

THE RANK AND FILE GOVERNMENT 'CRISIS

1912 was a stormy year for Asquith's government, facing industrial unrest, problems with the suffragettes and the gathering storm of the crisis over home rule for Ireland. Through a recently unearthed letter, **Barry Doyle** offers a rare glimpse of the activist's reaction to the key issues facing Liberals at the time. What did they think of the New Liberal programme the government was trying to implement? Was the government losing its traditional middle-class supporters?



E AND THE LIBERAL SIS' OF 1912: A NOTE

SINCE THE 1930s, attempts to explain the remarkable collapse of British Liberalism have paid particular attention to the Edwardian era. The stunning victory of the party in the 1906 election and the wide range of social and constitutional reforms which the governments of Campbell-Bannerman and Asquith instituted have been juxtaposed with the emergence of an electoral and industrial challenge from Labour, the eruption of constitutional turmoil in Ireland and militant action by women seeking the vote.¹

The fact that this was followed by a four-year modern war from which the party emerged divided and defeated has raised important questions about the health of Liberalism and the Liberal Party in 1914.² Historians of the left have consistently argued that Edwardian Britain was in the throes of a crisis from which Liberalism could not recover,³ with their position further weakened by the rise of Labour, especially in the industrial north.⁴ This position has been challenged by those who

tend to point to the war itself as the main culprit in the Liberal collapse.⁵ Within this tradition, disagreement has centred on the extent to which the electorate was realigning along class lines – either between the Liberals and Labour or between progressives and conservatives – in the years before the First World War.⁶

Although these debates remain largely unresolved, there is agreement that in the years following the December 1910 election, the Liberal government struggled to retain its popularity and that it experienced by-election defeats, bad press and considerable reversals in local government.⁷ In particular, in 1911–12 ‘the Liberals went through one of their deepest troughs of unpopularity’,⁸ alienating both their traditional middle-class supporters and the increasingly volatile working-class electorate with a range of policies which were often interpreted as unnecessary and costly interference.⁹ That the Liberals were unpopular in 1912 is not in dispute – although Packer suggests that the land campaign may have reversed the trend as early as May 1912¹⁰ – but what is more

relevant is whether their actions were causing irredeemable damage to the party amongst its core middle-class supporters.¹¹

Initial assessments of the effects on Liberal Party support focused on the parliamentary party and some sections of the rank and file, especially in Lancashire and London. From this Emy, Blewett and especially Clarke deduced that the New Liberalism was mainly adopted by and attractive to the metropolitan, professional middle class – journalists, educationalists and those from the less established branches of the traditional professions.¹² Such ideas were less popular amongst the provincial, urban, Nonconformist middle class who filled the ranks of the party at both local and national level and who Clarke and Bernstein believe were fundamentally alienated by the switch to social politics.¹³ However, subsequent studies of both parliamentary and local politics by Searle, Packer and Doyle have argued for a more nuanced approach, which suggests that the Edwardian party was broadly behind the government, if occasionally disappointed with its priorities.¹⁴

The letter-writer and the recipient: Sydney Vere Pearson and Noel Buxton MP

In addition to studying the reactions of MPs to the legislation of this period,¹⁵ historians have used two further types of evidence to assess its impact in the country: election results – by-elections and municipal contests¹⁶ – and press reaction.¹⁷

Amongst the problems besetting the government in 1912 was a revolt by doctors over the newly instituted system of National Health Insurance.¹⁸ This legislation was also criticised by workers, who objected to the compulsory deduction of 4d a week – a greater contribution than either the employers or the state were making.¹⁹ As the worst of the opposition to National Insurance began to die down the government was plunged into renewed crisis in March 1912 by a national coal strike for a minimum wage. Although generally opposed to state support for able-bodied adult males, Asquith's cabinet utilised the precedent of the Trade Boards' Act of 1909, which had brought in minimum wages for the sweated trades, to help meet the miners' demands. Although stopping short of a national rate, the government did introduce regional wage boards, initially on a temporary basis and in the face of some opposition from moderate and business Liberals.²⁰

