candidates were held throughout the constituency. About 250 people gathered in the yard of Denvir's Hotel, Downpatrick, to hear James Wood and T. W. Russell, but the meeting in Ballynahinch broke up in disorder.⁸ The *Down Recorder*

Killinchy, in what Carson called 'an unholy alliance' of Catholics and Protestants.¹³ As we look back over a century to 1902, it is to be remembered that another 104 years earlier these areas were strongholds of the United Irishmen in the 1798 rebellion.

The nature of Wood's support is demonstrated by the names on the illuminated address as well as those reported during the campaign. While Gawn Orr was a doctor in Ballylesson and William Carse a Presbyterian minister in Magherahamlet, many tended to be owners of relatively large farms or were prominent in their own localities. Joseph Carr JP lived at The Gocean in Killyleagh, where his family had founded the Flax Spinning Mill. James Silcock JP owned Marybrook Mill between Crossgar and Ballynahinch. James Hutton JP had a large farm at Bell's Hill and was a leading member of the Downpatrick Board of Poor-Law Guardians. The family tradition of John Clarke JP of Lisnastrain, Lisburn was that he was for the Liberals and against the landlords. If a hat was not doffed when paying rent at Hillsborough Castle, a flunkey would remove it with a stick.¹⁴

After the declaration of the result, Wood and Russell were carried shoulder high to the Down Hunt Arms Hotel, where they addressed the crowd. Wood said they had been opposed by the strongest possible combination, but they had beaten the press, the landlords and Ballykilbeg (the home of William Johnston, the militant Orange MP for South Belfast). Rev. R. Lyttle of Moneyrea advised people against being led into strife and pointed to the peaceful example shown the previous day when Protestant and Roman Catholic worked side by side for Mr Wood. That night bonfires were lit in various parts of the constituency. The local newspapers differed in their headlines regarding the result. The *Newtownards Chronicle* reported 'Victory for the Compulsory Sale Candidate' while the *Down Recorder* regretted 'A Nationalist Victory'.¹⁵

The East Down result was a major boost to Russell's campaign for compulsory purchase and his growing support was again demonstrated in a 1903 by-election in North Fermanagh where his candidate, Edward Mitchell, defeated the Official Unionist James Craig.

Wyndham's Land Act of 1903 was the response of Balfour's Conservative government. It was more generous in purchase schemes for both landlords and tenants and, although compulsory purchase was not finally adopted until 1925, it succeeded in removing the land question as a major election issue.¹⁶

The general election of 1906 was a watershed in British history, with Balfour's Conservative and Unionist Party losing 250 seats in a landslide to the Liberal Party, which gained a large majority over all other parties.¹⁷ The new government of Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman, including figures such as Asquith, Lloyd George and Churchill, was to embark upon one of the great eras of reform. In Ireland three Liberals were returned, holding North Tyrone and South Tyrone (T. W. Russell) and gaining North Antrim. The loss of East Down and North Fermanagh indicated, however, that the Russellite campaign was now in decline.

Although Russell had begun his career in South Tyrone in 1886 as an outspoken Unionist, the land issue caused him to move across the political spectrum, so that by 1906 his followers were clearly identified as Russellite Liberals. Dependent on class, Russellite Liberalism had sought to transcend the religious divide, and appeal to Protestant and Catholic farmers; this worked so long as Protestant farmers had to choose between self-interest and traditional sectarianism. The danger to Russellism came when farmers no longer had to make a clear choice: when the main Protestant party was prepared to offer both sectarian and economic satisfaction.¹⁸ One major outcome of the threat he posed was that the Unionists improved their organisation through the formation of the Ulster Unionist Council – an umbrella body of the Orange Order, constituency associations and MPs – in 1905.¹⁹

Stations	Voters	For Wallace	For Wood	Nationalists
Ardglass	571	155	416	436
Ballyculter	276	88	188	197
Ballynahinch	707	531	176	152
Crossgar	469	278	191	151
Downpatrick	923	431	492	364
Drumaness	254	50	195	188
Drumbo	692	321	371	4
Dunmore	270	50	220	209
Killinchy	256	107	149	21
Killyleagh	433	218	215	92
Kilmegan	290	151	139	234
Lisburn	774	634	140	202
Saintfield	646	228	418	124
Seaforde	265	124	141	134
Tyrella	170	54	125	126
Totals	7,005	3,429	3,576	2,634

The 1906 election marked the effective end of landlord domination of County Down politics.²⁰ Unionist candidates now had to be selected by constituency organisations and were no longer the sole preserve of landlord families. The new Unionist Constituency Association in East Down invited the defeated North Fermanagh by-election candidate, James Craig, a Presbyterian businessman, to contest the 1906 election, thus starting a career which would lead to him becoming Northern Ireland's first Prime Minister. Craig polled 4,011 against Wood's 3,341 – a majority of 670. In a 91 per cent poll, Wood's proportion of the vote fell from 51 per cent to 46 per cent.²¹

On 28 September 1906, a banquet was held for James Wood by his East Down supporters in the Wellington Hall, Belfast.²² Following toasts to 'the King' and 'the Lord Lieutenant (Lord Aberdeen) and Prosperity of Ireland', James Wood was presented with a cheque for £600 (MPs were not paid until 1911) and Mrs Wood with a tea and coffee service in recognition of his services as Member for East Down. After a toast to 'East Down,' Rev. W. Carse related the history of the testimonial to James Wood and said that no fewer than 1,422 individuals had subscribed to the object.²³

T. W. Russell MP spoke highly in praise of the new House of Commons with a mandate in favour of the application of Liberal principles. He was not quite sure that the strength of the House of Commons was always recognised in these parts, but they must not judge the House of Commons by the quota contributed by the Orange Order. He was glad to see James Wood being honoured and he felt his election in East Down was one of the great turning points in the land war. He ought never to have been lost to the House, but accidents would occur in politics as well as in other things and

they had now to see that the mistakes of the past were repaired, that this great province, with its splendid traditions, its living actualities, and its great capacities, would not be known, as it now unfortunately was, as the most retrograde, stupid, and selfish portion of the United Kingdom in political affairs.²⁴

Ulster Liberals continued to be a force in the period of the Liberal government up to the First World War. In 1907, they successfully defended North Tyrone, the most marginal seat in Ireland, despite the majority being reduced from nine votes to seven in a poll of 6,019 – 99 per cent of the electorate!²⁵ (North Tyrone stayed Liberal from 1895 to 1918.) In 1910, the seats of North Antrim and South Tyrone (T. W. Russell) were lost, but in 1913 Londonderry City was won by David Cleghorn Hogg in a by-election. The last Liberal to be elected from Ireland to Westminster was Sir James Brown Dougherty, who was returned unopposed for Londonderry City in 1914 following Hogg's death. The removal of the land question as a major issue and the return to the constitutional struggle after 1912 reduced Liberal appeal to an increasingly polarised electorate. The First World War and the 1916 Easter Rising changed the political landscape of Ireland. No Liberal contested the 1918 election, which saw the triumph of Sinn Féin and Unionism and, apart from in 1929, when five candidates were defeated, Liberals were absent from the political scene until the late 1950s.

T. W. Russell continued as MP for South Tyrone and later North Tyrone until 1918, serving for eleven years as Liberal Vice-President of the Department of Agriculture and Technical Instruction for Ireland. He became an Irish Privy Councillor in 1908, a baronet in 1917, and died in 1920.²⁶

James Wood contested East Down again in 1910 as a Liberal,

The 1906 election marked the effective end of landlord domination of County Down politics.

but lost by 974 votes. He continued as a solicitor with an extensive practice, especially among the farming community. He died on 31 October 1936 at his home, Marino House, Holywood, Co. Down. *The Irish News* reported that regret would be felt throughout Northern Ireland:

Unsparing in his efforts on behalf of the downtrodden small farmers under the regime of landlordism, Mr Wood was a staunch tenant-righter and in that cause he fought as a Liberal a famous election in 1902 in East Down, which he won by a large majority over his opponent, the Orange Order leader, Colonel R. H. Wallace. ... The late Mr Wood proved himself an able supporter of his leader Mr T. W. Russell. He was a keen debater and, as [an] orator fluent in delivery. ... There are few of Mr Wood's contemporaries alive today but those who are will always remember him as a straightforward gentleman, honest in his dealings with his fellows, kindly and broad-minded towards those who differed from him in either religion or politics. In religion a Presbyterian, he was a loyal member of his church, impatient of anything that savoured of oppression or tyranny, of which he was an implacable foe.²⁷

After the death of his son in the 1990s, his papers were given to the Linen Hall Library in Belfast, which is now also the home of the illuminated address of a hundred years ago. Perhaps someone will discover the whereabouts of the accompanying silver tea and coffee service from that Belfast banquet of 1906.

Berkley Farr is a former Chairman of the Ulster Liberal Party and was candidate for South Down in 1973. This article is based on one published in the Lecale Review: a Journal of Down History, in 2006.

- 1 Address to James Wood, Linen Hall Library, Belfast.
- 2 Details from James Wood archive in Linen Hall Library and *The Irish News*, 3 November 1936.
- 3 Ibid.
- 4 Frank Thompson, *The End of Liberal Ulster: Land agitation and land reform 1868–86* (Belfast: Ulster Historical Foundation, 2001) p. 297.
- 5 B. M. Walker, *Parliamentary Election Results in Ireland, 1801–1922* (Dublin: Royal Irish Academy, 1978), p. 342.
- 6 *The Down Recorder*, 1 February 1902.
- 7 Ibid.
- 8 Ibid.
- 9 Ibid.
- 10 Ibid.
- 11 Ibid.
- 12 *The Down Recorder*, 8 February 1902.
- 13 Alvin Jackson, 'Irish Unionism and the Russellite Threat, 1894–1906', *Irish Historical Studies*, XXV, no. 100 (Nov. 1987) p. 400.
- 14 Personal communication, Alan Clarke.
- 15 *The Down Recorder* and *The Newtownards Chronicle*, 8 February 1902.
- 16 Thompson, *The End of Liberal Ulster*, p. 298.
- 17 Michael Kinnear, *The British Voter; An Atlas and Survey since 1885* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 1981) p. 28.
- 18 Jackson, 'Irish Unionism and the Russellite Threat, 1894–1906', p. 397. A study of the relationship between Liberals and Ireland over the last two centuries is to be found in *Journal of Liberal History* 33 (Winter 2001–02), including Berkley Farr on 'Liberalism in Unionist Northern Ireland'.
- 19 Eamon Phoenix, 'On this day', *The Irish News*, 3 November 2005.
- 20 Brian Walker, 'Landowners and Parliamentary Elections in County Down, 1801–1921', *Down History & Society* edited by Lindsay Proudfoot, (Dublin: Geography Publications, 1997) p. 321.
- 21 Walker, *Parliamentary Election Results in Ireland, 1801–1922*, p. 343.
- 22 *The Northern Whig*, 29 September 1906.
- 23 Ibid.
- 24 Ibid.
- 25 A. D. McDonnell, *The Life of Sir Dennis Henry, Catholic Unionist* (Belfast: Ulster Historical Foundation, 2000) p. 24.
- 26 Jackson, 'Irish Unionism and the Russellite Threat, 1894–1906', p. 403.
- 27 *The Irish News*, 3 November 1936.

Centenary commemoration supported by the Liberal Democrat History Group

CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN COMMEMORATION

Sunday 27 April 2008
Meigle (Perthshire)

The Rt. Hon. Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman, GCB, 1836–1908

Sir Henry, born (as Henry Campbell) at Kelvinside House, Glasgow on 7 September 1836; Liberal MP for Stirling Burghs (Stirling, Dunfermline, Culross, Inverkeithing and Queensferry) from 20 November 1868; Prime Minister from 5 December 1905; resigned as Prime Minister on 3 April 1908; died in Downing Street on 22 April and, after a memorial service in Westminster Abbey on 27 April, was buried beside Lady Campbell-Bannerman (died 1906) in Meigle on 28 April 1908.

The Commemoration Programme on Sunday 27 April 2008 will include a visit to Belmont Castle (Sir Henry's last Scottish home) at 11.30 a.m., lunch in Meigle at 1.00 p.m. and a wreath-laying at the Campbell-Bannerman grave beside Meigle Parish Church at 2.30 p.m.

For further details and tickets (for the Belmont Castle visit and lunch), contact **Dr. Sandy Waugh** at: email: s.waugh.bnchry@btinternet.com
phone: Banchory (01330) 823159
before 17 April.

WILLIAM D THE INDIAN

William Digby, the first secretary of the National Liberal Club, was also a radical political organiser and agitator for India. One of his many exposures of Indian poverty was referred to as 'one of the most terrible indictments ever probably written of a governing race'. He assisted Charles Bradlaugh, and acted as election agent for Dadabhai Naoroji, the first Asian elected to Parliament. **Dr Mira Matikkala** examines his life and interests.



DIGBY AND THE QUESTION

WILLIAM DIGBY was born in Wisbech, Cambridgeshire in 1849.

He began his journalistic career early, becoming an apprentice on a small local newspaper in 1864. In 1871, he left England for Ceylon, to become the sub-editor on the *Ceylon Observer* in Colombo. In Ceylon he soon became involved in a major temperance campaign, and another campaign for the abolition of food taxes brought him honorary membership of the Cobden Club in 1876.

The following year Digby settled in India, where he became the editor of the influential daily *Madras Times*. The years of severe famine which followed soon led him to question the rationale of British rule in India. He wrote his first major pamphlet, the two-volume *Famine Campaign in Southern India*, in 1878, and used the *Madras Times* extensively, as well as *The Times* in London, to stir up both the government and the British public. As a result,

the Indian government began to organise public works and food shipments to Southern India, and a substantial relief fund was launched in London. The Indian famine was the turning-point in Digby's life, leading him to devote himself to Indian reform until his death.

His wife having died in India, Digby returned to England in 1879. For the next few years he edited first the *Liverpool and Southport Daily News* and then the *Western Daily Mercury* at Plymouth. Then, in November 1882, he was elected as the first secretary of the newly-established National Liberal Club.

After months of preparatory work, the Club was established at a meeting on 16 November 1882. According to an active member, the meeting 'was largely attended by leading Liberals from all parts of the country ... On 29 November, Mr. William Digby was appointed secretary. Success immediately followed. By 31 December 1882, the list of original members was closed with more than 2,500

names.¹ According to Digby, five months later the figure was nearly 3,900.²

However, it seems that Digby was somewhat too dynamic for the secretaryship. The Club was not meant to be anything other 'than a social meeting-place for progressive politicians',³ but Digby was far from satisfied with this. In June 1883 he wrote to Herbert Gladstone:

I thank you very much for your detailed criticisms of the suggestions I put on paper respecting the political work of the Club. Those criticisms are, in the main, adverse to my suggestions. ... If the National Liberal Club is to be a social club merely ... I, for one, should be grievously disappointed, and should regret having given up journalism (where now and then I could be of some service) for the secretaryship. ... I could add page upon page of conversations I have had with leading Liberals from all parts of the country. They (the leading Liberals) look,

Digby's portrait at the National Liberal Club, by J. C. Forbes, presented to the Club in 1905 (courtesy of Simon J. Roberts, secretary of the National Liberal Club)

with eager expectancy, to the Club to become a central party organisation, and are prepared to support it accordingly. If it is merely 'social', then, I am convinced, there will be a great falling off in numbers and in influence.⁴

Nevertheless, Digby did not have his way. When he informed Herbert Gladstone of his resignation four years later he bitterly acknowledged 'that what the Club wants is a thoroughly capable hotel manager'.⁵

'Indian Problems for English Consideration'

Digby's criticism of British rule in India sprang from humanitarian grounds, having its roots in the famine, but in the 1880s he extended it to broader themes: first demanding full economic and racial equality, soon also calling for representative government for India, and, finally, advocating full self-government.

He began his Indian agitation in Britain with a pamphlet entitled *Indian Problems for English Consideration*, published by the National Liberal Federation in 1881. Digby argued that Indian reform was 'a Liberal duty', and defined India as 'a larger Ireland'. He predicted serious troubles in India, unless Englishmen and Indians would 'be brought to know one another better, and to understand each other's position to a fuller extent than they now do'.⁶ He testified that 'our fellow-subjects in the east are like-minded with ourselves in all that constitutes good citizenship and law-abidingness'.⁷

He also insisted, bluntly, that the British had failed to govern India properly. He argued that there were 'forty million starving' and nine million had 'died from want of food' under the 'crushing weight of administration'. Moreover, Digby asserted that the native Indian administration functioned much better

'If the National Liberal Club is to be a social club merely ... I, for one, should be grievously disappointed'.

in times of famine than the British one. This was, he argued, because native states availed themselves of local Indian experience, whereas the British did not.⁸

Furthermore, Digby challenged the widely-held view 'that India had no cause of complaint against Great Britain, as she was not made to contribute anything to this country'. While acknowledging that no direct contribution had been paid, Digby stressed that indirectly England was 'draining India, not simply of its surplus, but actually of its very life-blood'. As an example of this unequal partnership, Digby stated that on seven occasions India had been made to pay for English wars: twice for China and New Zealand, and once each for Crimea, Persia, and Abyssinia. In all these imperial undertakings, Britain had borrowed Indian troops and India had paid. On the other hand, when reinforcements had been sent from Britain to India in the 1840s and 1857, India had been made to pay 'every fraction of the pay of the troops from the moment they left England'.⁹

Most importantly, Digby was a strong advocate of John Bright's scheme for decentralised government in India as the answer to India's difficulties. Bright had insisted since 1858 that it was impossible for one man, the Governor-General or Viceroy, to rule India. Thus, the country should be divided into five or six presidencies, equal in rank and each under a separate governor who would be in direct communication with the Secretary of State for India in London. In Digby's view, Bright's idea was 'practicable and necessary', and he even predicted it would result in competition for good works between the presidencies.¹⁰

With the help of a Liberal friend, Richard Tangye, Digby managed to get 10,000 copies of *Indian Problems for English Consideration* printed and circulated. The Liberal Federation's annual

meeting in October 1881 recommended extensive circulation for Digby's pamphlet among Liberal Associations, and stated that the Federation could be of great service in the cause of Indian reform along the lines Digby indicated. Digby was appointed a member of the General Committee of the Federation 'with a view to his re-opening the subject at a convenient time'.¹¹

However, after the occupation of Egypt in 1882, the Liberal Party became less supportive of its critics of empire. Once again, India was to pay for the British expedition, and this caused a conflict between the Viceroy, Lord Ripon, and the home government. The Secretary of State for India and Gladstone argued that the Suez Canal was much more important to India than to England; thus, the charges had to be met by the Indian government. Ripon strongly disagreed, but succeeded only in having the sum reduced.¹²

'India for the Indians – and for England'

Digby greatly admired Lord Ripon, who, as Viceroy of India from 1880 to 1884, re-established the freedom of the press after Lord Lytton's Vernacular Press Act of 1878, furthered education, and extended local self-government. During the 'Ilbert Bill' controversy in 1883–84, which resulted from Ripon's attempt to extend the right of qualified Indian magistrates to try Europeans in criminal cases, a short-lived British India Committee worked assiduously in support of Ripon, and Digby was actively involved in this work.¹³ After Ripon's arrival in Britain, Digby organised a dinner in his honour on 25 February 1885, in his capacity as the secretary of the National Liberal Club.

Digby was furious about the criticism of Lord Ripon and responded to it with a book, *India for the Indians – and for England*, published in February 1885.

