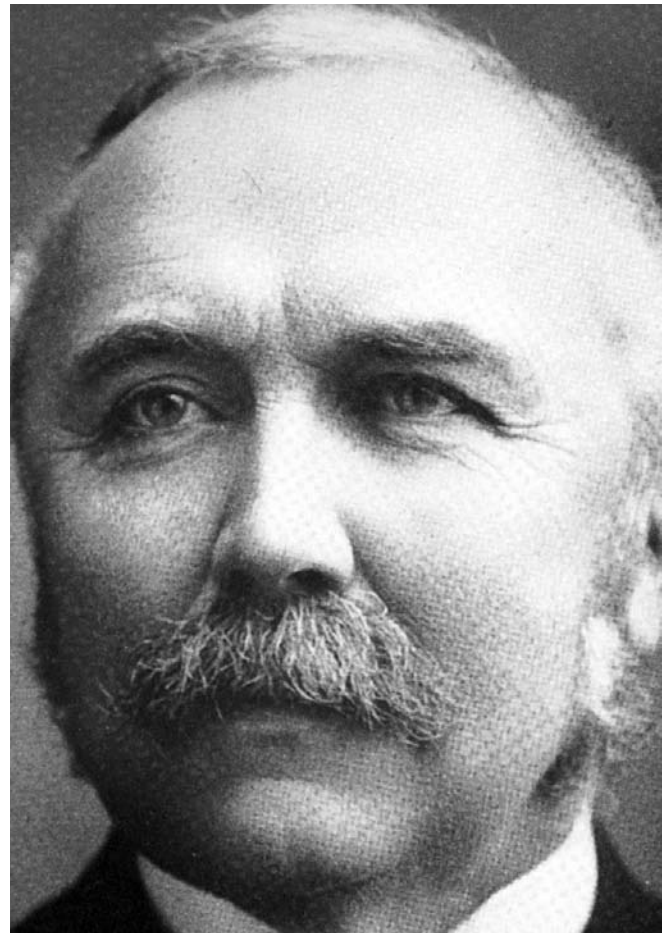
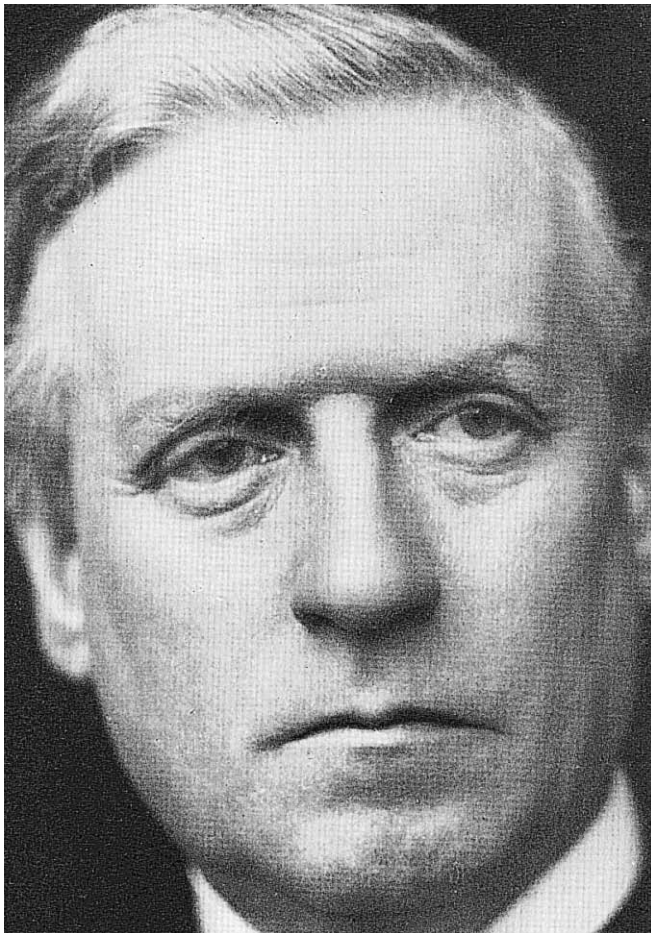


CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN AN UNEASY POLITICIAN



This year marks the centenary of the death of Liberal Prime Minister Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman and of the succession to the premiership of H. H. Asquith, the last head of a purely Liberal government of the United Kingdom. **Iain Sharpe** considers the relationship between the two Liberal leaders.

MAN AND ASQUITH: CAL PARTNERSHIP

SIR HENRY Campbell-Bannerman and Herbert Henry Asquith between them presided over the twentieth century's longest continuous period of non-Conservative rule, from 1905 to 1915.¹ They were instrumental in transforming the Liberal Party's political fortunes in opposition before 1905, leading to the landslide election victory of January 1906 and nine and a half years in government, before the inclusion of Conservatives in Asquith's wartime coalition government in May 1915. In government between 1905 and 1908, Asquith was the clear second-in-command to Campbell-Bannerman and deputised for the Prime Minister during his frequent illnesses. Yet for much of the period before the Liberals took office the two men were on opposite sides of the divisions that beset the Liberal Party and which at times threatened to divide it permanently. Their willingness to work together in spite of pressures from the rival wings of the party that threatened to pull them apart was crucial to rescuing the Liberals from the electoral wilderness.