Early 1912 also saw the government begin the process of introducing the long-promised third Home Rule Bill and continue to grapple with the thorny problem of women's suffrage. On neither count could the party really rely on a strongly positive response from the British electorate, and both may have offended some parts of the Liberal rank and file.²¹ On the other hand, attempts to deal with traditional concerns, such as education, temperance and land reform, had proved no more effective following the curtailment of the power of the House of Lords than they had before.²² However, land reformers,

including supporters of the ideas of Henry George, did experience something of a golden summer on the back of Lloyd George's land campaigns launched in the summer of 1912.²³

Clearly each of these issues could and did affect the party's popularity in the country and may have helped to turn both middle- and working-class supporters away to either Labour or, more likely, the Conservatives. The Liberals lost a number of seats to the Unionists in by-elections during 1911–12 and suffered considerable setbacks in the municipal elections of November 1911.²⁴ Moreover, the Liberal press was ambiguous in its response to some of the bolder aspects of government policy. Certainly most provincial newspapers were uncomfortable with the miners' minimum wage, while some were ambivalent about home rule, hostile to land reform and broadly supportive of female suffrage but bitterly opposed to the militant tactics of the Women's Social & Political Union. Only on the National Insurance Act did they wholeheartedly support the government.²⁵

This evidence has often been taken as proof that what the Liberals were facing was more than just mid-term blues. Despite Labour's limited success in elections (they polled no more than 30 per cent in any of the by-elections they contested and actually lost four seats they were nominally defending²⁶) historians have pointed to Unionist and Labour advances in municipal contests, and the wavering of the press, as proof of a profound ideological and electoral malaise within Liberalism.²⁷ Yet very little evidence has been presented as to how conventional rank-and-file activists felt about the direction Liberalism was taking, or their views on the key issues of the day.²⁸ The rest of this article will examine a detailed letter from a prominent north Norfolk Liberal activist to his MP in March 1912, providing his

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personal views on each of the important questions highlighted above. In particular, it will present background information on the author and recipient and the constituency in which they were actively involved.

The author of the letter²⁹ was Sydney Vere Pearson, a physician who specialised in tuberculosis. Pearson obtained an MA and MD from Cambridge and MRCP from London³⁰ but his career as a consulting physician was curtailed by a severe bout of pulmonary tuberculosis. Following sanatorium treatment in Germany, he returned to Britain in 1905 and became Medical Superintendent of a small private sanatorium in Mundesley on the north Norfolk coast.³¹ He built the business up with the help of increasing government support for sanatorium treatment, especially under the provisions of the 1911 National Insurance Act. He continued to run the Mundesley sanatorium until after the Second World War, chaired numerous TB-related committees at local and national level, including the Joint Tuberculosis Council of Great Britain, and wrote extensively on aspects of TB cause and cure.³²

Pearson was also active in politics, and particularly as a follower of Henry George, in support of the taxation of land values (the 'single tax').³³ He played a very active role in Liberal constituency politics prior to the First World War, organising a full calendar of events and speakers and providing leadership in an area dominated by rural labourers and petit-bourgeois elements. He was a Vice President of the North Norfolk Liberal Party and chaired Mundesley Liberal Association until the First World War when, in 1915, his pacifism led him to join the Independent Labour Party (ILP). He became a voluminous propagandist for the single tax between the wars, writing many articles and letters for the left-wing press,³⁴ and a string

of books in the 1930s which focused on the issue of over-population.³⁵ He seceded from the ILP in 1933 over their more militant stance following their disaffiliation from the Labour Party,³⁶ and though he stayed a Labour supporter for the rest of the 1930s, by the mid-1940s he claimed to have abandoned politics altogether. He published his autobiography in 1946 and died a few years later.³⁷

The recipient of Pearson's letter, Noel Buxton, later Lord Noel-Buxton, was also on the left of the Liberal Party. According to the great Liberal journalist, A. G. Gardiner, Buxton was 'not an orator, for he is too cautious in the use of words for that, and he is not a popular politician, for he has no touch of the demagogue in him'.³⁸ Prior to the Great War his main political interest was in foreign affairs, and in particular the Balkans. He founded the Balkans Committee and chaired it until 1913, acting as a special advocate for the demands of Macedonia, leading Gardiner to note: 'Parliament contains no one who brings to the consideration of international affairs a wider vision and a saner judgment than the man who for ten years has fought the battle of Balkan freedom with the single-minded devotion of a Knight-errant'.³⁹