In the preceding December he had written optimistically to Herbert Gladstone:

In that work I produce (almost entirely from official documents) evidence of the most remarkable character, evidence which if true (as I believe it to be to the very smallest sentence) ought to lead to a re-consideration of our position in India;

but nonetheless stressing that,

My suggestions (I believe) are in no degree wild. I recognise all the good England has done in India and is doing at the same time that I show the marked superiority of native rule under English over-lordship. The title of my little book, viz. *India for the Indians* – and for England, shows I am no revolutionist in my ideas.¹⁴

In the book, Digby reproached the Anglo-Indians' 'ecstatic admiration of themselves and their doings' which led British statesmen to adopt the same attitude of admiration towards them and to underestimate the Indian character and capabilities. Thus, Digby produced a powerful testimony in favour of Indians and their administrative capability.¹⁵ In his opinion, British rule in India ought to have adopted a merely supervisory role, so 'that the British, as they alone can in India, should keep the peace. That done they should stand aside, allowing the people to rule themselves according to their own ideas and experience of what is best.'¹⁶

He also repeated his economic statements from 1881, arguing that the British legal and scientific approach was too rigid, and that India required adaptability and sympathy. Native-governed villages were financially secure, due to flexible administration, whereas in British India the collection of land revenue was harsh even when crops failed;

in addition, in British provinces traditional village and communal life had been largely destroyed. He even argued that famines were more frequent in British provinces than in Indian states, due to severe failures in administration.¹⁷

'I never wrote a book or an article for a newspaper into which I put so much of myself as I have put into this book', Digby wrote to Herbert Gladstone at the time of publication.¹⁸ Gladstone, however, as Digby himself put it, was not willing to 'go into the merits of the case' and opposed Digby's actions. The main problem from Herbert Gladstone's point of view was, as Digby put it,

... the propriety, or otherwise, of the secretary of the National Liberal Club, in his private capacity and from his private address, calling attention ... to a state of things unparalleled by anything the government has had to deal with in either South Africa or North Africa – at home or abroad. You declare, inferentially rather than directly, my conduct to be incompatible with the position I hold.¹⁹

Hence, Digby was to give up his criticism of the Raj or resign his connection with the Club. His answer was:

Should an occasion again arise in which I shall be situated as I was situated when I wrote and issued the letter you condemn, I shall act as I acted then. With this difference, however, a difference caused by your letter to me: I shall inform the Committee what I am about to do and if they consider my conduct to be incompatible with the official position which I feel it an honour to hold, then as a man of honour and conscience I shall have no course before me but to resign the secretaryship. ... God forgive me for having, in the past, been too indifferent

to considerations such as I have described, and may He help me to be more true to the cause of ill-governed India in the future.²⁰

The election of 1885: 'India's Interest in the British Ballot Box'

The matter was left at that and Digby was made a Liberal parliamentary candidate for the forthcoming election. When he was 'no longer in hostility towards the wishes of the Committee', he approached Herbert Gladstone to get some 'pecuniary help' towards his expenses from the Liberal Central Association.²¹ Previously he had approached his Indian friends in a similar way, asking them to guarantee, in case of election, his election expenses, all office expenses, and an honorarium of £1,000 per year.²² The requests were as unsuccessful as his attempt to get into the Commons.

In British politics Digby was an advanced radical and a staunch supporter of Gladstone. He was determined to make Indian reforms part of the Liberal programme, but ended up disappointed. Indian nationalists were not eager to interfere in British party politics, believing that reform would be best accomplished by appealing to both Liberals and Conservatives alike. In 1885, even Dada-bhai Naoroji, who was later to become both Digby's close friend and a Liberal MP, held this opinion.²³ Furthermore, neither Digby nor anyone else managed to get William Gladstone – who was wholly preoccupied with the Irish question – significantly interested in India.

Before the election, Digby's book was briefly reviewed in *The Times*. The reviewer averred that it contained many points which were 'worthy of serious consideration'.²⁴ Soon afterwards, Digby published yet another book, *India's Interest in the British Ballot Box*. 20,000 copies – a

'In that work I produce evidence of the most remarkable character, evidence which ought to lead to a re-consideration of our position in India.'



quarter of which went to members of the National Liberal Club – were printed and all circulated by the end of September.²⁵

‘I do not know of a more complete task of the kind ever having been attempted or carried out’, Digby wrote to Lord Ripon, who paid the expenses. ‘From the purely business point of view only there is more than value for the money. I have never before known so much work done for so small an amount’, he assured Ripon when sending the bill. The readers of the book had ‘the opportunity of seeing what your lordship’s policy in India really was’; and furthermore, ‘in case of future depreciation of your work, the facts received will be useful, and will be availed of, for reference’. ‘There has not yet been time for people to read the pamphlet, but such remarks as I have heard from those who have read portions are full of admiration at what they regard as the moral grandeur and material beneficence of your administration,’ Digby asserted; ‘your lordship will see how your policy is accepted as the guiding star for the reformation of India’.²⁶

Dadabhai Naoroji, Liberal MP for Finsbury Central, 1892–95, the first non-white to sit in the House of Commons

Indeed, the book was to a great extent a major apologia for Ripon’s Indian policy. After discussing Ripon’s Viceroyalty in detail, Digby further emphasised the vital need for local self-government which Ripon had sought to advance. He also criticised the fact that the promises made to employ Indians in the government of their own country had not been kept. The first step forward, Digby argued, would be a ‘Royal Commission of Enquiry into the whole administration of India’.²⁷

Digby was convinced that the Indian issue could be warmly and successfully espoused by supporters of Liberal politics. He wrote confidently in the preface:

I remember how keenly my countrymen resisted the stamping out of Polish nationality by the despotic empires of Europe and how warmly they sympathised with the aspirations and the efforts of the Italians to free themselves from the hateful yoke of the Austrians at Venice and of the French at Rome. Consequently, I am sure that the affairs of their fellow-subjects in India and in the Crown Colonies will not be pushed aside as of little concern. ... The system of administration now existing in India is as certainly doomed to early overthrow as was Negro slavery in the United States.²⁸

In contrast to Indian nationalists, Digby stressed that Indian reform had to be made a party question: ‘None but Liberals are prepared for the annoyance, vexation, misrepresentation, misunderstanding, which always accompany the initiation of reform – whether for one’s own country or for another’, he explained, predicting that sooner or later ‘special broadly-defined Indian reforms will take a regular place in the programmes discussed on Liberal platforms’.²⁹

The election of 1885 was the first to bring the Indian issue to

the fore. In addition to Digby’s efforts, this was accomplished through the candidacy of Lal-mohan Ghose in east London and the visit of a three-man delegation from India. In the end, both Ghose and Digby were defeated.³⁰

The Indian Political Agency

At the end of 1885, the Indian National Congress formulated its programme and from then on Digby was a staunch advocate of its demands: the ‘Indianisation’ of the Indian civil service, considerable reductions in military expenditure, a parliamentary inquiry into Indian affairs, abolition of the India Council, and Indian representation in the legislative councils of India.

It was at this time that Digby befriended the leading Congressman, Dadabhai Naoroji, who settled in London in 1886, hoping to become a Liberal parliamentary candidate. When Naoroji first visited Digby in April 1886, he found the latter ‘depressed’ because ‘he had not suitable and proper representatives of India’. Then ‘he over and over again repeated that now that I had come, be the result about my object what it may, he will be able to work for India, with more heart and zeal. He was extremely desirous to do all that lay in his power to promote my object.’ When they met again ten days later, the work was well under way. To begin with, Digby strongly recommended that Naoroji change his Parsi headdress to an English top hat: ‘better to appear altogether like an Englishman’. He also intended to get Naoroji a ticket to a Liberal meeting in favour of the Irish Bill, and advised him to prepare to speak in favour of Irish Home Rule at some point.³¹

Disappointed by the non-political, leisurely social atmosphere at the National Liberal Club, Digby resigned his secretaryship in 1887. The following

April he formed an Indian and Political General Agency, which was to provide services for Indian political associations, native states, and individuals alike.³² Digby's main intention was to serve the Indian National Congress, and he thus suggested that all Indian political associations should jointly appoint him as their agent on a yearly fee of £250 plus expenses.³³

Naoroji's friend W. C. Bonnerjee, who was visiting London, personally guaranteed Digby's expenses for 1888.³⁴ The campaign got off to a highly promising start, and in the winter of 1888–89 Digby visited India to attend the fourth Congress and to secure financial support for his Agency. There he collaborated closely with A. O. Hume, who pressed upon Congress-workers the vital need for British propaganda on an adequate scale:

Our only hope lies in awakening the British public to a sense of the wrongs of our people – to a consciousness of the unwisdom and injustice of the present administration. The least we could do would be to provide ample funds ... to carry on agitation there, on the lines and scale of that in virtue of which the Anti-Corn Law League triumphed.³⁵

During his visit Digby became the English representative for several Indian papers, and London correspondent of the *Hindu* in Madras and the *Amrita Bazar Patrika* in Calcutta, both eminent daily newspapers.³⁶ The financial question, however, remained unsolved.

In his Agency work, Digby received extensive help from the Liberal MP Charles Bradlaugh. Having a parliamentary representative 'of its own' was one of the most important things for the Agency. Prior to the founding of the Agency, Digby had asked Herbert Gladstone 'to do something to safeguard the interests of the Indian people who are, in all

such instances, entirely unrepresented and without a voice or direct influence',³⁷ but soon after the Agency was founded, Bradlaugh was 'chosen' instead.³⁸ From 1888 until Bradlaugh's death in 1891, Digby coached him on numerous Indian issues for questions in the Commons and energetically assisted him in promoting two successive Indian Reform Bills. A few samples of Bradlaugh's frequent messages to Digby serve best to reveal the nature of their relationship:

Have you a spare copy of the Memorandum which you prepared officially and circulated last year when it was thought my motion would come on for Royal Commission? Give me the exact references to the Lansdowne and Trevelyan referred to in it. You promised me a complete copy of the Dufferin Minute. If you have it kindly send it as early as you can together with a complete copy of the Lansdowne Minute of February. (16 June 1890).

Mr Asquith wants you to give him particulars so that he may speak for us on the Indian Councils Bill. I wish you would do it as early as you can, for we may be surprised any day by having the Bill thrust on us. Our duty is clearly to be ready for the fight always. (28 June 1890).

Reid wants you to pen him a short brief from which he could speak in support of my amendment. (1 July 1890).

When Bradlaugh's 'membership for India' became more famous, dozens of letters poured in from India to him, and he forwarded them regularly to Digby to answer on his behalf.³⁹

In order to gain financial support from India, Digby produced two considerable collections of articles and interviews which eloquently presented various sides of the British campaign

and, coincidentally, brought the crucial roles of Digby and, especially, Bradlaugh forward.⁴⁰ The first collection, *India in England*, also included Digby's interview with William Gladstone on Indian matters.

'I have always had good will towards the Indian people and have done for them, from time to time, all that has seemed to me possible', was the 'assurance of sympathy' from the Grand Old Man when interviewed by Digby in April 1889. Digby sought to convince Gladstone that 'if ever there was any organisation in the British Empire which deserved the hearty support of all English Liberals, it is this of the Congress', emphasising the constitutional manner in which the Congress acted. 'Indeed, I am speaking sober truth when I say there is no loyalty in the British dominions more sincere than that of the Indian reformers', Digby insisted. However, Gladstone was rather suspicious of the 'seditious native press' which, he had heard, contained 'writings of a disloyal character'. Digby assured Gladstone that he, who was an expert on the Indian press, did not know of any such instances; 'but as a matter of fact district officials in India are such irresponsible despots that they resent all comment on their actions however mild, and call that sedition what probably any unprejudiced person would say fair criticism'. Gladstone 'could well believe that'.⁴¹

In July 1889, Digby's Agency was merged with the newly-established British Committee of the Indian National Congress, and Digby was made its first secretary. When the Committee began publishing its own paper, *India*, in 1890, Digby also became its first editor. Funded mainly by Indian nationalists, *India* was distributed free to parliamentarians, political clubs and the British press, and in these important spheres it was fairly successful. However, money was an issue. Whereas the Anti-Corn

Digby coached Bradlaugh on numerous Indian issues for questions in the Commons and energetically assisted him in promoting two successive Indian Reform Bills.

Law League, Hume's model, had spent more than £200,000 in 1843–46, the Committee's yearly income averaged around £3,000.⁴² Indian financial support for the British Committee remained limited.

Radicalisation and defeat

Encouraged by Lord Ripon, Digby organised another British tour for a Congress delegation in the spring of 1890. The deputation of eight notable nationalists arrived in early April and began with public meetings in London, which Naoroji and Digby also attended.⁴³ At Bradlaugh's request, the nationwide tour was then started from his constituency, Northampton, where the meeting was held with 'very good attendance'.⁴⁴

Undoubtedly Digby also aimed to further his own cause within the Liberal Party through the delegates. They were summoned to a meeting at the National Liberal Club in order to 'acquaint them with the programme of the campaigners in Britain and to see in what way they could help'. He also emphasised to the readers of *Hindu* that 'everywhere Liberals have assisted the delegates and formed the audiences: nowhere have the Conservatives even attended the meetings to learn what Indian grievances are'.⁴⁵ Moreover, Digby organised the tour so that it finished conveniently with a meeting with William Gladstone. When the delegates affirmed their hopes for the first steps in representative government in India by the expansion and reconstitution of the councils, Gladstone responded: 'Well, it seems you must be prepared to wait a little longer for the realisation of your hopes. You will have to wait a while.'⁴⁶

At around the same time, Digby began to radicalise, which soon led him into disagreements with the Committee, which stressed moderation. The first sign of trouble appeared

with the last issue of *India* of 1890. This 'Christmas number', called 'The Kashmir Injustice: A British Disgrace', was, in effect, an exhaustive defence of the deposed Maharaja of Kashmir.⁴⁷ Digby had continued the commercial practice of his private Agency alongside his work for the Committee, and his dual roles as secretary to the Committee and, simultaneously, as head of his private Agency, were anomalous and confusing. His paid agitation on behalf of the Maharaja of Kashmir as well as those of Nepal and Mysore 'became increasingly a source of embarrassment to the Congress in India and its Committee in England'. Furthermore, Digby irritated the Indian government through his interference with the government's sensitive relations with the princely states.⁴⁸

Matters became even worse when Digby unleashed his anti-imperialism in the following issue, called 'An Open Letter to the Members of the House of Commons on The Dark Side of British Rule in India: a side so dark as to make it doubtful if British rule has been and is a blessing to the masses of India'. He cited an impressive array of statistics, exposing the huge dimensions of India's poverty, and blaming Britain.⁴⁹ This 'statistical revelation' continued in subsequent numbers, and Digby also repeated his strong arguments in an interview in *Greater Britain*, whose editor described Digby's letter as 'one of the most terrible indictments ever probably written of a governing race'.⁵⁰ At the same time, Digby's position in the Committee was weakened by the death of his patron, Charles Bradlaugh, in early 1891.

Nevertheless, Digby's energetic efforts carried him ahead in radical Liberal ranks, securing him a candidacy for South Islington in 1892. His election programme was similar to the official Gladstonian programme apart from the inclusion of the

issue of Indian reform, which stated the Congress demands.⁵¹

In 1891–92 Digby also acted as election agent for Naoroji, Liberal candidate for Central Finsbury. During the long election campaign which culminated in Naoroji's winning the seat, Digby was his staunchest supporter, taking care of many practical things and guiding Naoroji in Liberal circles and political practices.

In 1885 in North Paddington, Digby had secured 1,797 votes (42.0 per cent) against his Conservative competitor's 2,482 votes (58.0 per cent). In 1892 in South Islington he achieved 2,873 votes (47.4 per cent) against his Conservative competitor's 3,194 votes (52.6 per cent).⁵² 'Deeply disappointed' but 'not overcome', he wrote to a friend: 'I believe, if elected, I could have done India and this country some service. I ought to have won. And, I should have won if I had been fighting an honest foe. The 300 votes by which I lost were, literally, taken from me by means which will ill bear investigation.'⁵³

Digby thanked his supporters and explained his defeat in *India*, the *Hindu*, and the *Amrita Bazar Patrika*. In his opinion he was beaten 'because, in the last four days of the fight, our opponents almost literally snatched many of those who had promised us their support, out of our hands'. Among other things he complained that his competitor had replaced all Digby's posters – 'Vote for Digby and for Real Unity and Home Rule for Ireland' – with his own.⁵⁴

The last issue of *India* which Digby edited appeared in September 1892. In January 1893, *India* began its new series with H. Morse Stephens, Lecturer in Indian history at Cambridge, as its editor. The Committee continued on moderate lines, while Digby sometimes criticised it rather severely in his letters to the *Amrita Bazar Patrika* and the *Hindu*.⁵⁵

'I have always had good will towards the Indian people and have done for them, from time to time, all that has seemed to me possible', Gladstone assured Digby.

In the following decade, Digby and Naoroji joined forces several more times on Indian matters. As late as 1904, the year Digby died, they addressed the London India Society, an organisation of Indian students in Britain, together. Digby began by stressing the need for Indian self-government, and Naoroji followed in similar vein. In the more radical atmosphere of the early 1900s, their suggestion 'was at once and almost universally approved by the nationalist press in India'.⁵⁶ By this time, both Digby and Naoroji had fully developed their ideas in huge volumes, both published in 1901. In *Poverty and Un-British Rule in India*, Naoroji put the finishing touches on his 'drain theory' – namely that Britain was draining wealth out of India – and Digby's satirically entitled '*Prosperous*' *British India: A Revelation from Official Records* constituted a major indictment of the financial and economic impacts of the Raj.

Despite their best efforts, Digby and his co-agitators did not succeed in making Indian reform a major issue in British politics. The official British response to the campaign was wavering and suspicious, and tended to avoid defining the aims of Indian policy in clear terms. Since Indian nationalists expected prompt legal reforms, they soon became frustrated with the constitutional approach and this frustration doomed the reform effort to failure.

Nevertheless, with his work Digby did his best to keep Indian concerns in the British media, and the British people gradually became more familiar with Indian affairs. Previously, the British Raj had been a subject of interest only to experts and Anglo-Indian officials, but during the 1880s it became discussed among the wider public as well. Indeed, Digby succeeded in his most important objective – namely to *familiarise* the British with the Indian administration

and 'render it easily digestible'. The campaign did shape public opinion in Britain, but in the eyes of Indian nationalists this happened far too slowly.

Certainly, being a critic of empire in late-nineteenth-century Britain was far from easy. Dissenters and pioneers were often ridiculed, and William Digby was no exception; as a consequence, he suffered a severe mental breakdown in 1886, from which it took years to recover fully, and when he died in 1904 at the age of 55, it was said to be of 'nervous exhaustion'.

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 - 33 W. Digby to P. Mehta, 24 April 1888, quoted in M. D. Morrow, 'The Origins and Early Years of the British Committee of the Indian National Congress, 1885–1907'

- (unpublished PhD thesis, University of London, 1977), p. 30.
- 34 *India*, No. 15 (5 December 1890), p. 296.
- 35 A. O. Hume to the Indian nationalists, 10 February 1889, quoted in Sir W. Wedderburn, *Allan Octavian Hume: Father of the Indian National Congress, 1829–1912* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002 [1913]), p. 70. Hume was the son of Joseph Hume, an Anti-Corn Law League activist.
- 36 ‘Mr Digby’s “Record”’, in W. Digby, *The General Election of 1892, South Islington: I. Address of the Liberal Candidate, Wm Digby, C.I.E.*
- II. Mr. Digby’s ‘Record’* (London: A. Bonner, 1892), p. 35.
- 37 W. Digby to H. Gladstone, 23 February 1886, British Library, Viscount Gladstone Papers, Add. MS 46052, f. 34.
- 38 Digby’s notes of an interview with Lord Ripon, 10 November 1888,

RESEARCH IN PROGRESS

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

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

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

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

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

The Liberal Party’s political communication, 1945–2002. PhD thesis. *Cynthia Messeleka-Boyer, 12 bis chemin Vaysse, 81150 Terssac, France; +33 6 10 09 72 46; cynthiandrea@aol.com.*

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

- British Library, Ripon Papers, Add. MS 43636, f. 149.
- 39 Letters and telegrams from C. Bradlaugh, December 1889 – January 1891, British Library, Oriental and India Office Collections, William Digby Collection, MSS Eur D767/7.
- 40 *India in England, Volume II: Being a collection of speeches delivered and articles written on the Indian National Congress, in England in 1889* (Lucknow: G. P. Varma & Bros, 1889); W. Digby, *Indian Politics in England: The Story of an Indian Reform Bill in Parliament Told Week by Week; with Other Matters of Interest to Indian Reformers* (Lucknow: Ganga Prasad Varma & Bros, 1890).
- 41 ‘Mr. William Digby’s interview with Right Hon. W. E. Gladstone’, 8 April 1889, in *India in England, Vol. II*, pp. 61, 66.
- 42 M. D. Morrow, ‘The British Committee of the Indian National Congress as an Issue in and an Influence upon Nationalist Politics, 1889–1901’, in K. Ballhatchet and D. Taylor (eds), *Changing South Asia: Politics and Government* (Hong Kong: Asian Research Service, 1984), p. 58.
- 43 *India*, No. 4 (11 April 1890).
- 44 C. Bradlaugh to W. Digby, 8 February 1890, British Library, Oriental and India Office Collections, William Digby Collection, MSS Eur D767/7; *India*, No. 5 (25 April 1890), pp. 87–93.
- 45 W. Digby to the *Hindu*, 25 April 1890, in Digby, *Indian Politics in England*, pp. 133, 135.
- 46 *India*, No. 9 (21 June 1890), p. 175.
- 47 *India*, No. 15 (19 December 1890).
- 48 S. R. Mehrotra, *A History of the Indian National Congress, Vol. I, 1885–1918* (New Delhi: Vikas, 1995), p. 96; Morrow, ‘The Origins and Early Years of the British Committee’, pp. 37–41.
- 49 *India*, No. 16 (16 January, 1891).
- 50 ‘The Man of the Month: Mr. W. Digby, C.I.E.’, *Greater Britain*, No. 4 (February 1891), p. 310; and Digby’s detailed answers to the editor’s comments in W. Digby, ‘British Rule in India: Has it been, is it now, a good rule for the Indian people?’ *Greater Britain*, No. 5 (March 1891), pp. 340–44.
- 51 Digby, *The General Election of 1892*, pp. 11–17.
- 52 F. W. S. Craig (ed.), *British Parliamentary Election Results 1885–1918* (London: Macmillan, 1974), pp. 38, 25.
- 53 W. Digby to Sir George Birdwood, 10 July 1892, British Library, Oriental and India Office Collections, Sir George Birdwood Collection, MS Eur F216/49.
- 54 *The Hindu*, 27 July 1892 and *The Amrita Bazar Patrika*, 29 July 1892, quoted in *India*, No. 33 (26 August 1892), p. 216; *India*, No. 33 (26 August 1892), pp. 216–18.
- 55 Mehrotra, *A History of the Indian National Congress*, p. 96.
- 56 *Ibid.*, p. 120.

LETTERS

The greatest Liberal?

So Liberal historians, seeking ‘the greatest Liberal’ (*Journal* 57), have rejected Gladstone, Asquith and Lloyd George who actually held office, and they have rejected Keynes and Beveridge who, while never in office, substantially influenced events.

They have chosen instead the theoretician John Stuart Mill who sat only briefly as a Liberal MP, and lost his seat in the very 1868 general election which set in office the first government to which the name ‘Liberal’ can be applied without any hesitation.

Is there a moral, perhaps an unfortunate one, here? Do Liberal historians actually prefer theorists to people who do things?

Roy Douglas

Lloyd George and Hitler

I was astonished to read in the report of the discussion at the History Group meeting on ‘The Greatest Liberal’ (*Journal* 57) that Lloyd George ‘was credited with being one of the first to warn of the dangers of Hitler’. I hope that no one believed it!

Speaking at Barmouth in September 1933, Lloyd George argued that, if Hitler were to be overthrown, Communism would come to Germany. In November 1934, in the Commons, he said: ‘Do not let us be in a hurry to condemn

Germany. We should be welcoming Germany as our friend’.

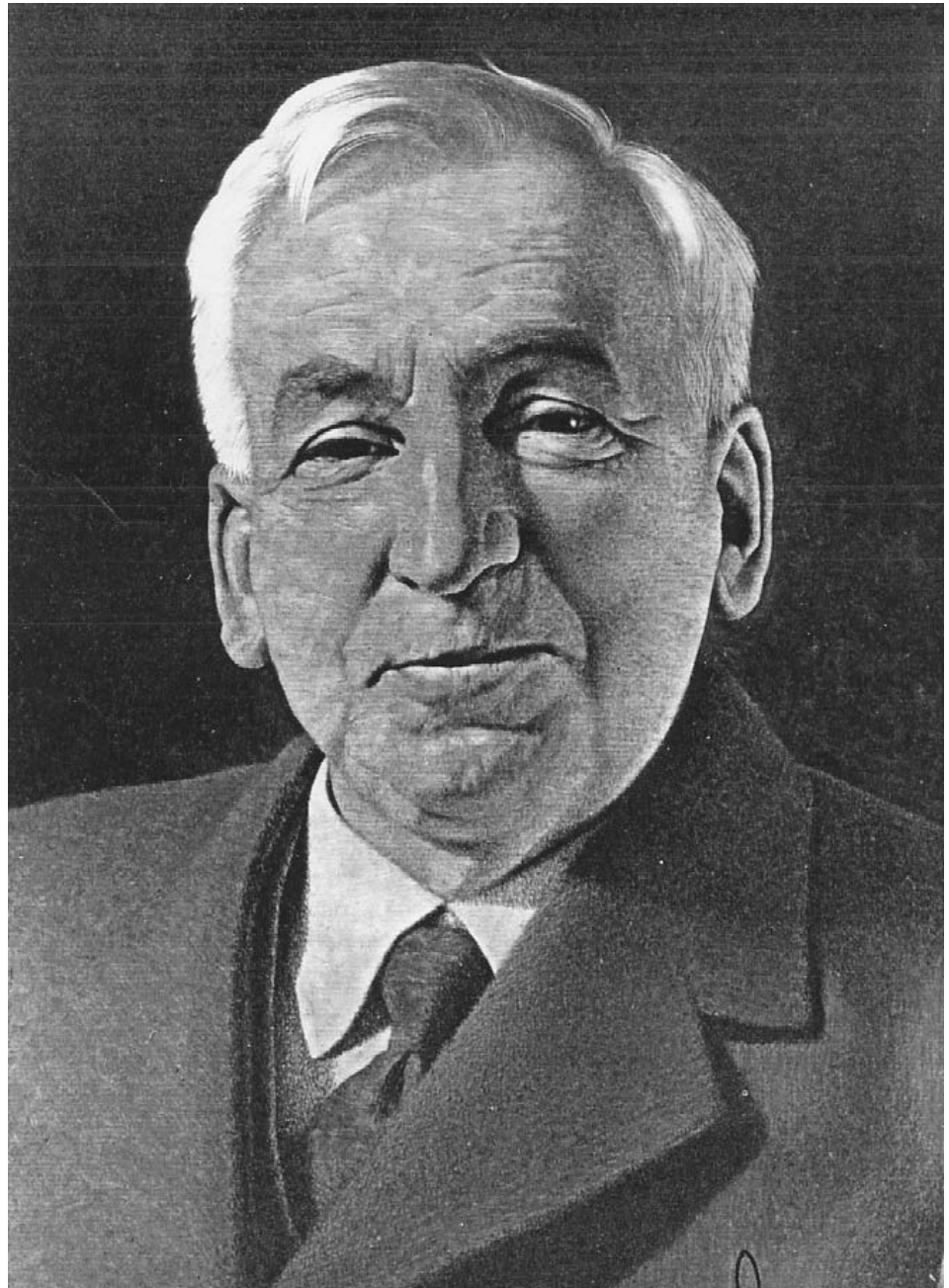
In 1936, he sought in the Commons to justify Hitler’s remilitarisation of the Rhineland; and, after meeting the Fuehrer later in the year, he declared that Hitler was ‘indeed a great man’, and wrote an article about him in the *Daily Express*, headed ‘The George Washington of Germany’, in which he said that: ‘The idea of a Germany intimidating Europe with a threat that its irresistible army might march across frontiers forms no part in the new vision’, and that ‘the Germans have definitely made up their minds never to quarrel with us again’. Explaining away the concentration camps, he declared *Mein Kampf* to be Germany’s Magna Charta; and even after the declaration of war, in November 1939, he had to be dissuaded from sending Hitler a letter of congratulation following the Fuehrer’s fortuitous escape from an assassination attempt!

All this is well known to most historians. It seems to me to disqualify Lloyd George from being regarded as ‘The greatest Liberal’ or indeed as a liberal of any sort. It is a pity that none of this is mentioned in Kenneth Morgan’s account,

Vernon Bogdanor (*Professor of Government, Oxford University*)

THOMAS JONES'

Dr J. Graham Jones discusses the classic biography of Lloyd George written by Thomas Jones, the eminent Deputy Secretary to the Cabinet from 1916 until 1930. In this unique capacity he served four very different Prime Ministers at the hub of British political life. His closeness to Lloyd George (and Baldwin) was proverbial – yet his biography was unpopular with Frances, Lloyd George's wife. Published by Oxford University Press in 1951, how has Jones's *Lloyd George* stood the test of time?



S LLOYD GEORGE

THOMAS JONES (1870–1955), a notable civil servant and public benefactor, was born at Rhymney in north-west Monmouthshire on 27 September 1870.¹ He received his early education at the Upper Rhymney board school and the fee-paying Lewis School, Pengam. His undoubted early academic promise seemed to come to an abrupt end when, at just fourteen years of age, he left school to take up a position as a clerk in the local ironworks. But the young Tom Jones continued reading avidly and excelled at scripture examinations, eventually winning the highly-coveted ‘Gold Medal’ of the Calvinistic Methodist denomination.

In the autumn of 1890, with the avowed aim of becoming a nonconformist minister, he entered the relatively new (it had been established in 1872) University College of Wales, Aberystwyth. Ironically, however, although displaying academic potential, Jones’s abject failure in mathematics, a core subject, meant that he could not graduate from Aberystwyth. Eventually he secured a highly-distinguished first class honours degree in philosophy and economics from Glasgow University in 1901, where his mentor was the renowned Welsh

philosopher Sir Henry Jones. During his period at Glasgow he joined the Independent Labour Party and helped to found the local Fabian Society. In December 1902, Jones married Eirene Theodora Lloyd, one of his fellow students at Aberystwyth. The marriage was to produce three children, one of whom, Mrs Eirene White, served as the Labour MP for Flintshire East from 1950 until 1970.

Although the strength of Tom Jones’s religious beliefs waned somewhat during his years at Aberystwyth and Glasgow, his social conscience grew and convinced him of the importance of social improvement work. His close friends included Sidney and Beatrice Webb and George Bernard Shaw. In 1909 he became the first Professor of Political Economy at Queen’s University, Belfast, but he was soon to be persuaded by David Davies, of Llandinam, to return to Wales to take up the post of Secretary of the King Edward VII Welsh National Memorial Association, which the multi-millionaire Davies had set up and financed to tackle the dreadful scourge of tuberculosis. Between 1912 and 1916 Jones then served as Secretary of the Welsh Insurance Commission, based in Cardiff, in which position he came into contact with

David Lloyd George, since 1908 the Chancellor of the Exchequer in Asquith’s government. When Lloyd George succeeded Asquith as Prime Minister in December 1916, Tom Jones was appointed first a member, and subsequently Deputy Secretary, of the Cabinet Secretariat, where he was to remain until 1930. His original hope for the position was to develop himself into ‘a fluid person moving among people who mattered and keeping the PM on the right path as far as is possible’.² In this unique capacity he was to serve four very different Prime Ministers – David Lloyd George, Andrew Bonar Law, Stanley Baldwin and James Ramsay MacDonald – at the hub of British political life. During the post-war coalition government, Jones dealt especially with industrial and labour questions and also played a key role in achieving the partial settlement of the vexed Irish question in 1921. He was also a trusted adviser to Baldwin at the time of the General Strike of May 1926. His closeness to both Lloyd George and Baldwin was proverbial. That a man originally firmly on the left of the political spectrum could end up as a close friend and trusted adviser to Stanley Baldwin, even drafting his political speeches, seems rather bizarre, but it would seem

Thomas Jones in
1937

that Jones's opinions had been transcended somewhat over the years by his deep admiration for Baldwin as an individual.

Jones's retirement from this position in 1930 certainly did not mark a retreat from public life. He continued to engage in a vast range of activities and built up a huge number of friends and associates. He still moved in political circles and was consulted regularly on appointments and the award of honours, especially in Wales. He continued to serve Stanley Baldwin in the latter's role as Prime Minister of the so-called 'National Government' (even drafting his 1935 general election speeches), made numerous trips abroad (including two controversial visits to Nazi Chancellor Adolf Hitler at Berchtesgaden), and was an active member of the Unemployment Assistance Board set up in 1935 with the aim of taking the vexed question of unemployment relief out of politics. His main preoccupation from 1930 onwards, however, was as the linchpin of an array of philanthropic, cultural and educational activities, particularly within Wales. To this end he served from 1930 until 1945 as Secretary to the Pilgrim Trust (originally financed by the American oil tycoon Edward Harkness) which distributed more than £2,000,000 during the long 1930s for the relief of the unemployed and for heritage protection. Jones was also a member of many of the committees of the National Council of Social Service.

Tom Jones's formidable contribution to educational concerns ran parallel to these activities. He was for more than half a century a pillar of the Workers' Educational Association, and gave exemplary support to the University of Wales (most especially the University College of Wales, Aberystwyth), the National Library and the National Museum of Wales. Failure to secure the position of Principal at Aberystwyth in 1919

In this unique capacity he was to serve four very different Prime Ministers – David Lloyd George, Andrew Bonar Law, Stanley Baldwin and James Ramsay MacDonald – at the hub of British political life.

had left a sore which continued to fester for the rest of his life – even after he had been elected President there in 1944. But the initiative with which Jones seemed 'divinely obsessed'³ was the establishment in 1927 of Coleg Harlech in north-west Wales, a pioneering residential adult education college to provide a unique opportunity for working-class young men. Before the Second World War, more than 220 young men passed through its doors. Parallel to this dynamic initiative was Jones's staunch support for the Educational Settlement Movement in south Wales. His loyalty to Wales was always unquestionable.

In the spring of 1945, Thomas Jones, accompanied by his unmarried sister Liz, leased a house at Aberystwyth, initially for a period of fifteen months. By this time he was a widower; his wife Rene, to whom he was totally devoted, had died, after a brief illness, in July 1935. The main reason for the move to Aberystwyth was that he had recently accepted a commission from Harvard University Press in the US to write a life of Lloyd George, and was anxious to make full use of the resources of the National Library of Wales: 'We have taken it from May 1st unfurnished. Its attraction for me is its nearness (5 minutes) to the National Library.'⁴ In 1946 he moved into another property owned by the National Library, situated at the end of its drive. This was to be his main base until 1954. A second reason for the migration to Aberystwyth in 1945 was Jones's election the previous year as President of the local University College. Now he was to be 'a President of the College in residence'.⁵ This followed his recent resignation as the long-term Secretary of the Pilgrim Trust. Although he had enjoyed his work for the Trust immensely, he was now in his seventy-fifth year and had become very much aware of the inevitable ageing process,

writing privately to a friend at the beginning of March, 'I'm less and less equal to things and problems. Signs of old age and decay of body rapidly multiplying now.'⁶

The prospect of researching and writing a biography of Lloyd George proved enticing. He had developed a great deal of admiration for Lloyd George from 1916 until at least about 1940. But he had looked askance at the former Prime Minister's obstinate refusal even to contemplate joining Churchill's coalition government in 1940 (or even to lend general support to the conduct of the allied war effort), and he had listened sorrowfully to A. J. Sylvester's incessant tales of the bitter family quarrels which had erupted during the build-up to Lloyd George's second marriage to his private secretary Frances Stevenson in October 1943. Lloyd George's acceptance of a peerage in January 1945 was a further thorn in Jones's flesh. On 2 February he had written to his old friend Violet Markham, a prominent long-term Liberal activist and public servant:

When criticising the Earldom I was not thinking of this aspect of his story, as of the deep & widespread disappointment in Wales with one who has been proud always to keep close to the common people & who did boldly always stand up to the land & money, power & privilege in the countryside. Now he & F[rances] play the local squire & lady bountiful, which is rather nauseating. I could not get myself to write congratulations on his marriage or peerage, partly because I did not want to take sides in the family squabble & I have a warm corner for Megan & admiration for Dame Margaret's dignified silence through twenty years of humiliation.⁷

Just eight short weeks later Lloyd George died at his new north Wales home, Ty

Newydd, Llanystumdwy. The BBC broadcast a tribute by Tom Jones on the day of Lloyd George's death, and an obituary penned by him was also published in *The Observer*.⁸ The Lloyd George family generally considered Jones's assessments to be too impersonal, clinical and detached, and it was widely felt that his relative detachment from his subject during the last five years of his life had coloured his judgement – for the worse. The day following the broadcast, Violet Markham wrote to Jones, 'I felt that subconsciously at the back of your broadcast lay something of the nausea you have experienced of late over the affairs of LG & his family & the sordid turns they have taken. You were so anxious to avoid anything of fulsome eulogy that perhaps you a little underplayed your hand.' She went on:

The Earldom is a great misfortune as it has turned out. You know I defended LG's action on the ground that a seat in the Lords would keep him in public life & give him a platform from which his voice could still be heard. But to take a title & die on it is to have the worst of all worlds. Frances as a dowager countess is ridiculous, so are the rest of the family. I wonder whether Megan will drop the 'lady'. I should do so in her place.⁹

Yet, in the immediate aftermath of Lloyd George's death, Tom Jones succeeded in convincing himself that, 'now that one has the freedom of history', it was possible to be relatively 'detached' and objective in writing a biography of Lloyd George. Hence his decision to accept the invitation of Harvard University Press.¹⁰ Within a month he had made contact with Frances, now the Dowager Countess Lloyd-George of Dwyfor, who responded that it would be 'a great pleasure' for her to welcome Tom Jones to Ty Newydd, although adding rather tartly, 'It would

have been a pleasure for LG also, and I do not know how you got hold of any idea to the contrary.'¹¹ Following their meeting (during which they went together amicably enough to see Lloyd George's impressively simple grave on the banks of the river Dwyfor), however, Frances refused to lend any help or support to Jones's venture: 'I do not feel very happy about the book which you say you are proposing to write on LG ... It cuts right across the book for which I am negotiating ... which I would personally supervise, providing, of course, new material and all the necessary documents.' She went on,

During these latter years you were engaged in serving his political opponents, whose chief aim, at whatever cost to the country's welfare, was to keep LG out of office. Quite frankly, therefore, I do not think, if you will pardon my saying so, that you would be the best biographer of this period. In any case, I am sure you will understand that under the circumstances it would be difficult for me to give you any help or material for your book.¹²

In response, Jones attempted to be conciliatory:

LG ... is big enough to have many more books written about him without exhausting the subject. ... I am only too conscious of my imperfections as a possible student of any period of LG's life, but perhaps I can say with complete truth that in serving his political opponents I did not entirely forget that I had served him. Indeed the charge against me as a civil servant might well be that I carried any old loyalty to him to extreme lengths!¹³

Other members of the Lloyd George family were, however, predictably more supportive. During the following November, Jones spent 'an hilarious

evening' over dinner with Lady Megan Lloyd George and his daughter Eirene. He at once found Megan 'most approving of the notion' that he should write her father's life '& very willing to help. I don't imagine she has any documents, only her own personal impressions.'¹⁴

Before the end of the same month, an announcement had been made that an 'official life' of Lloyd George was to be written by 'Mr Malcolm Thompson, for many years on the staff of the Liberal Party Organisation'. The announcement was greeted, it was noted, 'with considerable surprise'. Was not Dr Thomas Jones 'the name that most naturally occurs' in any consideration of the most suitable biographer for Lloyd George? Jones, it was widely known, was engaged in his own biography, 'but without access to the public and private papers in the Dowager Countess Lloyd George's possession. For it is the Dowager Countess who controls the situation as regards material for the biography.'¹⁵

Both Malcolm Thompson and Dr Thomas Jones CH were the latest in a long line of Lloyd George biographers and chroniclers.¹⁶ His earliest biographers had been Welshmen like J. Hugh Edwards and Beriah Gwynfe Evans, staunch Liberals, steeped in the ethos of Cymru Fydd, who tended to eulogise their subject somewhat uncritically. English writers from the same period like Herbert du Parcq (who published a four-volume multi-biography in 1912), Harold Spender and E. T. Raymond also tended to sympathise with Lloyd George. A new phase was, however, inaugurated following the collapse of the post-war coalition government in October 1922 and the subsequent beginning of Lloyd George's so-called 'wilderness years'. Disillusioned Asquithian loyalists like J. A. Spender, A. G. Gardiner and Charles Mallet all relished the opportunity to denigrate Lloyd George's good name,

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a trend reinforced by the verdict of the economist J. M. Keynes in his bitter 'essay in biography' published in 1933. The same year had seen the publication of Lord Riddell's *War Diary*, a highly revealing source which did not always portray Lloyd George in a favourable light.¹⁷ On the eve of the Second World War there appeared W. Watkin Davies's *Lloyd George, 1863–1914* (London: Constable, 1939), the most valuable account to date of Lloyd George's life and career up to the First World War, a study which contemptuously dismissed Lloyd George's post-1914 political career as 'purposeless', a period when he had been 'left to his own devices and seconded by charlatans whose grip of political principles was even weaker than his own'.¹⁸ The image of Lloyd George which emerged from Lord Beaverbrook's *Politicians and the War, 1914–1916* (2 vols, London: Butterworth, 1928 and 1932), too, was at best mixed. He emerged as power-crazy and anxious only to assume the premiership.