He visited Bulgaria for the Balkan War Relief Fund, writing up his experiences in a book published in 1913, and he played an important part in the Foreign Affairs Committee of the House of Commons. First elected for the Yorkshire fishing seat of Whitby, he won North Norfolk for the Liberals in January 1910 and held the seat until the election of December 1918, when he was defeated as a Liberal. He regained the seat in 1922 as a Labour candidate and held it until 1930, serving as Ramsay MacDonald's Minister of Agriculture in 1924 and again in 1929–30. He was elevated to the Lords in 1930 as Lord Noel-

Buxton and remained active in politics until his death in 1948.⁴⁰ He was succeeded in North Norfolk by his wife, Lucy, who lost the seat in 1931 and contested it unsuccessfully in 1935 before returning to Parliament in 1945 as one of the two Norwich Labour MPs. She stood down in 1950 and died in 1960.⁴¹

Their constituency was, on the face of it, unusual Liberal territory. One of five agricultural seats in Norfolk, it was amongst the safest Liberal seats in the south of England, remaining in the party's control even in 1886 when many similar constituencies fell to Liberal Unionism.⁴² Representation had been dominated by the Cozens-Hardy family of Holt, Methodist squires and connections of the Norwich Colmans,⁴³ whilst Buxton had distant family links to the area. Dominated by large estates dependent on grain production, the area had suffered badly during the great agricultural depression of the 1870s and 1880s. There were relatively few smallholders and large numbers of labourers, whilst some of the landlords, like the Marquis of Hastings of Melton Constable, were known to act in a hostile fashion towards Liberal voters.⁴⁴ Most of the towns were small, and many of those on the coast were replacing their former dependence on fishing with a growing holiday trade.⁴⁵ Non-conformity was relatively weak, though Primitive Methodism was practised by many of the labourers, whilst the Cozens-Hardy family promoted United Methodism from their chapel in Holt.⁴⁶ Although less representative of the type of seat which has dominated discussion of the Edwardian period, this constituency may have represented the future for Liberalism, and it retained its radical credentials into the 1920s, when it was won by Noel Buxton for Labour at every election.

Thus, although the letter from Pearson to Buxton did not

emanate from a traditional urban Liberal, it does provide a rare glimpse of the political views of a prominent rank-and-file activist. On its own it is insufficient to allow for radical conclusions, but it is suggestive of a number of possibilities. Looking back to the early debates about the social basis of support for New Liberal ideas, it tends to confirm the view that Liberal social policies were popular with educated, professional groups – what might be termed 'progressives'.⁴⁷ Pearson's involvement with an evolving state apparatus for health and welfare through his tuberculosis work helps to identify him closely with the type of newly positioned professional behind much of the social intervention apparent across the western world at the turn of the century. Yet in Pearson's case this progressivism was rooted in traditional Liberal concerns and issues. His position on votes for women and Ireland were consistent or a little ahead of most Liberals at the time, whilst his personal commitment to the views of Henry George reflected a coherent strand in radical Liberalism since at least the 1880s. Even on social issues his views reflected nineteenth-century values of equity and efficiency as much as the twentieth-century view of a new social politics, whilst in foreign affairs he shared the disapproval felt by many advanced Liberals, including Noel Buxton, for the policies of Sir Edward Grey, the Foreign Secretary.⁴⁸

The letter also shows that even a committed radical like Pearson could find a number of areas where he disagreed with the government on policy, priorities and direction. Yet these differences do not suggest any major break with the party, the contents of the document tending to confirm the view that 1912 was just a bad year for a Liberal government, experiencing a severe case of mid-term blues, rather than evidence of a 'strange death of Liberal England'.

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On the other hand, Sydney Pearson was not typical of the rank-and-file activists who have captured the attention of historians of Liberal decline. He was a professional rather than a businessman, rural, not urban, and not a practicing Nonconformist – and thus it could be argued that his views were not representative. Yet he does offer a rare glimpse into the mind of the activist at this key moment, and his prominent position as a Vice President of the constituency party and chair of a small town committee point to him holding mainstream views broadly in line with those of other local activists. Overall, this snapshot points to greater support for the government in the constituencies than has been revealed by studies of elections or the press, suggesting it was indeed the war, and not pre-war government policies, which led Pearson and others like him to abandon the party to left and right.

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[Typewritten draft copy of letter from Sydney Vere Pearson, M.B., M.R.C.P., Medical Superintendent, Mundesley Sanatorium, Norfolk and President Mundesley Liberal Association]

To Noel Buxton [in pencil]
March 21st 1912
My dear Buxton, –

I owe you an apology for not acknowledging your letter of the 28th of last month.⁴⁹ First let me answer your question with regard to the further distribution of some Insurance pamphlets. I have had the offer of some Cobden Club pamphlets “The Hungry Forties” for distribution.⁵⁰ I am going to see Wakelin⁵¹ in the course of the next few days on this matter, and, after seeing him, I will let you know what seems best with regard to distributing more Insurance Act pamphlets. I certainly think that the more knowledge which is spread of this Act, the better

for us. I think the temporary set-back Liberalism has received has been almost entirely due to the discreditable conduct of the Tories in this connection.⁵² But it is a relief to feel convinced that this will bring discredit to themselves alone in the long run.

I think at present, bye-elections are best avoided – even in Norfolk. I believe for at least as long as the rest of this year, hardly any Liberal seat can be considered really safe.⁵³

I hope the present stormy time will be weathered. Of course, I think any able bodied, willing worker should get a living wage for his work. But I certainly in principle do not approve of a minimum wage being fixed by statute for any industry. At the present minute, however, almost any [‘thing’ scored out and replaced by ‘temporary measure’] which can bring an end to the Coal Strike is legitimate.⁵⁴ I am, to a considerable extent, a follower of the economics of Henry George, and I believe that the taxation of land values would bring about a cessation of unrest in the industrial world. Of course, I recognise that this cannot be done at once, and that any steps in this direction must be undertaken somewhat [‘cautiously’ scored out and replaced by ‘gradually’]. I have an idea that the report which the [‘present’ scored out] commission now sitting to consider the relationship between Imperial and Local taxation will bring forward will have in it useful suggestions [‘presently’ scored out].⁵⁵ But the time is not quite ripe for them, nor, should I imagine, is their report wanted by the Government just at present.

The meeting on Monday night, at which Mr. Oglesby spoke, was not very full. It was a wet night. I think it is unfortunate that the Home Rule Bill had not appeared before these meetings,⁵⁶ and that the Coal Strike distracts attention from this subject. But, in any case, I

think the average Englishman’s interest in Irish Home Rule is somewhat limited, and not to be compared to that which it takes in the Insurance Act.⁵⁷ I am firmly of the conviction that the great majority of Englishmen now want Ireland to be granted Home Rule. There are only certain places, such as Liverpool and its neighbourhood, where keen interest and controversy on this subject remain.

I was glad to see that the Parliamentary Section of the Foreign Relations Committee had you for their Chairman the other day. I am afraid I am one of those Liberals who has rather weak faith in Sir Edward Grey.⁵⁸

Lest the sentiments expressed in the letter which you read in “The Nation”⁵⁹ were contrary to mine, I hasten to tell you that I have not written any letter which has appeared in “The Nation”. I do not see this paper. I take in, and read as a rule, so many dailies that I have not time to read also any weekly. The only letter I have written to the public press in recent months is one which did not see the light. It was a short letter to “The Daily Telegraph” attempting to show up the ignorance of Sir Ray Lancaster⁶⁰ about the Insurance Act, and about the task set the recently appointed Tuberculosis Committee. I think this Committee is an excellent one, and, naturally, I am much interested to hear their doings. Some of these reach me.⁶¹

When present troubles are over, undoubtedly we have not altogether finished yet with the stupid members of my own profession. It is very unfortunate that so many [amended to] prejudiced, conservative and often quite unfair obstacles should be placed in the way of this beneficent Act.

With regard to the Suffrage question: I am in favour of gradually getting to the condition of [‘establishing’ scored out] Universal Adult Suffrage. As a step towards this, I favour Woman Suffrage.⁶²

These differences do not suggest any major break with the party, the contents of the document tending to confirm the view that 1912 was just a bad year for a Liberal government, experiencing a severe case of mid-term blues, rather than evidence of a ‘strange death of Liberal England’.

[In pen] I apologise for the length of this [illegible].