Thomas Jones (and indeed Malcolm Thompson) had the advantage of undertaking their research at a greater remove from the events which they were describing and after their subject's death. Jones at least savoured the many long hours which he spent researching at the National Library of Wales. He soon became a familiar figure in the little seaside town, habitually clad in a grey or fawn cloak and a battered deerstalker hat. On 1 April 1946, he wrote to Violet Markham, 'I have no news in this remote region, where the sun shines daily & diffuses most welcome warmth. I am carried daily by your benevolence to the [National] Library where I try to read fifty books at once in an effort to keep track of the elusive LG.'¹⁹ Between 1945 and 1950 researching and drafting the book were to prove his main preoccupations. Early on in the extended enterprise

(which he declared to be 'a judicial attempt at interpreting a genius'²⁰), he resolved to shun the use of private papers and official documents other than those already available in print. 'I am sure the job of writing a life must be terribly difficult to do without papers', wrote Lady Megan Lloyd George consolingly in May 1946, 'but it may end in a much more human narrative. What is needed is a live portrait – and that I feel sure you will give.'²¹ To compensate for the lack of primary source materials, Jones requested memoranda from individuals who had worked closely with Lloyd George or who had a specialist knowledge of important events.

During 1946 it became more widely known that Tom Jones was engaged in preparing a life of Lloyd George. The news at once gave rise to 'much enthusiasm' for the 'intrinsic interest' of the proposed work and as a potentially 'fascinating display by a master in the art of walking the tight rope'.²² The author was, however, reminded that constraints existed on the freedom of former civil servants to publish.²³ This thorny question had already been raised in the House of Commons on 1 August 1946, and was relevant at the time in the context of the proposed biography of Lord Baldwin being written by G. M. Young and the publication of the diaries of Lord Hankey, the first ever Cabinet Secretary back in 1916. At the end of the year, Jones read in the press that *The Real Lloyd George*, authored by Lloyd George's former Principal Private Secretary A. J. Sylvester (an old acquaintance of Jones's) was to be published during 1947. Although he must have felt some resentment that Sylvester had to some extent 'stolen his thunder' by bringing out his book so promptly, Jones wrote to him, 'You must have worked very hard on it & it is sure to meet with great success. For myself my pace is that

of a septuagenarian & a slow one at that.'²⁴ In response, Sylvester anticipated Jones's 'frank expression of opinion on the work which has been executed against time', and continued, 'But I am waiting for your Life, for you can give the Celtic touch, with your knowledge and experience of the subject, which no other can excel.'²⁵ During February and March 1947, lengthy, potentially sensational extracts from Sylvester's forthcoming book were published in the *Sunday Dispatch* and gave rise to much interest and, by and large, commendation.²⁶

Thomas Jones, undaunted, plodded on resolutely with the task in hand. 'I go to the [National] Library almost daily', he wrote to his old friend Abraham Flexner at the end of April, 'but am experiencing a great decline in my powers of work which I suppose is to be expected!'²⁷ He was somewhat frustrated by the long delay in the appearance of Sylvester's eagerly-anticipated *The Real Lloyd George*, caused by an acute paper shortage, problems over binding, and the austerity which inevitably reigned in post-war Britain. He arranged to meet Sylvester in London at the beginning of July: 'I wish I had gone into partnership with you over it – sharing the profits and supplying the ballast! My effort makes slow progress and of course I blame the weather.' Both men were much annoyed by the lack of availability of pre-publication copies of Sylvester's tome, the author responding to Jones, 'When I think how I sweated and rushed everything through, and how long I have waited – well, it's just too bad.' Sylvester was apparently most anxious that Tom Jones, whose views and opinions he respected, should write a full review of the volume.²⁸ By September, Jones had evidently received an advance copy of *The Real Lloyd George* and sent an effusive congratulatory message to his old

He soon became a familiar figure in the little seaside town, habitually clad in a grey or fawn cloak and a battered deerstalker hat.



associate who replied, 'Coming from an old friend and colleague, who knew Lloyd George so well, I value it all the more.' Sylvester would feel 'honoured' should Jones wish to quote from the book in his own writings.²⁹ Within a week, Jones had sent to Sylvester a list of minor factual errors within the volume, expressing the hope that they might perhaps be corrected in a second edition.³⁰

Sir Robert Horne, David Lloyd George and Thomas Jones at the Cannes conference in 1922.

On the face of it, relations between the two authors were amicable and harmonious enough. But the following July, by which time Jones had already drafted a considerable part of his proposed biography, he did not mince his words in a private letter to Violet Markham: 'I had such a revulsion reading Sylvester on Sylvester that I was determined mine should not be TJ on TJ. I've probably gone

too far in the other direction.'³¹ Reading Sylvester's tome had clearly induced him ruthlessly to eschew much of his personal knowledge of Lloyd George which he had originally planned to include. Now he was very conscious of the potential risks of submitting to excessive personal prejudice.

At about this time there was an attempt to revive the idea of a national memorial to Lloyd

George, first mooted by Frances during April and May 1945. Then, in the immediate aftermath of Lloyd George's death, recalled Jones, 'I [had] tried to dissuade her, as I knew that attempts to do him honour in his lifetime had to be artificially buttressed.' Frances had retorted sharply by stating her intention to request that Winston Churchill launch the appeal. Jones went on, 'I [had] tried hard to get LG to subscribe to [Coleg] Harlech in vain!' By now, Frances had already disposed of their north Wales home, Ty Newydd – 'the house that I went over with Dame Margaret when it was destined for Lady Carey Evans. You see what a nasty mind I have. How much are the LG family subscribing? They are notorious for giving nothing to anything or anybody.' On reflection, he readily admitted that, in relation to the proposed Lloyd George memorial, 'I am much too prejudiced to be fair to it.'³²

By this time, Sylvester's *The Real Lloyd George* had captured the popular imagination and had gone out of print within weeks of publication. Severe paper shortages had made a second edition impossible. Some members of the Lloyd George family had generally welcomed the book – with the predictable exception of Frances. One of the admirers within the family was Richard Lloyd George, now the second Earl, who had himself published *Dame Margaret: the Life Story of his Mother* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1947).³³ At the beginning of November, Tom Jones wrote to Violet Markham:

I came up on Tuesday to the Athenaeum with Irvine & found Baldwin there. He had come up for the unveiling of the statue to George V. He asked me at once what I thought of Sylvester's book with its revelation of the autocratic chief. Later in the week Sylvester came to see me for half an hour & said the book was having a

By this time, Sylvester's *The Real Lloyd George* had captured the popular imagination and had gone out of print within weeks of publication.

great sale, but that the American agent was discouraging about an edition in that country as no one was interested in LG. The family dislike the book. I am to dine at the House with Megan on Wednesday next & shall hear what she thinks. Nothing approaching the truth can be expected to please her. Not one of the family, nor the Countess, has acknowledged the presentation copies sent by the author.³⁴

A week later he spent an evening at the House of Commons with Lady Megan Lloyd George, the Liberal MP for Anglesey since 1929, an interlude which he felt to be 'more enjoyable than profitable'. He found her to be 'furious with Sylvester & I cannot hope that my objective treatment of her father will not deeply disappoint the family. I tried hard to prepare her for this but I made little or no impression.' There followed two meetings with A. J. Sylvester: 'His bitterness is reserved for the Countess who seems to have promised at first to use him in connexion with the Life of LG, & then to have dropped him completely in favour of Malcolm Thompson – hence [Sylvester]'s speed in rushing out his book to get his blow in first.'³⁵

Shortly afterwards Jones sent the first 126 pages of his manuscript to the officials at Treasury Chambers for their approval. As they dealt with the period before his appointment to the Cabinet Secretariat, no objection was raised.³⁶ Before the end of 1947 he was reasonably satisfied with the writing of the book: 'I ... have made enough progress with it, in my slow fashion, to see the end approaching.' He then anticipated a volume of some 150,000 words which he hoped to complete by the spring of 1948. The final product would be 'more a class text book than a sensational story, with LG against the background of events in which he played a part'. At this point, the death of Earl Baldwin and

the publication in *The Times*, in a much-truncated form, of a lengthy obituary which he had prepared several years earlier led Tom Jones to reflection. The biography of Baldwin then being written by G. M. Young, Jones anticipated, would be 'a first rate job of work'. He mused on the four premiers whom he had served between 1916 and 1930:

Of the four PMs for whom I worked SB was the most considerate & grateful chief & the best friend in all weathers. His religion had given him a quality of modesty & forbearance & forgiveness of human frailties & he had a more intense love of the countryside & its beauty than had LG; Bonar [Law] had none. But I must not wander on like this. I can sum up by saying how greatly I prize the two words he [Baldwin] several times inscribed on books he gave me: 'With gratitude & affection.'³⁷

He plodded on with his writing as 1947 gave way to 1948 and still corresponded widely. A. J. Sylvester proudly recalled his own role in securing the indexing of the massive archive of Lloyd George's papers and in the researching of the *War Memoirs* in the 1930s: 'May your book be a best seller, and I shall be one of the first to purchase it when it is out. Whatever you do get it out before Frances.'³⁸ (This was presumably a reference to the 'official biography' by Malcolm Thompson, then known to be in an advanced stage of preparation.) A large number of associates commented in detail on the first draft of Jones's book during the spring of 1948, and their observations were then incorporated in subsequent revisions.³⁹ Sylvester, simply one of many to lend assistance in this connection, found the experience 'very interesting. It has whetted my appetite to read the book when it is ready. One thing only do I wish to say: Let URGENCY

be your motto. If you intend to publish it in this country, there is not a minute to lose.³⁰

Mastering the array of printed sources alone had proved a formidable task. But in the summer of 1948, the full text of the book, running to some 170,000 words, had been sent off to its American publishers. It was generally well received, but the company's rather patronising reader in the US eventually concluded that the text had to be pruned 'rather extensively'. The coverage of the period before 1914 needed to be abbreviated, and the chapters devoted to the years after 1922 axed ruthlessly: 'They all deal with Lloyd George's failures when he was out of power. ... The details are certainly of less interest to an American audience than to a British one.'³¹ Jones dutifully tackled the task of extensive revision which he found irksome and laborious. In November he opened his heart once more to Violet Markham: 'I've reached the stage when I think the LG book is "rotten" & ought to be completely rewritten. I had no business to attempt it knowing the strict conditions laid down for civil servants. ... What a number of snags & slips I find in this attempt at a final revision. ... So much of what I've written is stale for scholars & dull for the general reader.'³² He had long since concluded that accepting the commission to write the book was 'a piece of impertinence because of its extraordinary difficulty'.³³ His negative feelings were accentuated by the appearance in December of Malcolm Thompson's 'official biography' of Lloyd George. As he put it to his daughter Eirene:

The LG 'Official' Life came today & first impressions are very favourable. It is v. well produced, easy to handle, & well illustrated. Have only just savoured the text, which is fluent & readable, & if on the

partial side that is what one would expect. Of course it overlaps my effort in all sorts of ways & from sales standpoint it w[oul]d have been well if I had hurried a bit to be out first, but I don't find hurrying easy any more. Looking back I wish I had thought of doing the book or preparing to do it when I went to the P[ilgrim] T[rust] in 1930 & had some surplus energy. I think this publication may confine mine to USA. We'll see. And anyway I've thoroughly enjoyed the National Library.⁴⁴

(Even after the eventual publication of his own volume in the autumn of 1951, these emotions did not disappear. As he then wrote to an associate, 'I often wished in writing the LG that I had made the other choice', a reference to the possibility of preparing a biography of Stanley Baldwin rather than Lloyd George.⁴⁵) Just before Christmas 1948 he submitted his 'final script' of the Lloyd George biography 'reluctantly – should like now to rewrite it and properly, but unequal to it at seventy-nine. Should have started when I went to the P[ilgrim] T[rust]. I hope G. M. Y[oung]'s opus [on Baldwin] progresses towards perfection.'⁴⁶

In January 1949 Tom Jones sought the permission of Lloyd George's elder daughter Lady Olwen Carey-Evans to include in the book a full-page photograph of her mother Dame Margaret, continuing:

I have purposely avoided consulting you, Gwilym and Megan closely so that you may truthfully say when it appears that none of you has any responsibility for what I have written. I confess I had no idea when I lightly promised to do the book how difficult I should find the task at my age. Had I started twenty years ago it would be far more adequate than it is.⁴⁷

It was generally well received, but the company's rather patronising reader in the US eventually concluded that the text had to be pruned 'rather extensively'.

Lady Megan also assisted in the selection of illustrations and provided Jones with some of her father's original speech notes, commenting, 'Blessed is he who can read them in the original.'⁴⁸ The winter of 1949–50 saw Jones put the finishing touches to his text, responding to comments from friends and associates, among them Violet Markham, to whom the author observed, 'Re-reading it I feel it is more political history than personal biography, & far too much like a memorandum by a civil servant, as I think you said. Anyway I can't attempt to rewrite it, nor do I suppose I should succeed any better.'⁴⁹ Later the same month saw the aged patriarch dutifully plodding up to the National Library of Wales to make the final amendments, lamenting, 'There is loss as well as gain. They [the American publisher's readers] fight shy of human touches & points of interest to us in this country. Some I am re-inserting.' He anticipated that this thankless task would continue for several weeks. Jones then reflected on a curious plan hatched in 1922, when the coalition government was conspicuously tottering, for the well-heeled Davies family of Llandinam to purchase *The Times* newspaper and install Lloyd George as editor:

I am in correspondence with Stanley Morrison on the negotiations for the sale of *The Times* in 1922 which took place before it was bought by J. J. Astor. I went for LG to Scotland to see DD [David Davies, of Llandinam], Gwen & Daisy with a view to their buying it & making LG editor!! on the fall of the coalition. DD & G[wen] were willing but Daisy objected on the advice of their stockbroker. DD & LG as owner & editor would not have lasted a month together.⁵⁰

At this point he still hoped that the book would appear in the

autumn of 1950, at least on the other side of the Atlantic: 'At the moment I am checking bibliographical references, & taking out commas with which they have plastered its pages in USA! I don't like these three first months of the year & prefer to hug the blankets, but I can't complain.'⁵¹ His attention was absorbed, too, by the progress of the February 1950 general election campaign, in which his adored daughter Eirene was the Labour candidate at highly-marginal Flintshire East. In March Churchill was approached to write a foreword to the volume – 'So far as he [Lloyd George] ever had a political friend you were that friend' – but the Tory leader rather churlishly responded, 'Alas, I cannot add to my tasks at the present time', adding, 'I shall await the publication with great interest!'⁵² At the end of November, Jones was delighted to receive from Harvard the final, complete typescript text of his biography – 'It begins at last to look like a book' – which had been quite savagely pruned to some 120,000 words (a cut in the region of 50,000 words) and contained just six illustrations. The volume was expected to sell at fifteen shillings. On 1 December the text was returned to Oxford to be converted into long galley proofs.⁵³

In fact, the rewriting and elimination of material had been much more ruthless than Tom Jones had suggested in his correspondence to friends and associates – to the immense loss of historians of modern Wales. The eventual published volume focused primarily on the period from 1914 to 1922, although the blame for this did not lie with Jones. A great deal of important early Welsh material was cut out. A whole chapter on the campaign to secure the disestablishment of the Welsh church between 1886 and 1914 re-emerged as just one brief paragraph. Although Jones had been close to Lloyd George during the period after 1922,

the chapters on these years were again cut back quite substantially – as the result of the directives of the reader employed by the Harvard University Press who had insisted that the American readership at least would not be 'much excited by the long drawn-out demise of the Liberal Party and Lloyd George's part in it'.⁵⁴

The dawn of the new year – 1951 – saw poor Tom Jones, now fully eighty years of age, literally 'up to the eyes with LG proofs'. What an exacting & exhausting job it is – grammar, punctuation, capitals, quotations. I go daily to the NLW. ... I have 176 pages out of 300 in page form.' At this late stage, a further cruel blow was received when Lord Beaverbrook, by then the owner of the copyright for the Lloyd George Papers, obstinately refused permission to Thomas Jones even to quote passages from the published *War Memoirs* on the rather spurious grounds that he [Beaverbrook] had already commissioned Robert Sherwood to write a biography of Lloyd George. 'I'm having lots of bothers over the LG book', lamented Jones at the end of the month, attributing at least some of his difficulties to the fact that 'I am not one of the favourites of the Countess'.⁵⁵ The refusal to allow him to quote from the Lloyd George *War Memoirs* in particular he felt to be 'a nasty set-back', and his publishers considered Beaverbrook's churlish obstinacy 'unprecedented in their experience', but Jones resolved not to challenge the press magnate's decision as:

Beaverbrook is so incalculable that I decided not to write to him. I suspect the refusal comes from another source. So I set to & have eliminated several quotations & traced several to their sources from wh[ich] LG took them & altered footnotes &c – a great costly nuisance. The incident quite upset me. However I am now recovered & C. is satisfied that Beaverbrook

will not have any ground for a prosecution.⁵⁶

The proofs were duly returned to the printers on 12 February, and the final pages were printed and numbered by 22 April, by which time Sir Geoffrey Whitehead, a former civil service mandarin at Whitehall, was busily at work preparing the index.⁵⁷ Whitehead had completed his laborious chore by 10 May and lavished praise on Jones's ability as a biographer 'to pack [in] an extraordinary amount of matter and at the same time to keep [the chapters] most readable', while the final chapter surveying Lloyd George's character had emerged as 'a really balanced and fair estimate of a fascinating and complex character'.⁵⁸

On 20 August 1951 Tom Jones was thrilled to receive his first advance copy of the final published tome, now due to be published simultaneously in Britain and America on 4 October. Its proud author considered the bound volume 'an admirable piece of bookcraft & worthy of the Press. ... I am most proud of the Index!!' He much regretted, however, the decision to charge one guinea for each copy rather than fifteen shillings – 'few buyers in Wales I imagine will stretch to a guinea for any book'.⁵⁹ The final volume ran to 330 pages and contained a full bibliography of the sources used and a magnificently detailed index. Ironically, as the publication of the book approached, the indefatigable Jones was busy at work on the final proofs of his autobiographical volume *Welsh Broth* ' & feeling rather sorry that I ever bothered to print it. I could have had a few copies typed for circulation "within the family"'. But I've gone too far with the publishers to draw back now.⁶⁰ He regretted that the official launch of the Lloyd George biography coincided with the beginning of the October 1951 general election campaign, '& its sales will be damaged for the

The dawn of the new year – 1951 – saw poor Tom Jones, now fully eighty years of age, literally 'up to the eyes with LG proofs'.

moment at any rate'. But he was 'much comforted' by the generous letters which he received from friends and reviewers who had been given advance copies of the book.⁶¹

Generally, indeed, the response of the reviewers was most gratifying. The Countess Lloyd-George, however, was predictably unimpressed. As she wrote privately to Ann Parry, Lloyd George's former 'Welsh secretary' and now the curator of the new Lloyd George Museum at Llanystumdwy:

Have you seen Tom Jones' book? I just glanced at it & don't think much of it, & I am told that apart from the papers where he has a pull, it has not had very good notices, & that it is *not* a good book. Beaverbrook asked me: 'What was Tom Jones' quarrel with LG?' That will give you an idea of the tone of the book. Do you think we ought to have a copy for the Museum?⁶²

But the reviews which appeared in print from reputable, unbiased reviewers were encouraging. Perhaps the most welcome was that of Robert Blake, a future doyen of political biographers, in 1951 a thirty-four-year old tutor in modern history at Oxford University, who was himself writing a life of Andrew Bonar Law. In the pages of the *Evening Standard*, he hailed Jones's work as 'the clearest and most authoritative account ... of the greatest interest. ... In less than 300 pages Dr Jones has been able to describe nearly everything that matters.' Inevitably, claimed Blake, the severely-compressed narrative degenerated into 'a crowded catalogue of events – and catalogues are often dull', and Jones tended to play down the importance of Bonar Law in Lloyd George's life and was notably 'sparing of personal reminiscences' such as the celebrated visit to Hitler at Berchtesgaden in the autumn of 1936

In the pages of the *Evening Standard*, Blake hailed Jones's work as 'the clearest and most authoritative account ... of the greatest interest. ... In less than 300 pages Dr Jones has been able to describe nearly everything that matters.'

when Jones himself was actually present. The final chapter was 'the best', and throughout his study Jones had been impressively 'wise. Political biography has in the past suffered from too much sugar. A dash of vinegar is a welcome change.'⁶³ In *The Observer*, Dingle Foot hailed the book as 'a remarkable achievement' where 'the controversies of 1916 to 1922' were 'recorded and analysed with a high degree of objectivity', whereas a review in the *Manchester Guardian* concluded that Jones had 'come nearer grasping the man entire than any previous biographer'. In *The Spectator*, the respected Welsh academic (and former Liberal MP for the University of Wales) W. J. Gruffydd welcomed the volume as 'an impressive attempt' to write 'an excellent text-book ... indispensable for the student of modern politics – but the student of society must turn elsewhere. ... For reliability and accuracy, no other biography of Lloyd George can compare with this work.' Gruffydd did, however, criticise Jones for being 'unduly circumspect', tending to 'skim over' discreditable episodes in Lloyd George's career such as the Marconi affair and the use of the Black and Tans in Ireland after the war. In the *Daily Telegraph*, Lord Birkenhead described Tom Jones's volume as 'the best and most objective book on Lloyd George ... scholarly and erudite ... painstaking without being dull. ... He has austere refrained from idolatry', while 'discuss[ing] with candour ... the more dubious aspects of Lloyd George's public conduct'. Although he felt compelled to stop short of hailing the work as 'a great biography', Birkenhead welcomed it gladly as a 'restrained and able book ... a true step forward in the attempt to assess this fascinating and baffling character'.⁶⁴

Some critics, inevitably, were not so generous. Frank Owen, himself at work on a massive volume on Lloyd George

(eventually to be published as *Tempestuous Journey* by Hutchinson in 1954), suggested that Jones had been far too guarded and over-cautious – 'What a story Tom Jones hasn't told!' Owen himself was to make very extensive use of the massive archive of Lloyd George's papers sold by the Countess to Beaverbrook in 1949. A. J. Cummings wrote of Jones's biography as 'competent, clear-cut, critical, with an air of scrupulous fairness ... but it is not by a long way – and could not very well be – the whole of Lloyd George'.⁶⁵ Such critical views were, however, very much in the minority.

On the whole, Jones himself was 'quite satisfied with the reception. It's amusing to watch what is quoted', while recognising that, 'Future *Lives* will do more than I have to stress the greatness & the warts.' He hoped that readers would 'read the book straight through & not in snippets'. By 9 October the Oxford University Press had resolved to initiate a second print-run of 3,500 copies. A full 4,000 copies had already been sent to the US.⁶⁶ The flood of reviews extending over several weeks continued to prove 'most diverting' to the aged author, although many reviewers felt that he should have been 'more expansive. I couldn't if I tried. I've forgotten the good stories. ... Meanwhile my secret service tells me that Beaverbrook paid the Countess £18,000 for the LG papers. They show that LG had been involved in four divorce suits, but had managed to extricate himself from all of them.'⁶⁷

Encouraged by the reception accorded to the Lloyd George biography, Tom Jones then began to consider publishing lengthy extracts from the detailed diaries which he had kept throughout his period in public life. He recognised from the outset, however, that publishing the diary material was 'a most difficult proposition *in my life time*. I am toying with its

preparation but the task of selection is a nightmare – so many people are alive – & kicking. I hope to manage one if not two volumes.⁶⁸ Indeed, after the publication of his biography of Lloyd George in the autumn of 1951, Jones devoted much of his time and energy during 1952 and 1953 to the preparation of a volume of his diaries interspersed with correspondence. Oxford University Press had again agreed to publish. The task kept him ‘fairly alive & active at Aberystwyth’ throughout 1953.⁶⁹ The selection of photographs for the volume proved an immensely difficult task, as its author had studiously avoided being photographed with the Prime Ministers whom he had served. The book, *A Diary with Letters, 1931–1950*, was eventually published by OUP on 21 October 1954 and was dedicated to Jones’s wife Eirene Theodora Jones (1875–1935). A most substantial volume running to no fewer than 582 pages and priced at thirty shillings, its author considered it ‘too dear to give away’. Within a month, Frank Owen’s biography of Lloyd George, *Tempestuous Journey*, had also seen the light of day, a mammoth study which Jones was quick to dismiss as mere ‘first rate journalism’.⁷⁰

By this time Tom Jones was in his eighty-fifth year and his health had begun to fail. Consequently he resolved to resign the Presidency of UCW, Aberystwyth and Coleg Harlech and the Chairmanship of the Pilgrim Trust. He decided to leave Aberystwyth and move to Manor End near Birchington in Kent which was just ten minutes’ journey away from his son Tristan and his family, and where he might see more of his daughter Eirene, since February 1950 – to Jones’s great delight – the Labour MP for Flintshire East in north-east Wales. Her second re-election in this marginal constituency in May 1955 brought much joy to her ailing father, who eventually died on 15 October 1955,

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just three weeks after his 85th birthday.

Tom Jones’s biography of Lloyd George, published as long ago as the autumn of 1951, has stood the test of time, regularly being cited and quoted by authors and scholars ever since. In February 1972, Kenneth O. Morgan, in a marvellous survey of the historiography of Lloyd George, still referred to the book as ‘by far the best one-volume study of Lloyd George to date’.⁷¹ Although it is probably fair to say that that accolade was subsequently taken by Peter Rowland in his magisterial biography published three years later – *Lloyd George* (London: Barrie and Jenkins, 1975), running to 872 fact-packed pages – Jones’s volume certainly remains a most concise and useful source, an essential short guide for the student of Lloyd George.

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

- 1 A superbly authoritative and scholarly biography of Dr Thomas Jones CH is available in E. L. Ellis, *T.J.: a Life of Dr Thomas Jones CH* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1992). The contents of this volume were subsequently summarised in E. L. Ellis, ‘Dr. Thomas Jones, CH, of Rhymney: a many-sided Welshman’, in the *Transactions of the Honourable Society of Cymmrodorion*, 1992, pp. 183–97. See also the helpful article by Rodney Lowe in the new *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Vol. 30 (Oxford: OUP, 2004), pp. 649–52.
- 2 Keith Middlemas (ed.), *Thomas Jones, Whitehall Diary, Vol. I* (London: Oxford University Press, 1971), p. 15.
- 3 Ellis, *T.J.*, p. 299.
- 4 National Library of Wales (hereafter NLW), Dr Thomas Jones CH Papers T7/40, TJ to Violet Markham, 30 March 1945.
- 5 The phrase is that used in Ellis, *T.J.*, p. 471.
- 6 Thomas Jones to David Astor, 3

March 1945 (private collection).

- 7 NLW, Dr Thomas Jones CH Papers T7/131, TJ to Violet Markham, 2 February 1945.
- 8 A transcript of the broadcast was published in *The Listener*, March 1945, and was also made available in pamphlet form. There is a copy in the NLW, Dr Thomas Jones CH Papers, file 7/58. The obituary appeared in *The Observer*, 1 April 1945. See also Thomas Jones, ‘Lloyd George: some personal memories’, *Contemporary Review*, May 1948, pp. 260–64. Jones had received ‘a sudden and urgent request’ to prepare an obituary notice for Lloyd George as early as April 1943: see NLW, Dr Thomas Jones CH Papers T7/79, TJ to A. J. Sylvester, 16 April 1943 (‘Private and Personal’) (copy), and Sylvester to TJ, 19 April 1943 (‘Private and Personal’).
- 9 *Ibid.*, T3/55, Violet Markham to TJ, 27 March 1945.
- 10 *Ibid.*, T7/40, TJ to Violet Markham, 30 March 1945.
- 11 *Ibid.*, A1/69, Frances Lloyd-George, T Newydd, Llanystumdwy, to TJ, 26 April 1945.
- 12 *Ibid.*, A1/70, Frances Lloyd-George to TJ, 20 May 1945.
- 13 *Ibid.*, A1/71, TJ to Frances Lloyd-George, 22 May 1945 (copy).
- 14 *Ibid.*, T7/154, TJ to Violet Markham, 10 November 1945.
- 15 *The Spectator*, 30 November 1945.
- 16 A most helpful survey, written from the vantage point of the early 1970s, is Kenneth O. Morgan, ‘Lloyd George and the historians’, *Transactions of the Honourable Society of Cymmrodorion* 1971, Part I (1972), pp. 65–85. This was originally given as a lecture at the House of Commons on 22 February 1972.
- 17 See the review in the *New Statesman and Nation*, 17 June 1933.
- 18 W. Watkin Davies, *Lloyd George, 1863–1914* (London: Constable, 1939), pp. 279–81 and 289. See also the review by R. H. S. Crossman in the *New Statesman and Nation*, 25 March 1939.
- 19 NLW, Dr Thomas Jones CH Papers T8/8, TJ to Violet Markham, 1 April 1946.
- 20 Cited in Ellis, *T.J.*, p. 494.
- 21 NLW, Dr Thomas Jones CH Papers A1/72, Lady Megan Lloyd George

- to TJ, 31 May 1946.
- 22 Ibid., A1/73, J. A. Barlow, Treasury Chambers, to TJ, 25 November 1946.
- 23 Ibid., A1/74, TJ to Sir Edward Bridges, Treasury Chambers, 27 November 1946; *ibid.*, A1/75, Bridges to TJ, 2 December 1946. In the former letter TJ added, 'PS. Perhaps I should add that I have not sought access to the Official Papers in the keeping of Countess Lloyd-George'.
- 24 NLW, A. J. Sylvester Papers, file D6, TJ to Sylvester, 23 December 1946.
- 25 Ibid., Sylvester to TJ, 29 December 1946 (copy).
- 26 See J. Graham Jones, 'The Real Lloyd George', *Journal of Liberal History* 51 (Summer 2006), pp. 4–12.
- 27 NLW, Dr Thomas Jones CH Papers S3/81, TJ to Abraham Flexner, 24 April 1947.
- 28 NLW, A. J. Sylvester Papers, file D6, TJ to Sylvester, 10 June 1947; *ibid.*, Sylvester to TJ, 17 June 1947 (copy).
- 29 NLW, Dr Thomas Jones CH Papers 7/79, A. J. Sylvester to TJ, 25 September 1947.
- 30 NLW, A. J. Sylvester Papers, file D6, TJ to Sylvester, 2 October 1947; NLW, Dr Thomas Jones CH Papers 7/79, Sylvester to TJ, 7 October 1947.
- 31 Ibid., T8/89, TJ to Violet Markham, 1 July 1948.
- 32 Ibid., T8/83, TJ to Violet Markham, 5 June 1948.
- 33 For reviews of both books, see *The Listener*, 16 October 1947. *The Real Lloyd George* is also extensively reviewed in the *Times Literary Supplement*, 4 October 1947.
- 34 NLW, Dr Thomas Jones CH Papers T8/68, TJ to Violet Markham, 2 November 1947.
- 35 Ibid., T8/69, TJ to VM, 9 November 1947.
- 36 Ibid., A1/76, TJ to Sir Edward Bridges, [13 November 1947] (copy); *ibid.*, A1/77, Bridges to TJ, 1 December 1947.
- 37 Ibid., S3/86, TJ to Abraham Flexner, 28 December 1947.
- 38 Ibid., 7/79, A. J. Sylvester to TJ, 20 December 1947.
- 39 See the correspondence *ibid.*, Class A2.
- 40 Ibid., 7/79, A. J. Sylvester to TJ, 27 February 1948 ('Personal').

- 41 Ibid., A1/79, 'A Second Note on THE LIFE OF DAVID LLOYD GEORGE by President Thomas Jones' by Donald C. McKay, 6 August 1948. Cf. *ibid.*, A1/78 for McKay's preliminary report.
- 42 Ibid., T8/104, TJ to Violet Markham, 9 November 1948.
- 43 Ibid., S3/86, TJ to Abraham Flexner, 28 December 1947.
- 44 Ibid., X10/139, TJ to Eirene Jones, 15 December 1947. On Thompson's volume, see the comments in *The Spectator*, 17 December 1948, and NLW, A. J. Sylvester Papers, file C94, Sylvester to TJ, 4 January 1949 ('Personal') (copy).
- 45 NLW, Dr Thomas Jones CH Papers A7/59, TJ to Geoffrey [?Fry], 9 October 1951 (copy).
- 46 Ibid., W7/158, TJ to Geoffrey Fry, Christmas Eve 1948 (copy).
- 47 Ibid., A1/83, TJ to Lady Olwen Carey-Evans, 25 January 1949 ('Personal').
- 48 Ibid., A1/84, Lady Megan Lloyd George to TJ, 16 June 1949.
- 49 Ibid., T8/147, TJ to Violet Markham, 3 January 1950.
- 50 Ibid., T8/151, TJ to Violet Markham, 23 January 1950.
- 51 NLW, A. J. Sylvester Papers, file C95, TJ to Sylvester, 27 January 1950.
- 52 NLW, Dr Thomas Jones CH Papers A1/85, TJ to Sylvester, 13 March 1950 (copy); *ibid.*, A1/86, Churchill to T. J. Wilson, 27 March 1950.
- 53 Ibid., T8/185, TJ to Violet Markham, 26 November 1950.
- 54 Ibid., A1/80, David Owen to T. J. Wilson of the Harvard University Press, 18 August 1948. The final typescript of the volume is available, *ibid.*, A3 and the working proof, *ibid.*, A4. On the final rewriting process, see also Morgan, 'Lloyd George and the historians', 1971, p. 70.
- 55 NLW, Dr Thomas Jones CH Papers T8/189, TJ to Violet Markham, 19 January 1951; *ibid.* file 1/3, Edith Barnes, Curtis Brown Ltd., London WC2, to TJ, 19 January 1951 (copy); *ibid.* W7/160, TJ to Geoffrey Fry, 24 January 1951 (copy).
- 56 Ibid., T8/190, TJ to Violet

A Kettner Lunch / Liberal Democrat History Group meeting

David Lloyd George

Owen Lloyd George, the present and 3rd Earl Lloyd George of Dwyfor, the grandson of Liberal Prime Minister David Lloyd George, will speak about his famous ancestor at the Kettner Lunch (organised jointly together with the Liberal Democrat History Group) to be held at the National Liberal Club on 15th April.

The lunch takes place at 1.00pm and costs £15 for two courses, followed by coffee and mints. You do not have to be a member of the National Liberal Club or the History Group to attend.

To reserve your place please contact **Peter Whyte** on 01344 423 184.

1.00pm, Tuesday 15 April

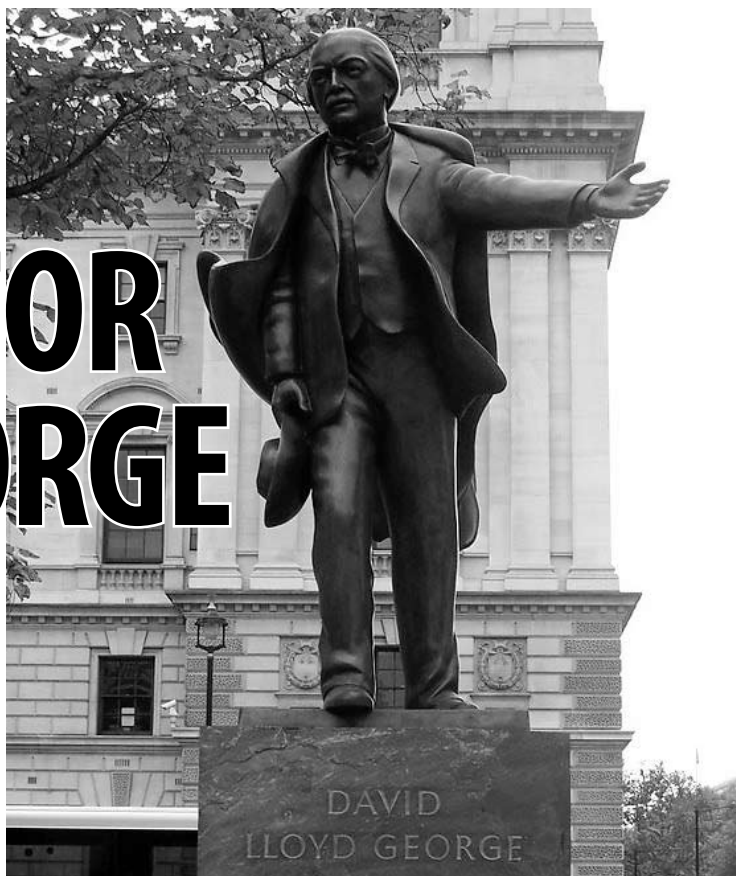
National Liberal Club, 1 Whitehall Place, London SW1

Markham, 2 February 1951.

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York Membership reports on the unveiling of the statue to David Lloyd George, Liberal Prime Minister 1916–22, in Parliament Square.

A STATUE FOR LLOYD GEORGE



THE GREAT and the good put aside political differences, at least for a few hours, to unveil a statue of Liberal Leader and Prime Minister David Lloyd George late last year. The weather might have been suitably Welsh, but the drizzle failed to dampen the proceedings at the event in Parliament Square on Thursday 25 October, when the £350,000 statue to the ‘Welsh Wizard’ was unveiled by the Prince of Wales and the Duchess of Cornwall in front of Royal Welsh bandsmen.

‘In the course of a decade, David Lloyd George established himself as one of the greatest social reformers and war leaders of the twentieth century’, said Prince Charles. ‘And though he never forgot his Welsh roots, it is as a national and international statesman that he will best be remembered.’

The official party included Prime Minister Gordon Brown and former premiers Margaret Thatcher and John Major. Prince Charles was Patron of the Appeal Trust Committee formed to commission the statue in recognition of Lloyd George’s contribution to public life. Also present were acting Liberal Democrat Leader Vince Cable, leadership candidate Chris Huhne (who last year told the *Journal of Liberal History* that his political hero was none other

than Lloyd George – see *Journal* 57) and Conservative Leader David Cameron.