I remain, Yours sincerely
SVP

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Overall, this snapshot points to greater support for the government in the constituencies than has been revealed by studies of elections or the press.

- 1 George Dangerfield, *The Strange Death of Liberal England* (London: Paladin Reprint 1970, first published 1935); Henry Pelling, *Social Geography of British Elections, 1885–1910* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1967); George L. Bernstein, *Liberalism and Liberal Politics in Edwardian England* (London, Allen and Unwin, 1986); *Journal of Liberal History* 54 (Spring 2007), special issue on 1906.
- 2 Trevor Wilson, *The Downfall of the Liberal Party, 1914–1935*, (London: Fontana, 1966); Roy Douglas, *A History of the Liberal Party, 1895–1971* (London: Sidgwick and Jackson, 1971); Ian Packer, *Liberal Government and Politics, 1905–15* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2006); G.R. Searle, *The Liberal Party: Triumph and Disintegration, 1886–1929*, (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2nd ed. 2001).
- 3 Dangerfield, *Strange Death*; Pelling, *Social Geography*; Bernstein, *Liberalism*.
- 4 Keith Laybourn, 'The Rise of Labour and the Decline of Liberalism: The State of the Debate', *History*, 80 (1995), 209–26; Ross McKibbin, *The Evolution of the Labour Party, 1910–1924* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1974); David Powell, *The Edwardian Crisis: Britain, 1901–1914*, (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 1996).
- 5 Wilson, *Downfall*; Douglas, *Liberal Party*; Packer, *Liberal Government*; Michael Bentley, *The Climax of Liberal Politics: British Liberalism in Theory and Practice, 1868–1918* (London: Edward Arnold, 1987); Duncan Tanner, *Political Change and the Labour Party 1900–1918* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990).
- 6 Laybourn, 'Rise of Labour'; P.F. Clarke, *Lancashire and the New Liberalism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1971); Tanner, *Political Change*; Barry M. Doyle, 'Urban Liberalism and the "Lost Generation": Politics and Middle Class Culture in Norwich, 1900–1935', *Historical Journal* 38 (1995), 617–634; Barry M. Doyle, 'A Conflict of Interests? The Local and National Dimensions of Middle Class Liberalism, 1900–1935' in C. Jones & D. Dean (eds.) *Parliament and Locality* a Special Issue of *Parliamentary History* (Edinburgh, 1998), 131–40.
- 7 Roy Douglas, 'Labour in Decline, 1910–14' in K.D. Brown (ed.), *Essays in Anti-Labour History Responses to the Rise of Labour in Britain*. (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1974); Bernstein, *Liberalism*; Chris Cook, 'Labour and the Downfall of the Liberal Party, 1906–14' in Alan Sked and Chris Cook (eds.), *Crisis and Controversy*, (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1976), 38–65; Ian Packer, *Lloyd George, Liberalism and the Land: The Land Issue and Party Politics in England, 1906–1914* (Woodbridge: Boydell & Brewer, 2001).