The unveiling of the statue – designed by Welsh sculptor Professor Glynn Williams – was organised by the David Lloyd George Statue Appeal Trust following a long campaign to erect a fitting memorial to one of Britain’s greatest premiers.

The Patrons of the Trust included the Prince of Wales, Paddy Ashdown, Betty Boothroyd and John Major. The trustees included Michael Heseltine, Emlyn Hooson, Lord Morris of Aberavon (the former Labour MP) and Dick Newby. The late Ted Heath and Jim Callaghan had also been trustees until their deaths.

‘It’s been a long time in the making, but it’s there now’, said Professor Williams at the unveiling of the eight-foot-tall bronze statue, which stands on Welsh slate between two statesmen who were close to Lloyd George – Field Marshal Jan Smuts, and his friend and sometime political rival Winston Churchill.

After the statue’s unveiling, guests withdrew to the Methodist Central Hall for a champagne reception attended by the Prince of Wales and Sir John Major among others.

Perhaps fittingly, given the controversy he attracted in life, the unveiling of Lloyd George’s statue itself proved controversial, even though it took place more than sixty years after his death. On the day of the unveiling, a letter in *The Daily Telegraph* signed by Nobel Prize-winning playwright Harold Pinter and left-wing journalist John Pilger attacked the bombing by British war planes of the Middle East during Lloyd George’s premiership, which they claimed made ‘today’s celebration of Lloyd George’s legacy highly topical and disgraceful’.

But rubbishing their attack, the historian Kenneth O. Morgan surely spoke for Lloyd George supporters everywhere when he observed, ‘Lloyd George was a great radical and a democrat who deserves to be honoured’.

REPORT

Liberals and Local Government in London since the 1970s

Evening meeting, 4 February 2008, with Cllr Sir David Williams and Mike Tuffrey GLA; Chair: Cllr Stephen Knight
Report by Graham Lippiatt

WINNING LOCAL elections has been a keystone in Liberal (Democrat) success in the years since the adoption of the community politics strategy at the Eastbourne Assembly in 1970. There have been spectacular advances across London, from the heartland of the south-western boroughs to Southwark and Islington, and, more recently, there have been breakthroughs to share power in Camden and Brent. But there are still black holes – ten London boroughs with no Lib Dem representation, and places like Harrow and Tower Hamlets where the party controlled the council only to see a near wipe-out follow.

The meeting, which followed the History Group AGM, was chaired by Cllr Stephen Knight, who has spent the past ten years supporting Lib Dem councillors on what used to be called the Association of London Government, and is now known as London Councils – a time of change for local and regional government in London. Stephen introduced the meeting by looking back to 1986, one of his earliest political recollections, which sparked his interest in London politics, recalling that at that time Ken Livingstone was Leader of the Greater London Council, which was about to be abolished by Mrs Thatcher.

Our first speaker was Cllr Sir David Williams. David was first elected to Richmond

Council in 1974, was its leader for eighteen years (probably the longest ever serving Liberal leader of a local authority) and led the Liberal (Democrats) on the Association of Metropolitan Authorities, the London Boroughs Association, the Association of London Government and on the Local Government Association during its first few years of existence. He also played a prominent role on the post-GLC London Boroughs Grants Committee; he was given a knighthood in 1989 for services to local government.

David began by confessing that his favourite historical Liberal figure was David Lloyd George, but felt that the quotation on the statue of Gladstone, in the entrance to the National Liberal Club, provided him with a fitting starting point for his talk. The quotation is from a speech Gladstone made not long after switching his allegiance from the Tories to the Liberals: 'The principle of Toryism is mistrust of the people qualified by fear. The principle of Liberalism is trust in the people qualified by prudence'. Trust in the people remains an important component of Liberal (Democrat) philosophy today and has guided the party's approach to local government since 1970. What has distinguished our party from the other two over the years, as it still does today, is that we are a bottom-up party whereas they are top-down. He

continued with another nineteenth century quotation: 'Of all studies, the study of politics is the one in which a man can make himself most useful to his fellow creatures and that of all lives, public, political lives are capable of the highest efforts'. This comes from the autobiography of Anthony Trollope; David said it had been an inspiration for his political activity from a schoolboy interest at the time of the Suez crisis, through his presidency of the Liberal Club at Durham University and into Liberal politics in Richmond in the early 1970s.

Richmond was unusual at that time. It had had Liberal councillors in the early 1960s but none were elected after the first local government reorganisation of Richmond-upon-Thames Council in 1964 until Stanley Rundle got in at a by-election in 1966. He lost the seat in 1968 but was re-elected at another by-election in 1969. Rundle was an amazing man. He spoke fluent Italian, helping to compile a definitive English-Italian dictionary for Cambridge University. He held a PhD in languages and claimed a working knowledge of thirty-three languages, one of which was Welsh, as he grew up in a bilingual part of Wales; he allegedly swore in Welsh. Additionally, he held a chemistry degree and was a scientific translator. Politically, he was a brilliant exponent of community politics. He was one of the first to make use, in the 1960s, of local community newsletters.

David showed us one of the first issues of *Kew Comment*, produced by Stanley Rundle in 1963, quoting from it to demonstrate that Rundle was the true forerunner of thousands of *Focus* editors over the coming years. Effective coverage of an issue should state what the problem is, say how it came about and then say what was to be done – laced with some modest self-promotion and finishing

What has distinguished our party from the other two over the years, as it still does today, is that we are a bottom-up party whereas they are top-down.

with the invitation to the reader to get in touch if the problem recurs. While the copy in question reads in a dated fashion today, it was high-impact and truly ground-breaking at the time. The format inspired David's own efforts as editor of the *Ham & Petersham Comment*. He fought his first election in 1971, coming third. Rundle's reaction was to say it was good he had lost first time but not to lose again. Since then he has been elected eight times, so there must have been something in Rundle's thinking.

In 1973, Graham Tope's successful parliamentary by-election took place in neighbouring Sutton & Cheam. Trevor Jones came down from Liverpool to assist with literature and campaigning, and Richmond learned from these techniques. Then, later in 1973, came a local by-election in what had traditionally been a Labour-Tory marginal. Labour expected to win, having been successful in by-elections in 1972. The Labour candidate was Bob Marshall-Andrews (now a famous MP) and he finished nine votes from the Tory – but the Liberal candidate John Waller (later four times parliamentary candidate for Twickenham) was 400 votes ahead of both of them, a triumph. One of the innovations was a 'good morning' leaflet, and it was backed by a well-planned polling day organisation.

In many places local politics had become stale, decayed and complacent. The Labour and Conservative Parties put out one traditional glossy election address; no one flooded the area with localised leaflets. The other parties canvassed and got posters up, but they were essentially going through an established routine. The Liberals filled the vacuum with a campaigning style and energy which were new and of their time. It was not until later that the opposition parties began putting out

Effective coverage of an issue should state what the problem is, say how it came about and then say what was to be done – laced with some modest self-promotion and finishing with the invitation to the reader to get in touch if the problem recurs.

their own, similar, leaflets and it became necessary for the Liberals to respond. Rundle refused to go negative. He said he only mentioned the Tories in his leaflets to congratulate them on supporting Liberal policies. One of David's responses to the opposition's efforts to mimic the Liberal leaflets was to print in imitation Victorian copperplate: 'Distributed to every resident in the neighbourhood, always ask for *Comment* by name, accept no inferior substitutes, beware of imitations!' This was an effective riposte and the other parties became abusive after that, to their political cost.

From the earliest editions of *Comment*, there were action stories about local issues, alliterative headlines, opportunities to say what the councillors and campaigners were doing and invitations to the public to send in comments and complaints. David was also keen to stress that humour had its place, quoting from a joke questionnaire (underlining a serious political message that Liberal candidates were local and worked hard to represent their wards) and commenting how this approach piqued the other parties. He then showed us a series of Richmond newsletters from the early 1980s to the present day which were now more modern in style and format, with many photographs, but which showed a clear lineage in content and political philosophy going back to the innovative, original editions of *Comment* put out in the early 1970s.

The success of the community politics approach in Richmond was due not simply to campaigning techniques and literature design, nor the hard work put in by candidates. The basis of the success was teamwork, without which initial electoral victories cannot be consolidated or maintained. The demographics of Richmond were kind in that there were many young

professional, well-educated people who took to community campaigning. They scared the living daylights out of the Tories and obliterated Labour. The Liberals gradually got better at fighting and winning elections, winning nearly every by-election, and in 1982 the Alliance ended up with twenty-six seats, matching the Tories. The Tories retained control of the council only on the Mayor's casting vote. The strategy for the Alliance group was to maximise attendance to take advantage if any Tory councillors failed to show up and force every issue to the casting vote. This meant that the vote to elect the Mayor each year was crucial and was in effect the vote to decide who controlled the council. Then came a double by-election which offered the chance to win control outright. Neither ward was especially promising: one had the largest Tory majority in the borough, while the other had a Liberal majority of one. Despite this, confidence was high and so many helpers came from all over the country that there was sometimes nothing for them to do. The Tory leaflet campaign was not impressive. On one leaflet the headline 'Tories keep promises' was followed immediately by the words 'more heavy lorries in Hampton Wick'. The Liberal seat was held with a comfortable majority of over 300. The Tory seat was gained with a majority of more than 700.

Once in control, one of the innovations the Liberals introduced – trusting the people, consistent with a bottom-up ideology – was the pledge not to go ahead with any major development proposal until a majority of public opinion was in favour. The Conservatives and Labour both failed to understand the philosophy behind this approach, arguing publicly that councillors were elected to make decisions and should not

be ‘passing the buck’ to the people for their opinions.

Richmond was the first majority Liberal administration in Greater London but it was to be followed by others, and many other local councillors in London were elected as a result of the community politics approach. After 1986, the make-up of London councils allowed Liberals to take a leading role in two key London-wide committees on voluntary grants and planning advice. Through holding the balance of power on the grants committee, Liberals ensured that the voluntary sector was placed on a sound footing on a London-wide basis, despite all the political uncertainty and turbulence of the times.

In conclusion, David stressed the continuity flowing from the words of Gladstone about trust in the people, through the political philosophy of his hero Lloyd George, to Liberal political success in Richmond and across London. Community politics put Liberalism into practice in a new and effective way from 1970. It built on the legacy of previous Liberal greats, trusting in people, believing in them, and moving towards community engagement and empowerment.

In conclusion, David quoted from a provocative speech Lloyd George had made in December 1909, during the campaign for the January 1910 general election. This followed the political tumult of the 1909 People’s Budget and the issue of ‘Peers versus the People’:

Yesterday, I visited the old village where I was brought up. I wandered through the woods familiar to my boyhood. There I saw a child gathering sticks for firewood and I thought of the hours I spent in the same pleasant and profitable occupation; for I am also something of a backwoodsman. And there was one experience taught

to me which is some profit to this day. I learnt ... that it was little use going through the woods after a period of quiet and calm weather, for I generally returned empty-handed. But after a great storm, I always came back with an armful. We are in for rough weather. We may even be in for a winter of storms which will rock the forest, break many a withered branch and leave many a rotten tree torn up by the roots. But when the weather clears, you may depend upon it, that there will something brought within the reach of the people that will give warmth and glow to their grey lives. Something that will help to dispel the hunger, the despair, the oppression and the raw cold which now chills so many of their hearts.

Our next speaker, London Assembly Member Mike Tuffrey, first came to prominence in 1985, when he was elected to the old GLC in a by-election for its last year in existence. He later became a councillor in Lambeth, then a hotbed of what came to be described as ‘the loony left’ under Labour, serving between 1990 and 2002. In that time the Liberal Democrat group went from four members to twenty-five and became the largest party on the council. From 1994–98 Mike was joint Leader of Lambeth Council when there was no overall control and all three political parties took turns at the leadership. This presented the opportunity to transform Lambeth into a much more efficient and well-organised authority. In 2002 Mike succeeded to the London Assembly as a member of the Liberal Democrat list, replacing a Lib Dem member who had resigned. Since 2006, Mike has led the Liberal Democrat group on the Assembly.

Mike used his personal experience of Liberal politics in London to help illustrate the regional tier of government

in London and to review the politics of London-level government over the period in question. Mike first moved into Lambeth in 1981, just after the disturbances in Brixton. He came from Liberal roots; his grandfather, a Quaker, was a Liberal councillor in the Midlands in the 1920s and his mother was a Liberal activist in Orpington. In Lambeth in the early 1980s, where the Liberals had not traditionally been strong, there was a very active SDP group, but the Falklands War meant that just one councillor was elected at the 1982 borough elections, in Prince’s Ward. In 1985, Mike was elected to the GLC at the Vauxhall by-election, for which election Patrick Mitchell, now the History Group’s Membership Secretary, was his agent. In 2000 Mike stood unsuccessfully for the London Assembly but got in after the resignation two years later.

Turning to regional government, Mike explained that following the referendum of May 1998, which approved the setting up of a regional assembly for London, we have today the London Assembly, comprising twenty-five elected members, fifteen elected by first-past-the-post voting in single-member constituencies, and the remaining ten through a top-up list system. This ensures that the total number of Assembly Members is proportional to the votes cast in the list election.

The Liberal Democrats strongly supported setting up a regional assembly in London but had serious reservations, and still do, about some aspects of the machinery of London government and the role of the Mayor. In some respects, the Mayor is an elected dictator with very few checks on his powers. The Assembly and Mayor are responsible for strategic planning, advisory strategies for local councils on issues like water and noise,

In some respects, the Mayor is an elected dictator with very few checks on his powers.

transport (through Transport for London), fire and emergency planning (with the boroughs), police (jointly with independent members), and some newer responsibilities for housing, skills and waste management as well as the London Development Agency. However, it should be noted that there is still a Government Office for London, with a government minister for London and the 2012 Olympics, so decentralisation is not totally complete.

It is interesting to note that many of the issues being grappled with today go back to the time of the GLC and before, and there is still tension and ongoing debate between and within the national, regional and local tiers of government (and the political parties) in London about which is the right tier for particular London-wide responsibilities. When the GLC was established in 1963 it had responsibility for planning, major roads, refuse disposal (collection was with the boroughs), the fire service, the ambulance service, traffic management and research; it shared responsibility for housing, recreation, parks, sewage and land drainage. The boroughs retained responsibility for social services, environmental health, local roads and libraries, with schools being a half-way house: the outer London boroughs had responsibility for education, but inner London was served by the separate Inner London Education Authority. The ambulance service was taken away from the GLC in 1974, joining the rest of health under the NHS, but there is still a debate today about the role of borough councils in relation to health provision. Transport and housing were taken from the GLC in the early 1980s.

Looking further back, the London County Council (LCC) had been set up in 1889 at a time when parish and district councils in London were not well developed. The boroughs

came into being following the Local Government Act of 1894 and the London Government Act of 1899, which reduced the powers of the LCC. Arguments over the proper place for various responsibilities have been taking place ever since. Mrs Thatcher's abolition of the GLC was therefore part of the historic trend of political struggle between national, regional and local government.

As to Liberal electoral performance at the London-wide level, Mike took us back to 1964 and surveyed the scene since then. One consistent feature over the years was the extreme difficulty for any third party trying to break into representation at the London regional tier, until the introduction of proportional representation in 2000. However, support for the Liberals can be tracked through election results in the different parts of London. The revival came first in outer London, in places like Orpington, Sutton and Richmond. More recently, there has been a clear upward trend for the Liberal Democrats in inner London areas.

In 1964, Liberal candidates won ten per cent of the London-wide vote. From 1964 to 1970, when the elections were based on borough boundaries, only Labour and Conservative candidates were elected; Liberal candidates got nine per cent of the vote in 1967 and only five per cent in 1970. However, in 1973 there came a breakthrough when Stanley Rundle, who had stood in Richmond in 1970, gaining 16 per cent of the poll, won the seat with 44 per cent, and Ruth Shaw won in Sutton, building on Graham Tope's success in the parliamentary by-election of December 1972. The Liberal percentage of the poll across London in 1973 increased to 12.5 per cent, with second places being achieved in Orpington and Croydon.

In 1977, the Liberals lost both GLC seats, with their poll

Adrian Slade wrote in his memoir that Mike's victory was 'a minor triumph'; Mike said he thought it was 'a bloody miracle'.

share falling to 7.8 per cent. In 1981, Adrian Slade won back Richmond, and there were near misses in Twickenham and Sutton, with good second places in Croydon South, Orpington, Hackney & Shoreditch and Tower Hamlets and 30 per cent of the poll in Lewisham Deptford, which seemed to Mike to defy logic and analysis (other voices at the meeting suggested it had to do with the candidate's running a semi-religious campaign). In 1981, Simon Hughes was the candidate in Southwark & Bermondsey, paving the way for his successful parliamentary campaign in the by-election of 1983.

Overall, the Liberal vote was up to 16.6 per cent, and Mike felt that 1981 was a missed opportunity, with the Tory vote down nearly 13 per cent. Labour underwent a left-wing coup shortly after the election, when 'Red' Ken Livingstone deposed Andrew Macintosh. It might not have taken many more votes to have elected a sizeable third-party group at County Hall, and then the whole history of London government from 1981 onwards could have taken a very different path. Another feature of the 1981 election was the appearance of Social Democratic Alliance candidates in Lambeth and Islington, the SDA polling respectably there as a forerunner of the SDP. Two who were elected as Labour members but who later defected to the SDP were Anne Sofer in St Pancras North and Paul Rossi in Lewisham East. Anne Sofer took the view that, having defected, she should resign and fight a by-election, which she duly won in October 1981. Rossi chose not to do so and there was soon therefore an Alliance group of three on the council, rising to four with Mike's own election in the Vauxhall by-election of 1985, which he won in a straight fight with Labour. Adrian Slade wrote in his memoir that

Mike's victory was 'a minor triumph'; Mike said he thought it was 'a bloody miracle'. Patrick Mitchell had reminded Mike that the canvass returns were indicating that something was possible, although there was no great belief in the possibility of victory. Most activists went to the pub after the polls closed, thinking it a lost cause. Those who went to the count learned the truth, but those in the pub (including Tim Clement-Jones and Helen Bailey) took some convincing that there actually was a victory celebration to attend.

At the same time as the Vauxhall by-election, there was one in Putney. The candidate for the SDP was Jeremy Ambache, who is now at number four on the Liberal Democrat list for the Assembly elections in May 2008, with a realistic hope of being elected.

After 1985, the GLC was truly operating on borrowed time, the Queen signing the Royal Assent to its abolition on the day Mike attended his first full council meeting. Mike said he developed a life-long dislike of Ken Livingstone from his time on the GLC. Livingstone's method was to make radical speeches and gestures proposing illegal or undesirable initiatives in the knowledge that sufficient numbers of the Labour group's right-wingers would refuse to endorse his irresponsible plans. He also encouraged other Labour stalwarts such as Paul Boateng, who was Chair of the GLC Police Committee, to do likewise, particularly after the second set of disturbances in Brixton, which were partly in Mike's ward. The GLC continued until 31 March 1986. ILEA carried on and the Liberal-SDP share of the vote in the ILEA elections of 1986 was 21 per cent.

To complete this account of London-wide voting history, Mike took us forward to the Assembly elections. In 2000,

Susan Kramer was the mayoral candidate. She gained 12 per cent against Livingstone's 39 per cent and Frank Dobson's 13 per cent. In 2004, Simon Hughes increased the Lib Dem vote share to about 15 per cent. The Lib Dem Assembly vote in 2000 was 15 per cent – disappointing at the time but historically consistent with former GLC elections. In 2004, the Lib Dem vote rose to just under 17 per cent. In 2000 four Liberal Democrats were elected under the top-up list system, with an extra seat being gained in 2004. In the list election, Labour managed only 24.4 per cent, one of their worst London-wide performances ever. The Conservatives were not far ahead, with a vote of 27.8 per cent. What was noticeable was the growth of the minor party vote, with the Greens on 8 per cent, UKIP also with 8 per cent (the elections coinciding with the Euro elections in which UKIP polled strongly), and the BNP and Respect both getting just under the 5 per cent threshold for representation.

Looking back over the years to 1970, therefore, the main

change has been the challenge to the duopoly of Labour and the Conservatives, first by the Liberals and the Alliance, and more recently by other third parties too. London-wide, the Liberal vote has increased from as low as 5 per cent in the 1970s to the mid-teens today and the impact of PR has been to introduce a fragmentation of the vote. This effect has also begun to filter down to borough level, with the Greens appearing more regularly and the BNP making inroads in east London.

London government will continue to be argued over, as it has been historically. There is no settled cross-party consensus on the relative functions of national, regional and local government London-wide. The electoral system itself may change and PR may be abandoned, but at present the Liberal Democrats are clear beneficiaries of the Labour government's (and Tony Blair's) insistence that when the regional tier was re-introduced to London it should have an element of PR.

Graham Lippiatt is Secretary of the Liberal Democrat History Group.

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REVIEWS

Dizzy and the Grand Old Man

Richard Aldous, *The Lion and the Unicorn: Gladstone vs Disraeli* (Hutchinson, 2006)

Reviewed by Dr J. Graham Jones

OVER THE years both William Gladstone and Benjamin Disraeli, Earl of Beaconsfield, the political giants of the mid-Victorian age and bitter (political and personal) arch-enemies, have inspired several biographies and other studies. But Richard Aldous's absorbing volume is the first joint biography of these two larger-than-life characters. Although an array of individuals flit across the canvass of this book, the focus is throughout kept on the two central characters.

The author has clearly quarried avidly all previous biographies and political histories of the period, and has made widespread use of Gladstone's own most extensive diaries as well as those of John Bright, Lord Derby, Lord Grenville and Albert, the Prince Consort. He has even consulted the letters from Queen Victoria to her beloved daughter Vicky. He also makes extensive use of the published volumes of speeches of Gladstone and Disraeli and has consulted widely the volumes of the new *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (2004). It is notable, however, that he makes no use of primary manuscript source materials.

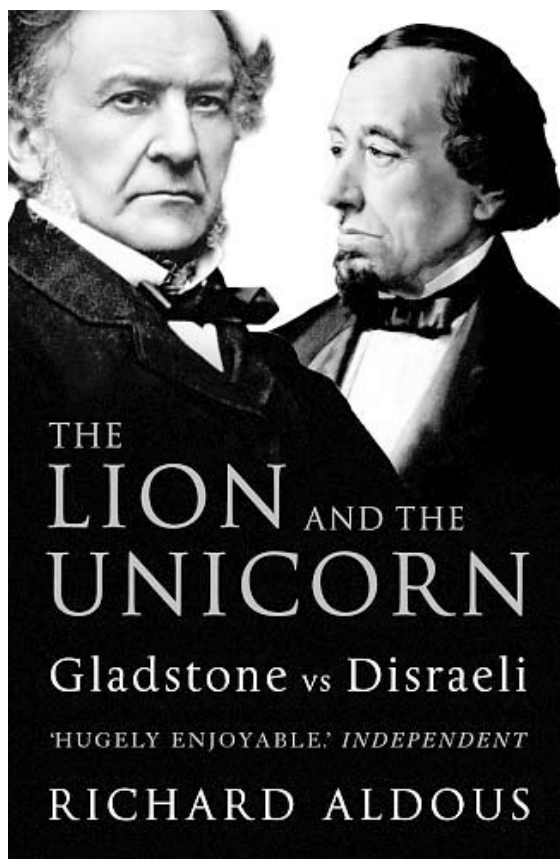
The book begins with a 'Prologue' which looks at Gladstone's reaction to the long-anticipated death of his political rival Disraeli in April 1881. Thereafter it follows a strictly chronological approach, beginning in January 1835 when the two men met for the

first time as guests at a dinner party given by Lord Lyndhurst. Their first real clash was during the Budget debate in February 1852, an altercation cemented by a nasty dispute over the wearing of the Chancellor's robes. There is a brief epilogue, 'In Memoriam' (pp. 320–26), which jumps to Gladstone's death in May 1898, seventeen years after his arch-rival's. Ironically, he was laid to rest at Westminster Abbey at the foot of Disraeli's monument; Disraeli himself had been buried at his Buckinghamshire home.

There is a real sense of tension and drama in each chapter as this political drama unfolds over several decades. Each section throughout the text is most helpfully introduced by a heading giving the date and place of its setting – 'Hawarden Castle, 19 April 1881', 'St. George's Chapel, Windsor, 1861', or 'Cabinet Room, 13 March 1873'. Each scene is then set in detail, and at times there is at least a small element of poetic licence beyond the point of historical certainty. This provides the narrative with great pace and absorbing interest.

Throughout there is a neat balance of personal and political history, and the story of the two central figures is narrated against the backdrop of national events. A recurring theme is Gladstone's need for sexual excitement beyond the marriage bed – his search for 'fallen women' to 'rescue', the resultant temptations and bouts of self-flagellation. Aldous deals

competently with the complexities and intricacies of the Second Reform Bill of 1867 and the moves which led to Disraeli becoming Prime Minister in the same year. We read intriguing accounts of the death of Albert, the Prince Consort, in 1861 and the holding of the Great Exhibition the following year, the death of the frail Mary Ann Disraeli in 1872, the decision of Queen Victoria to become Empress of India in 1876 (in part so as not to be eventually out-ranked by her daughter Vicky, the Princess Royal, who was in line to become in due course the German Empress), and the frenzied Midlothian campaigns of 1880. He displays an enviable mastery of the course of nineteenth-century political history. The author also gives Disraeli his due as an accomplished author and writer and refers to many other important literary publications throughout the text. Disraeli's many important and widely read novels are fully assessed in the text.



The author, clearly, has an eye for the memorable phrase. In middle age, an exasperated Catherine Gladstone exclaimed to her trying husband, 'Oh, William dear, if you weren't such a great man you would be a terrible bore!' (p. 52). In 1876 Disraeli thundered to Lord Derby, 'Posterity will do justice to that unprincipled maniac Gladstone – extraordinary mixture of envy, vindictiveness, hypocrisy and superstition – whether prime minister or leader of opposition – whether preaching, praying, speechifying or scribbling – never a gentleman' (p. 274). When it seemed very likely that Gladstone was about to become Prime Minister for the second time following the Liberal victory in the general election of 1880, a distraught Queen Victoria, beside herself with rage, let rip – 'she screamed that she would "sooner abdicate than send for or have any communication with that half-mad firebrand who would soon ruin everything and be a dictator"' (p. 306). Clem Attlee's reaction to reading Gladstone's letter of proposal to Catherine Glynne is recorded in a sublime footnote – 'He really was a frightful old prig ... He was a dreadful person.' (p. 29). Aldous does not, however, weary his reader with over-long quotations in the text.

The volume, although clearly based on meticulous, wide-ranging research and reading, reads like an historical novel from cover to cover. Richard Aldous writes in a captivating, enthralling style which makes it difficult for the reader to put down the book. There are a number of most engaging pen-portraits of the major characters. Of Catherine Gladstone we read, 'She rarely read books or even newspapers, and could be shockingly uninformed. Catherine attended both church and parliament regularly, but had little interest

The author, clearly, has an eye for the memorable phrase. In middle age, an exasperated Catherine Gladstone exclaimed to her trying husband, 'Oh, William dear, if you weren't such a great man you would be a terrible bore!'

in discussing either. When apart, the Gladstones wrote to each other most days. These letters were frank, but also contain more than a hint of emotional detachment' (p. 52). Of her husband we read, 'Gladstone was seen as a difficult, prickly character. He was a habitual resigner, even creating problems for those he admired such as Peel and Aberdeen. His preachy, arrogant manner had often infuriated fellow MPs. Even those who admired him, such as John Trelawny, found him aloof and cold (p. 144).

Of Disraeli in the mid-1850s we read, 'His health had never been particularly robust, but the onset of middle age was taking its toll. He had begun to develop a marked, painful stoop, which ached when he sat in one place for too long. His weak lungs were susceptible to infection in the damp, foggy London winters. Jet-black locks now only retained their colour with the assistance of hair dye' (p. 99). There are similar pen-portraits of key players like Sir Robert Peel, the Duke of Wellington and Lord Palmerston as they flit across the pages of this enthralling tale, though they are firmly relegated to the sidelines of the main story.

The book is enhanced with a large number of most attractive pictures and photographs, most taken from Getty Images. There are detailed endnotes

which give the sources of the direct quotations in the text and other guides to further reading. Although this practice is now academically fashionable, it can be a little confusing, and the present reviewer at least would certainly prefer conventional numbered footnotes which are an easier read. Helpful, too, would have been a full systematic bibliography of all the sources used by the author while undertaking his research.

The book is a gripping read from cover to cover, likely to reawaken interest in the politics of mid-Victorian Britain and in the extraordinary lives and careers of these two central characters. It will appeal to academics, students and lay readers alike. Although Richard Aldous is most objective and scrupulously fair throughout his study, one detects a slight predilection in favour of William Gladstone.

This is Aldous's third major book. His previous publications include a biography of Sir Malcolm Sargent. One eagerly anticipates further volumes from the pen of this brilliant young academic who is currently Head of History and Archives at University College, Dublin.

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

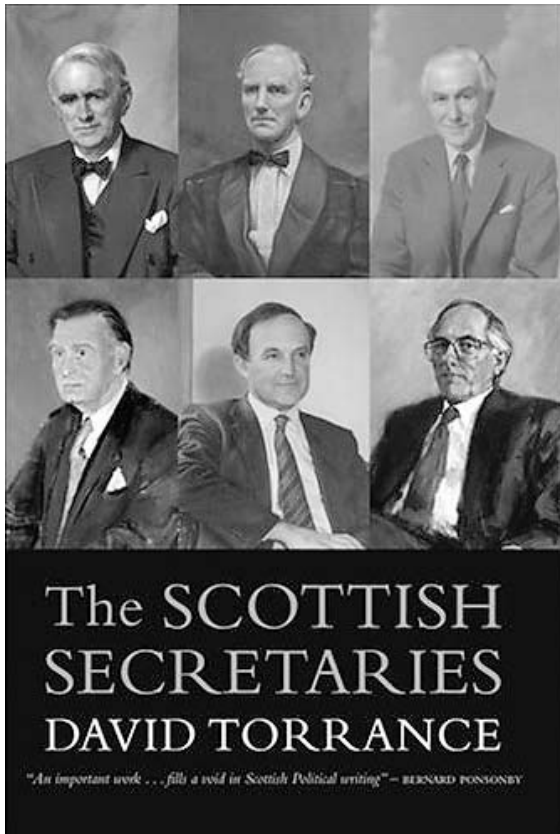
Governing Scotland

David Torrance, *The Scottish Secretaries* (Birlinn, 2006)

Reviewed by Ewen A. Cameron

DAVID TORRANCE, a freelance journalist and parliamentary aide to the Shadow Secretary of State for Scotland, has written a collective biography of the thirty-

nine men and one woman (the redoubtable Helen Liddle) who have held the office of Secretary (of State since 1926) for Scotland since 1885. The position is an oddity: a territorial



ministry among functional departments; sometimes Scotland's representative in the Cabinet; sometimes the Cabinet's representative in Scotland; sometimes not in the Cabinet at all. Unlike the Irish Viceroy and his Chief Secretary there was little dignity (nor, it is fair to say, much danger) attached to the position, a point perhaps noted by G. O Trevelyan who served at Dublin Castle and Dover House.

Until the inter-war period the Scottish Office had few civil servants; most were responsible to a series of autonomous boards operating in Edinburgh. Indeed, until the 1930s the Scottish Office had hardly any base in Scotland. St Andrew's House, opened in 1939, gave the position some architectural dignity, and an office with a fine view of Edinburgh. As he entered St Andrew's House in 1947, Arthur Woodburn may well have reflected that 'what's for ye'll no go bye ye', as he recalled his Great War imprisonment as a conscientious

objector in the Calton Jail, demolished to make way for his new workplace.

Arthur Balfour, who first encountered rebellious Celts during his short stint as Scottish Secretary in 1886–87, went on to be Prime Minister and others – John Gilmour, Walter Elliot, Ernest Brown, Archibald Sinclair – held other more or less senior offices, as have recent incumbents since George Younger in the 1980s. There have, however, been many political nonentities at Dover House: the 6th Duke of Richmond (1885–86), the 13th Earl of Dalhousie (1886), the 1st Marquis of Linlithgow (1905), the 6th Earl of Rosebery (1945), William Adamson (1924, 1929–31), Joseph Westwood (1945–47). Lord Balfour of Burleigh (1895–1903), Thomas Johnston (1941–45) and William Ross (1964–70 and 1974–76) have been among the most substantial figures to hold office and were politicians who made an active choice to 'confine' their careers to Scotland. Hector McNeil (1950–51) may have gone on to higher things had he not died in 1955.

Readers of this journal will be most interested in what Torrance has to say about the Liberals, of various kinds, who held the office. Of these, John Sinclair (1905–12) and Robert Munro (1916–22) were the only ministers to hold the post for long enough to make a mark. They are scarcely the most distinguished Liberals to serve in this capacity, however. Sir Archibald Sinclair, who deserves that description, was in office for too brief a period to have much impact. Godfrey Collins (1932–36), from the notable Glaswegian publishing family, and Ernest Brown (1940–41) were Liberal Nationals; Lord Novar and John Colville, of the Lanarkshire steelmakers, were former Liberals who had turned Unionist. Torrance is surely right to

note of John Sinclair that he attracted praise and scorn in almost equal measure, and was seen as a creature of Campbell-Bannerman. Nevertheless, he had a long tenure after his master's death and presided over important land and educational reforms.

Indeed, the essay on Sinclair illustrates some of the faults of this worthy but rather dull book (in this it is rather like many of its subjects). Torrance has a good eye for anecdotal and personal material, but his political analysis tends towards legislative description, such as the vexed case of the Small Landholders (Scotland) Bill in Sinclair's case. Thomas McKinnon Wood and Robert Munro presided over some of the greatest political excitement in Scotland: the rent strikes of 1915, the industrial struggles on the Clyde, the forty hours strike of 1919. As servants of wartime governments and, in Munro's case, Unionist-dominated coalitions, they scarcely had the opportunity to have a *Liberal* influence. These cases exemplify the difficulty and misconception of this book. Unlike Roy Jenkins's stimulating collective biography of Chancellors of the Exchequer, the biographies are not sufficiently interesting to merit the treatment they receive here. The major figures have been dealt with in other contexts, either with their own biographies or in the wider context of the governments of which they were members.

The real interest of the post of Scottish Secretary lies not in its holders' biographies, but in the dissonance between its constitutional position – to conduct government policy in Scotland where, prior to devolution, a separate legal system necessitated distinctive treatment of many issues – and the political role often adopted by its incumbents – to be, like Thomas Johnston, a chauvinistic defender of Scotland's

national interests. These points are discussed in passing but they are submerged in a welter of personal detail. Although Torrance has read quite widely in fairly well-thumbed secondary sources and has ploughed through a good deal of manuscript material and diary comment, he seems unaware of much recent research on modern Scottish history. While there are some cases – those of Walter Elliot or Willie Ross, for

example – about which it would be good to know more, Torrance's accounts do not provide much additional detail or interest and readers wishing to know more would be better advised to turn to the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*.

Ewen A. Cameron is Senior Lecturer in Scottish History at the University of Edinburgh and co-editor of the Scottish Historical Review.

Man of contradictions

Arthur H. Cash, *John Wilkes, The Scandalous Father of Civil Liberty* (Yale University Press, 2006)

Reviewed by Nancy LoPatin Lummis

HE WAS a mass of contradictions. John Wilkes was gentleman, journalist, a captain in the King's army and a carousing libertine. He was a landowner who continually over-borrowed and depended on others to get him out of debt. He was a careless student but a loving father, committed to his daughters' education. He was also a flamboyant rabble-rouser and trouble-maker who stood before courts, jubilant crowds and Parliament, attacked government abuses, sat in prison to dramatise injustice, and fought tirelessly to sit in the parliamentary seat to which electors had, by popular vote, returned him. He was a fugitive in exile, negotiating for a safe return to England, while a national hero seeking political power. James Boswell adored him, as did his daughter Polly, seeing him as a caring man, committed to strong principles. Voltaire found him charming. He was an impetuous country squire who identified with the working man, an outlaw defended by the eighteenth-century

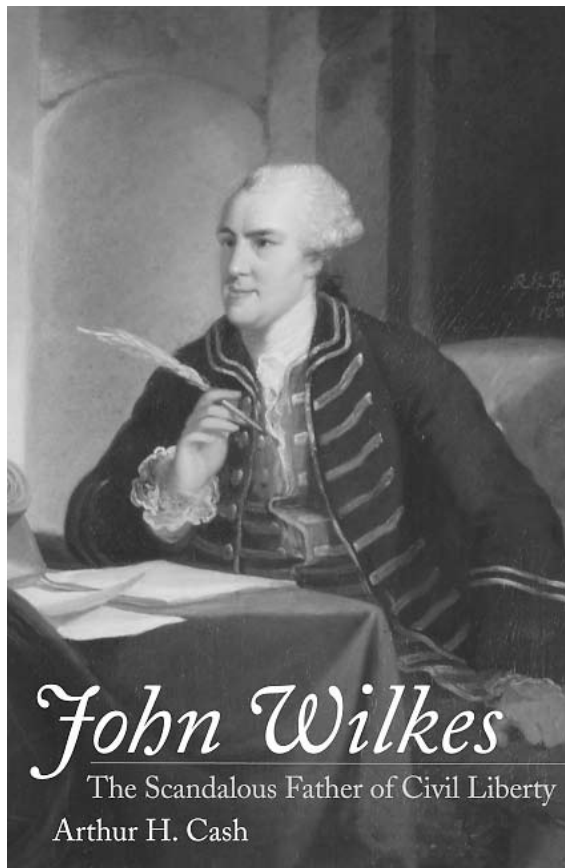
French *philosophes*. George III referred to him as 'that devil Wilkes', a characterisation echoed by Lord Mansfield, William Hogarth and numerous judges and politicians, as well as the cuckolded husbands of his many lovers. Then there were those, like Horace Walpole, who hated the man but admired his belief in liberty and electoral freedom. All, however, would agree that John Wilkes was a formidable force, whether ally or enemy.

This superb new biography of John Wilkes by Arthur H. Cash gives an entire picture of this amazing historical figure. A politician, fugitive and renegade legal reformer, Wilkes's life is revealed as one filled with principle and immorality, self-interest and tremendous generosity and, above all else, joy. Cash traces the life of this rogue and sometime demagogue from his early marriage and parliamentary career sitting for Aylesbury, through the enormously important publication of issue no. 45 of his *North Briton* and the legal and parliamentary battles and

precedents that ensued, to the culmination of his public career as Alderman, Lord Mayor and Chamberlain of the City of London. Cash argues that 'John Wilkes had established for Great Britain and subsequently the United States two closely related principles: within the simple limits of constitutional law, the people can elect as their representative whomever they please regardless of the approval or disapproval of the legislature ... [and] the first ten amendments to the American Constitution, the Bill of Rights, were written by men to whom Wilkes was a household word' (p. 3). The book then sets about the narrative of the man's life and deeds with a careful analysis of the significance, in legal and political terms, of his bold actions, which prove the success of his fight for the primacy of law and show his stamp on the development of the modern constitutional state.