- 8 David Brooks, *The Age of Upheaval: Edwardian Politics, 1899–1914* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1995), 140.
- 9 Pat Thane, 'The Working Class and State Welfare in Britain, 1880–1914', *Historical Journal* 27 (1984), 878–97.
- 10 Packer, *Lloyd George, Liberalism and Land*, 81–82.
- 11 See especially, P.F. Clarke, 'The End of Laissez-faire and the Politics of Cotton' *Historical Journal* 15 (1972), 493–512.
- 12 H.V. Emy, *Liberals, Radicals and Social Politics, 1892–1914*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1973); Neal Blewett, *The Peers, the Parties and the People: The General Elections of 1910* (London: Macmillan, 1972); Clarke, *New Liberalism*.
- 13 Clarke, 'End of Laissez-faire'; Bernstein, *Liberalism*.
- 14 G.R. Searle, 'The Edwardian Liberal Party and Business', *English Historical Review* 98 (1983), 28–60; Ian Packer, 'The Liberal Cave and the 1914 Budget', *English Historical Review* 111 (1996), 620–35. For local activists, Doyle, 'Urban Liberalism'.
- 15 Packer, *Liberal Government* for the most recent analysis of attitudes within Parliament to government policy.
- 16 Douglas, 'Labour in Decline'; P.F. Clarke, 'The Electoral Position of the Liberal and Labour Parties, 1910–14' *English Historical Review* 90 (1975), 828–836; Laybourn, 'Rise of Labour'; Cook, 'Downfall of the Liberal Party'; George L. Bernstein, 'Liberals and the Progressive Alliance in the Constituencies, 1900–1914: Three Case Studies' *Historical Journal* 28 (1983), 617–640.
- 17 Bernstein, *Liberalism*.
- 18 Norman R. Eder, 'Medical Opinion and the First Year of National Health Insurance in Britain' *Albion* 11 (1979), 157–171.
- 19 Bernstein, *Liberalism*, 129–30; Thane, 'Working Class and State Welfare'.
- 20 Bernstein, *Liberalism*, 136–8; Packer, *Lloyd George, Liberalism and Land*, 78; Powell *Edwardian Crisis*, 124–3.
- 21 Bernstein, *Liberalism*, 150–63; D.W. Bebbington, 'Nonconformity and Electoral Sociology, 1867–1918' *Historical Journal*, 27 (1984), 636–56; Stephen Koss, 'Wesleyanism and Empire' *Historical Journal* 18 (1975), 105–18; Asquith himself was a strong anti-suffragist, Powell, *Edwardian Crisis*, 83–4.
- 22 See Bernstein, *Liberalism*, pp.140–47 for the effects of this failure on the rank and file, but also D.W. Bebbington, *The Nonconformist Conscience: Chapel Politics, 1870–1914* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1982).
- 23 Packer, *Lloyd George, Liberalism and Land*, 96.
- 24 Cook, 'Downfall of the Liberal Party'.
- 25 Bernstein, *Liberalism*, ch.7.
- 26 Powell, *Edwardian Crisis*, 111–12.
- 27 Bernstein, *Liberalism*, 149–50; Cook, 'Downfall of the Liberal Party'.
- 28 For rank-and-file MPs in this period, see Searle, 'Liberal Party and Business'; Packer, 'Liberal Cave'. For local activists, Doyle, 'Urban Liberalism'; Doyle, 'Conflict of Interests'.
- 29 The letter is in a collection of four news cuttings books assembled by Sydney Vere Pearson during the course of his life. Though not entirely themed, vol. 4 is mostly medical and biographical material, focussing particularly on his books

- of the 1930s and 1940s; vol. 1 relates largely to his earlier life, mostly the period 1910–20; whilst vols. 2 and 3 are concerned mainly with his involvement with left-wing and land reform organisations during the later 1910s and the 1920s. The four volumes are in the possession of the author.
- 30 Typescript biography dated 10/1939, probably for publicity purposes whilst in the United States. Copy in Pearson Newscuttings vol. 4, 84.
- 31 Drawn from reviews of his autobiography. Pearson Newscuttings, vol. 4, 121–7.
- 32 Typescript biography, Pearson Newscuttings vol. 4, 84. This volume also contains numerous articles on TB.
- 33 Packer, *Lloyd George, Liberalism and Land*, 30; A. Offer, *Property and Politics 1870–1914: Landownership, Law Ideology and Urban Development*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983).
- 34 Pearson Newscuttings vols. 1–4.
- 35 S. Vere Pearson, *The Growth and Distribution of Population* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1935); S. Vere Pearson, *London's Overgrowth and the Causes of Swollen Towns* (London: C.W. Daniel and Co, 1939).
- 36 *Eastern Daily Press*, 5 May 1933 in Pearson Newscuttings vol. 4, 24.
- 37 S. Vere Pearson, *Men, Medicine and Myself* (London: Museum Press, 1946).
- 38 A.G.G. 'Mr. Noel Buxton: A Character Study', *Daily News* 26 April 1913.
- 39 Ibid.
- 40 M. Stenton and S. Lees (Eds.), *Who's Who of British Members of Parliament: A Biographical Dictionary of the House of Commons Based on Annual Volumes of 'Dod's Parliamentary Companion' and Other Sources*. 4 Vols. (Sussex: Harvester Press, 1976–1980): vol.3, 53–54.
- 41 Ibid., vol.4, 278–79.
- 42 Michael Kinnear, *The British Voter: An Atlas and Survey since 1885*. (London: Batsford, 1968).
- 43 D. Cannadine, *Aspects of Aristocracy: Grandeur and Decline in Modern Britain* (Yale University Press, 1994), 184–210.
- 44 Pam Barnes, *Norfolk Landowners since 1880* (Norwich, 1993); Pelling, *Social Geography*, 98–99.
- 45 J.K. Walton, *The British Seaside: Holidays and Resorts in the Twentieth Century* (Manchester University Press, Manchester, 2000).
- 46 Kinnear, *British Voter*; C. Binfield, *So Down to Prayers: Studies in English Nonconformity, 1780–1920* (London: Dent, 1978).
- 47 P.F. Clarke, 'The Progressive Movement in England', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 5th Ser., 24, (1974), 159–81.
- 48 Packer, *Liberal Government*, 28–36.
- 49 Unfortunately this letter is not available, so some references in Pearson's letter are a little opaque.
- 50 The Cobden Club, named in honour of the leading free trader of the mid-nineteenth century, remained a key propaganda tool of free traders into the twentieth century. During the Tariff Reform controversy of 1903–13, the Club produced a number of pamphlets, *The Hungry Forties* being particularly popular in rural areas. Anthony Howe, 'Free Trade and the Repeal of the Corn Laws', http://www.liberalhistory.org.uk/item_single.php?item_id=16&item=history&PHPSESSID=32f74420ec33, accessed 16 July 2007; Alan Sykes, *Tariff Reform in British Politics 1903–13* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1979).
- 51 Secretary, North Norfolk Liberals.
- 52 Eder, 'Medical Opinion'; E.H.H. Green, *The Crisis of Conservatism: The Politics, Economics and Ideology of the British Conservative Party, 1880–1914; Trade and the Empire* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995).
- 53 Within six weeks the party was plunged into a by-election in North-West Norfolk, following the death of Sir George White, the Norwich businessman who had held the seat since 1900. In a famous campaign by the single taxer E.G. Hemmerde, the seat was held easily, giving a further boost to Lloyd George's land campaign plans. For White, see Barry M. Doyle, 'Modernity or Morality? George White, Liberalism and the Nonconformist Conscience in Edwardian England' *Historical Research* 71 (1998), 324–40. For Hemmerde, Packer, *Lloyd George, Liberalism and Land*, 81.
- 54 This appears to have been the standard position amongst Liberals at this time, see Bernstein, *Liberalism*, 136–8.
- 55 The committee was set up to review changes in local taxation since the Royal Commission on Local Taxation reported in 1901 but took on a particular brief to address the thorny issue of rating valuation. *Final Report of the Departmental Committee on Local Taxation* [CD 7315] (HMSO, 1914).
- 56 The Bill was introduced on 11 April 1912. Bernstein, *Liberalism*, 158.
- 57 Packer presents evidence from leading Liberals that this was the case, though Bernstein argues that, in 1912 at least, Home Rule was still popular in the provinces. Packer, *Lloyd George, Liberalism and Land*, 79–80, Bernstein, *Liberalism*, 159. For sectarianism in Liverpool see P.J. Waller, *Democracy and Sectarianism: A Political and Social History of Liverpool, 1868–1939* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1981).
- 58 For general radical disapproval of Edward Grey, Packer, *Liberal Government*, 31–32.
- 59 The *Nation* was a radical/new Liberal weekly newspaper founded in 1907, owned by the Rowntrees and edited by H.W. Massingham. Key New Liberal thinkers such as L.T. Hobhouse contributed extensively to its pages and also helped to inform Lloyd George's land enquiries of 1912–13. Michael Freedon, *The New Liberalism: An ideology of Social Reform* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1986 reprint with corrections); Peter Clarke, *Liberals and Social Democrats* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978); Packer, *Lloyd George, Liberalism and the Land*, 81.
- 60 An eminent zoologist. A copy of the unpublished letter is in Pearson cuttings vol. 1.
- 61 The National Insurance Act allowed for sanatorium treatment for TB sufferers. See Linda Bryder, *Below the Magic Mountain A Social History of Tuberculosis in Twentieth-Century Britain*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988).
- 62 This rather half-hearted response betrays Pearson's own weakness on this topic. While an undergraduate at Cambridge he had publicly opposed the awarding of degrees to women. Pearson Cuttings vol. 1.