Beginning with his family background, formal education and ill-conceived arranged marriage, the biography moves on to Wilkes's early forays into sexual experimentation, his local charitable and political causes, and the birth of his political career. Wilkes entered Parliament as a Pittite MP for Aylesbury in 1757. The ensuing political battle between his faction and the followers of Lord Bute, following the accession of George III, rapidly became more than simply a battle for attaining and securing political position. The infamous role of the *North Briton*, originally a response to court papers such as the *Briton* and the *Auditor*, and part of the larger propaganda war for public opinion, changed rapidly because of the suppressive tactics adopted by the King's ministers. While Wilkes's original intention was to have Bute removed from government office, his political arguments progressed

George III referred to him as 'that devil Wilkes', a characterisation echoed by Lord Mansfield, William Hogarth and numerous judges and politicians, as well as the cuckolded husbands of his many lovers.



to making the case that the King's government continually and wilfully violated the very rule of British law every time it searched and seized property it believed had been acquired without payment of excise taxes. His more personal attacks, in issue 45, had further-reaching consequences than his arrest for libel against the King. The open warrants issued by Lord Halifax on behalf of the government (which resulted in the arrest of forty-nine people, when only three were named on the warrant), and the confiscation of personal property that ensued produced a public outcry so great that general warrants would be outlawed by the courts. Wilkes countered with a civil suit against the government for false arrest, violation of privacy and destruction of private property; he opened new legal arguments and his trials served to educate the public regarding the uses and abuses of government power before the courts. For

Cash, 'Wilkes's history lay behind the guarantees of a free press, the right to privacy, the freedom from unreasonable searches and seizures, and the prohibition of non-specific arrest warrants' (p.3).

Wilkes's conviction *in absentia* for libel (he fled to the Continent) only confirmed government abuse and corruption to the masses. He became a hero, even as an outlaw exiled in France, when Lord Chief Justice Mansfield improperly (and quite politically) instructed the jurors so as to secure a guilty verdict on Wilkes, seemingly confirming that all the King's men were corrupt as could be. Whether or not the reading public believed that Wilkes's *An Essay on Women* (produced at around the same time as issue 45 of the *North Briton*) was indecent and libellous, as the Bishop of Gloucester accused it of being, he was seen as the stoutest defender of a free press and of civil liberty in general. Tensions only mounted when the electors of Middlesex returned him as MP in 1768 upon his return to England as an outlaw.

Political manoeuvring, an eleventh-hour redefinition of what arrest warrants encompassed and the declaration as illegitimate of warrants that failed to name specific individuals, changed the law, but did little to change Wilkes's position. His imprisonment in 1768 only emboldened both the man and the public which had returned him to Parliament. No longer an outlaw, but a prisoner and an MP unable to be sworn in to office, Wilkes attacked the Commons as the agency of repression. New legal precedents were established. When the House received writs declaring Wilkes the winner of by-elections and opted to ignore them in favour of illegally declaring the election void, the people attacked the Commons. No institution now seemed to

respect and abide by the laws of the ancient English constitution – a perception not lost on the North American colonists making their own case for liberty and finding a sympathetic advocate in Wilkes.

The admiration and success Wilkes experienced upon his release from prison in 1770 and his election as a High Sheriff in the City of London the following year were a response to the firm belief that justice had triumphed – thanks to its champion John Wilkes – over the forces of corruption and abuse. The man himself did not maintain unquestioned admiration and loyalty, however. While he was elected Lord Mayor of London and in 1774, returned as the MP for the County of Middlesex, other forces were taking charge on the issues of liberty and government abuses. The Americans, parliamentary reformers, and followers of Charles James Fox took the reins in the political, legal and military struggles for English liberty and the rule of law. Wilkes barely kept his seat in the House in 1784 and retired from politics soon after.

His remaining years were spent socialising in London and Bath, going to the Royal Society, spending holidays with his daughters Polly and Harriet at Sandown Cottage on the Isle of Wight, and talking with friends like Boswell and Sir Joshua Reynolds. He died in 1797, believing himself an advocate for 'everyman' to the end. His will directed that 'six of the poorest men of the parish' carry his coffin, for which they would receive clothes and a shilling (p. 391).

Throughout his life, John Wilkes was a friend of the people and a man who loved and fiercely defended the rights and liberties he believed all Englishmen were entitled to through their ancient constitution and the rule of law. His clever, often

histrionic, plans to protect those rights created the right balance of public drama and litigious embarrassment to expose a wide array of government officials who had grown to believe that inheritance and appointment trumped fundamental principles and the rational application of law and history. However complicated the man, meritorious in some areas, offensive in others, he was a critically important figure in British – and American – political and legal history.

With this wonderful new biography, light is shone on his amazingly rich and interesting character, accomplished and influential far beyond traditional teaching.

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The two great wartime leaders

Richard Toye, *Lloyd George & Churchill: Rivals for Greatness* (Macmillan, 2007)

Reviewed by Dr J. Graham Jones

IN 2005 Robert Lloyd George (Lloyd George's great-grandson and the second son of the present Earl Lloyd-George of Dwyfor) published a very readable, attractive volume, *David & Winston: How a Friendship Changed History* (reviewed by the present writer in *Journal of Liberal History* 48 (Autumn 2005), pp. 49–50). This book was hailed, on publication, as 'the remarkable story of the enduring friendship between David Lloyd George and Winston Churchill', a clear indication of the line adopted by the author. Now Dr Richard Toye, one of the most able political historians at the University of Cambridge (since moved on to pastures new at Exeter University) has produced an outstandingly full and balanced survey of the political and personal relationship between the two great wartime leaders, spanning five decades. He sets the scene for what follows in his introduction, with a pungent quotation from Lloyd George about Churchill in February 1934 – 'He would make a drum out

of the skin of his own mother in order to sound his own praises' (p. 5). The book's central theme, to which Toye returns time and again (see the telling comments on pp. 146–47 and 149) is that 'Churchill's loyalty to Lloyd George was episodic' (p. 98), and the converse was certainly equally true, perhaps even more so; Lloyd George made many unpleasant, bitchy comments about Churchill. There is, throughout, a nice balance of political and personal history with a store of fascinating anecdotes and asides.

The amount of research and reading which underpins the present volume is humbly complete. Dr Toye has consulted a rich array of archival sources scattered in libraries and record offices throughout the UK. Some have not been used before. The present reviewer was delighted to see the extensive use made of the various Lloyd George archives in the custody of the Welsh Political Archive at the National Library of Wales. Especially effective use has

been made of the revealing letters from Lloyd George to his younger brother William over several decades (though it would seem that these were not quarried to illuminate those crucial weeks during November and early December 1916 which saw Lloyd George's inexorable rise to the premiership as Asquith's successor). In the case of the letters from Lloyd George to his first wife Dame Margaret, however, the author relies exclusively on the published volume of correspondence *Lloyd George: Family Letters, 1885–1936* edited by Kenneth Morgan in 1973, rather than consulting the original letters at Aberystwyth. This is a shame as only a selection of the correspondence was published by Morgan and much of interest was omitted.

There is an admirable sense of balance and fair play throughout the book as the author uses a judicious selection of sources, both published and unpublished, to tell his tale. He displays an absolute mastery of such complex themes as Lloyd George's and Churchill's involvement in the framing of the 'People's Budget' of 1909; the military, diplomatic and political manoeuvres of World War One; the Anglo-Irish negotiations and ensuing treaty of 1921; and the steps which led to the fateful Carlton Club meeting of October 1922, which heralded the end of Lloyd George's ministerial career – for ever, as it was to prove. The author has an eagle eye for the many, many myths which have grown up around both Churchill and Lloyd George as individuals and around the long, complex relationship between them. He totally debunks the widely-held, grossly over-sentimental myth, perpetuated by Robert Lloyd-George and other writers such as Martin Rintala, that the two men always remained close personal allies no matter how bitterly

The book's central theme ... is that 'Churchill's loyalty to Lloyd George was episodic', and the converse was certainly equally true, perhaps even more so.

REVIEWS

they might disagree on policy matters.

The text is also genuinely helpful to and supportive of the non-specialist reader. Dr Toye does not presuppose a specialist knowledge and explains the identities of less well-known individuals in his account. Freddie Guest, we are told, was 'Churchill's cousin and Lloyd George's ex-Chief Whip' (p. 148), Kerensky was 'the leading figure in the Russian provisional government toppled by the Bolsheviks in 1917' (p. 261); and potted accounts of the political careers of Neville Chamberlain and his less well-known half-brother Austen are presented on page 252. Sir William Berry is recorded as 'soon to become Lord Camrose, an influential newspaper owner whose titles included *The Daily Telegraph* and *The Sunday Times*' (p. 266).

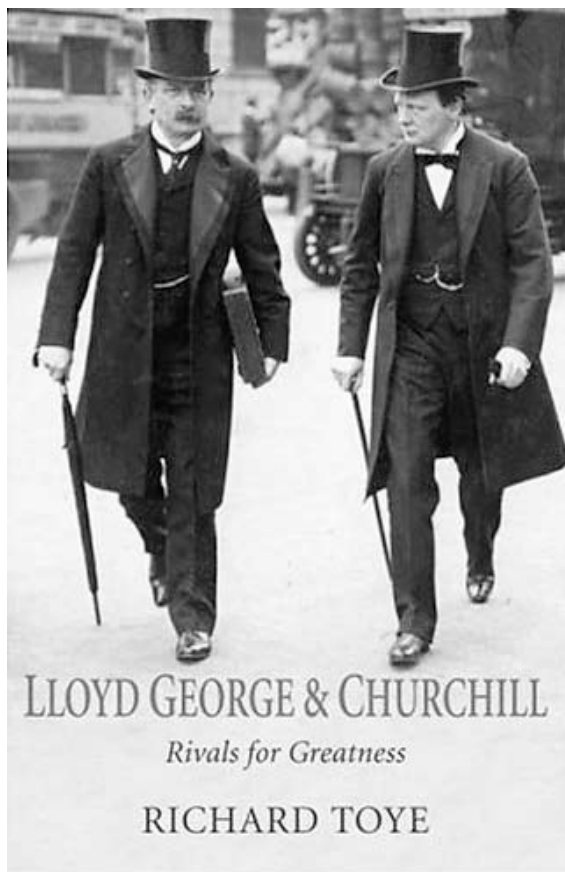
Given the wide scope of the book, it would be impossible not to disagree with some of Dr Toye's comments

and interpretations. Boldly to bracket Lloyd George with Churchill as simply 'non-Christian' in the introductory section (p. 2) is surely a great exaggeration. Lloyd George was at least a regular chapel-goer both at Criccieth and in London, on occasion expressing a belief in an after-life and a curious interest in spiritualism. It is strange that the enthralling account of the suffragette campaigns does not include any reference to the agitation which accompanied the opening of the Llanystumdwy Village Institute by Lloyd George in 1912 and at the Wrexham National Eisteddfod the same year. The all-important 'Green Book' (*The Land and the Nation*) and 'Brown Book' (*Towns and the Land*), both published in 1925, are tersely passed over in just one sentence (p. 260), while the Liberal Party captured a total of fifty-nine seats, not fifty-six (p. 270), in the all-important general election of 30 May 1929.

Moreover, is it really accurate to describe the newly-elected Aneurin Bevan as, almost overnight, 'a rising Labour star' (p. 275) immediately upon his election to the Commons? It is by no means certain that Jennifer Stevenson (born in 1929) was Lloyd George's natural daughter (p. 372); the weight of evidence now available would seem to suggest that she was fathered by Colonel T. F. Tweed, Lloyd George's Chief-of-Staff at Liberal Party Headquarters and Frances's lover for a long period. Finally, Dame Margaret Lloyd George suffered her fall (which ultimately led to her death) not 'at their North Wales home' Brynawelon, Criccieth, during January 1941 (p. 378), but at Garthcelyn, the home of William and Anita George, her in-laws, on 28 December 1940. But these are, of course, relatively minor points of detail which do not detract in any way from the value of Dr Toye's admirable and pioneering volume.

Throughout the book, the analysis is extremely full, with an immense amount of fascinating detail packed into its pages. Just occasionally, however, one feels that there is an element of 'overkill' as one battles to absorb all the detailed facts and the sometimes-complicated analysis supporting them. This is especially true of Chapter Six, 'Master and Servant', which is devoted to the complexities of the post-war coalition government of 1918–22, and of Chapter Ten, 'I shall wait until Winston is bust', which chronicles the repeated, but ultimately abortive, attempts to persuade the ailing Lloyd George to accept a governmental or official position, possibly even a cabinet post, during the early years of the Second World War. This latter chapter raises the utterly baffling issue of whether secretly, in his heart of hearts, Lloyd George hoped to wait until Churchill had failed and then to succeed him as Prime Minister himself and negotiate a compromise peace with Hitler, for whom he still had a lingering regard. These two chapters could well have been pruned a little to make them an easier, less demanding read. As it is, Dr Toye can rest assured that he has written perhaps the last word on a sometimes tempestuous relationship, which extended over several decades and influenced the course of history.

Overall, this volume is a compelling, illuminating read. It is certain to command an immense amount of interest and respect. The revelation concerning an unpublished article allegedly written by Winston Churchill in 1937 on 'How the Jews Can Combat Persecution' has already given rise to fierce, partisan debate amongst academics. One now looks forward with great anticipation to the publication, scheduled for later this year, by



Mr Ian Hunter of his edition of the correspondence which passed between Churchill and Lloyd George, more than 1,000 communications in all, dating from 1904 to 1945. It will undoubtedly be an admirable

companion volume to the present tome.

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Liberalism in Germany and the Netherlands

Patrick van Schie and Gerrit Voerman (eds.) *The Dividing Line between Success and Failure* (Lit Verlag, 2006)

Reviewed by Saeed Rahman

MY FIRST encounter with continental liberalism was a happy one, some time in the mid 1970s. Steve Atack, then Chair of the National League of Young Liberals, brought a delegation from the Youth Wing of D66 down to Maldon to meet a Young Liberal branch. The meeting over, we all went to the pub, returned home and we, as hosts, skinned up. 'Ahhh, ze Eenglich joint' said one of our Dutch *fraters* (we didn't even have joint-sized Rizlas). They then produced their stash ...

This book bears an unpromising title, and when it goes on to explain that it is 'a comparison of liberalism in the Netherlands and Germany in the 19th and 20th centuries', are we greatly encouraged? Mark Smulian, reviewing the anthology for *Liberator*, wasn't, but as I pointed out, he was wrong.

It was not only in Britain that liberalism suffered a decline after the First World War, and whilst there are generalisations that can be gleaned from the study of our sister liberal movements, it is evident that local factors played a part in both decline and recovery. There was little interplay between the liberal movements of Germany and the Netherlands until relatively recently. On the Liberal International (LI) stage nowadays

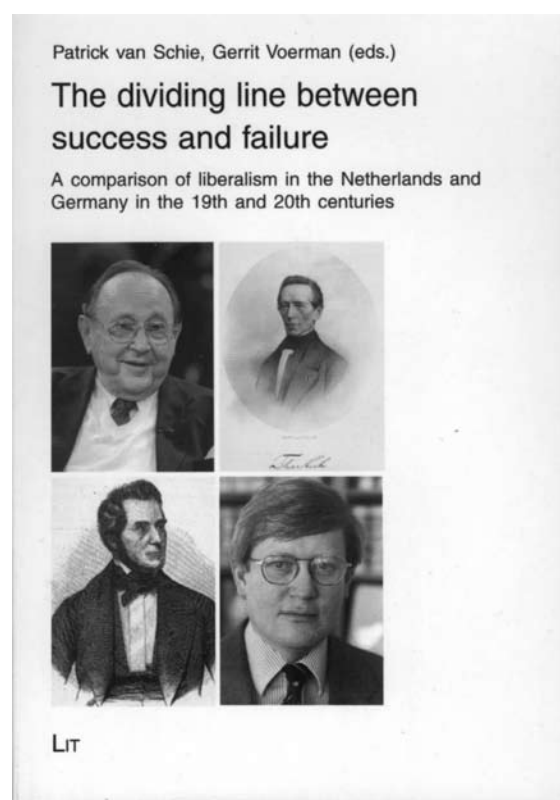
one tends to see a synergy between the Dutch Volkspartij voor Vrijheid en Democratie – VVD (People's Party for Freedom and Democracy) and the German Freie Demokratische Partei – FDP (Free Democratic Party) on the right or economic wing. The Dutch Democraten 66 – D66 (Democrats 66) on the other hand represents the left or social wing of LI and is more commonly allied with the British Liberals.

This split between economic and social liberals is common in Europe and was also the case in Germany before the shameful capitulation to Hitler. It is unfortunate that the contributors to this anthology do not touch on this matter – why not is perhaps the most pressing question we would put to them. Both the Deutsche Demokratische Partei – DDP (German Democratic Party) on the left and the Deutsche Volkspartei – DVP (German People's Party) were important, if declining, players in the Weimar Republic, but signed away constitutional powers to Hitler in the belief that he was a politician whom they would be able to moderate.

German liberalism has a proud intellectual heritage, counting Kant and Hegel among its ranks, though Humboldt (through John Stuart Mill) is its main influence on British

liberalism. It was heavily associated with the 1848 revolutions and things went downhill from there on. Despite being the main voice for German unification, its regionalism stifled its development – always looking towards the state instead of the people, whom it might be said to fear. Not only the National-liberale Partei (National Liberal Party) on the right but also the Deutsche Volkspartei and Fortschrittliche Volkspartei (Progressive People's Party) on the left (in particular) had a chequered history under Bismarck and the Kaiser; while they had some successes, they were increasingly marginalised on the national stage. However, the *Kulturkampf* was as much their policy as Bismarck's, reflecting the anti-clericalism that characterises much continental liberalism (and the fact that Roman Catholicism was a major force for the darkest forms of Conservatism for many years to come).

The precursors of D66 and the VVD in the Netherlands enjoyed a less traumatic history. Despite what one might expect



WORKING WITH OTHERS: THE LIB-LAB PACT

From March 1977 to October 1978, the Liberal Party kept Jim Callaghan's Labour government in power through the Lib-Lab Pact. Labour ministers consulted systematically with Liberal spokespeople across a wide range of policy areas. Arguably, the Pact restored a degree of political and economic stability to the country, but its achievements from a Liberal point of view were highly limited and it did not appear to be popular with the country at large.

Yet, in the longer term, the Pact can be seen to have paved the way for the concept of different political parties working together – which led in the following decade to the Liberal–SDP Alliance and may – ultimately – lead to coalition government at Westminster.

Twenty years on from the Pact, key participants from both sides discuss its history and impact.

Speakers: **David Steel** (Leader of the Liberal Party 1976–88); **Tom McNally** (Head of the Prime Minister's Political Office 1976–79); **Michal Steed** (President of the Liberal Party 1978–79, and academic psephologist). Chair: **Geoff Tordoff** (Chairman of the Liberal Party 1976–79).

7.00pm, Monday 14 July

National Liberal Club, 1 Whitehall Place, London SW1

given the character of the Dutch, a liberal party did not emerge until 1885 – the *Liberal Union* – and then only as a rather loose coalition. Its decline in the 1930s was associated with economic policies which could not endure in the times in which they were implemented – the dislocation of the free trade system in the wake of the First World War is certainly one of the reasons for the weakness of liberal movements in that period.

After the Second World War, Germany was again fragmented and its liberalism at first reflected this,

but amazingly, the liberals went on to form a single party – the aforementioned FDP – which, in view of the nature of the country's political system, has enjoyed considerable success, albeit as a junior coalition partner. The book's contributors agree that the FDP lacks a sound electoral base, which I suspect mainly reflects that old lack of faith in the people. The VVD, on the other hand, has gone from strength to strength, whilst D66 has played a significant role in Dutch politics. The authors speculate on merger, then dismiss the idea, though it has since

re-emerged within the current rounds of internal squabbling in the VVD and D66. In particular there is the danger of populism which the successes of Pim Fortuyn exposed them to.

There is little on Dutch liberalism available in English, so this is a welcome volume from that aspect alone. Frölich's piece on German liberalism in *Journal of Liberal History* 41 (Winter 2003–04) left many questions unanswered on the FDP and Detmar Doering's contribution in this book meets some of these. Overall, the anthology makes a good starting-point for studying the liberal

movements of Germany and the Netherlands, though, alas, one cannot go much further with the Dutch without a knowledge of that language. Given the ascendancy that they enjoy within LI and their greater grasp of the balances between social and economic liberalism, a closer examination of these parties might serve the Liberal Democrats well.

Saeed Rahman read German History at the LSE and has been active in Liberal and international Liberal politics since the 1960s.