The Liberal leadership

The final decade and a half of the nineteenth century was a period of electoral failure for the Liberals. The landslide defeat of 1886 followed the secession of the Liberal Unionists over Irish home rule. The party staged a modest electoral recovery in 1892, taking office under Gladstone, and then Rosebery, but the government was short-lived and accomplished little. The party suffered another catastrophic defeat in the 1895 general election. The resignation of Rosebery as Liberal leader in 1896 and that of his successor, Harcourt, in 1898, in both cases the result of disputes over imperial policy, created an impression of a party in perpetual crisis.

The Liberals' choice of leader now fell between Campbell-Bannerman and Asquith, both survivors of the 1892–95 Cabinet. Of the two, Asquith seemed the more obvious choice. Aged forty-six, he was one of the few success stories of the recent Liberal government, in which he had served as Home Secretary. Originally from Yorkshire, he came from a relatively modest,

middle-class and staunchly Liberal family. He had been a brilliant classics scholar at Balliol, before becoming a barrister and Liberal MP for East Fife. In the House of Commons he was associated with figures such as Richard Burdon Haldane and Sir Edward Grey, who were imperialist in outlook and wanted the party to project a moderate image, but who were also open to new ideas on social and welfare reform. Campbell-Bannerman, known universally as 'C-B', was more clearly a Liberal in the Gladstonian tradition. Sixteen years older than Asquith, he had served in all Liberal governments since 1868, most recently as Secretary of State for War. His father was a wealthy Glasgow merchant and his family Conservative. Although he had attended Cambridge University, his academic achievements were modest. As a cabinet minister he was capable and loyal, but by no means outstanding – neither a great orator nor a shining intellect. His lack of leadership ambition is shown by his unsuccessful pursuit in 1895 of the House of Commons Speakership.²

Liberal leaders:
Asquith and
Campbell-
Bannerman

In the event, the party was spared a leadership battle. Asquith ruled himself out of contention because, being dependent on his earnings at the Bar to support a large family and a notoriously extravagant socialite wife, he could not devote himself to full-time politics. Indeed, despite his acute mind and academic achievements, Asquith was regarded by many of his contemporaries as a parvenu, in contrast to C-B who, although he took little part in 'society', was at least wealthy.³ Asquith offered his backing to C-B, promising 'the most loyal & energetic support', while admitting that, with the party's ongoing difficulties, 'it has not at first sight a very friendly look to urge a man into such a position'.⁴ C-B's election was confirmed at a meeting of Liberal MPs on 6 February 1899, at which he made clear that he was a reluctant party leader, and said: 'I hope I am well enough known to be a person of a pretty tolerant and easy-going disposition not likely to exercise pedantically any powers of party discipline.'⁵

Both men were to be severely tested on these respective pledges in the ensuing years.

The South African war

Although C-B enjoyed a quiet first few months as opposition leader, the war in South Africa, which broke out in October 1899, was guaranteed to reawaken divisions in the party. Liberals in the Gladstonian and Cobdenite traditions opposed aggressive imperial adventures and instinctively sided with small nations such as the Transvaal and Orange Free State, with which Britain was now at war. By contrast, the 'Liberal Imperialists', as they were to become known, felt the war was justified and did not want the party to seem unpatriotic.

On the surface Asquith and Campbell-Bannerman held similar views on the war. Both were

critical of the Unionist government's diplomacy, but realised that a responsible opposition could not appear to side with their country's enemies in wartime. Yet C-B ultimately blamed the British government for the war and believed it an unnecessary blunder, while Asquith regarded Britain as more sinned against than sinning. In the early part of the war, they attempted to coordinate their public statements to avoid contradicting one another. But it was impossible to avoid differences of emphasis. Asquith, Haldane and Grey all supported the diplomacy of Sir Alfred Milner, the British High Commissioner for Southern Africa and Governor of Cape Colony, with whom they had close personal ties. C-B, on the other hand, was privately critical of Milner's belligerent approach and struggled to resist expressing these views in public.

Key parliamentary votes in the early part of the war highlighted the divisions among Liberals between three groups: supporters of the war, its implacable opponents (dubbed 'pro-Boers'), and those who followed C-B's lead in trying to steer a middle course. Unlike Haldane, Grey and other imperial-minded Liberals, Asquith avoided voting against his leader on the parliamentary divisions. He cooperated with C-B and the Chief Whip, Herbert Gladstone, in agreeing an amendment to the Queen's Speech in February 1900 that briefly united all factions in regretting the government's 'want of knowledge, foresight and judgment' in its conduct of South African affairs and preparations for the war.⁶

Methods of barbarism

Despite C-B's attempts to preserve unity, Grey and Haldane, along with other Liberal Imperialists, believed that Campbell-Bannerman's leadership was resulting in an unsustainable

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fudge over the war and hoped for Rosebery to return to the leadership with Asquith leading the party in the House of Commons. Asquith, however, does not appear to have shared his friends' desire to oust C-B, and continued to support him.⁷ However, C-B's notorious 'methods of barbarism' speech in June 1901, in which he denounced the conditions in which Boer prisoners were being held in concentration camps in South Africa, plunged Asquith into open confrontation with his leader.⁸ Despite its celebrated position in the canon of Liberal speeches, the phrase 'methods of barbarism' was at the time widely regarded as a mistake, even by Liberals loyal to his leadership,⁹ because it appeared to be a criticism of British troops fighting for their country. While C-B was sincere in his comments on the suffering in the concentration camps, Asquith joined with Liberal Imperialists in seeing it as a sign that the party leadership had been captured by the pro-Boers and that their own views were being anathematised. This was partly because the speech was given to a dinner sponsored by the anti-war National Reform Union, and the whole event was seen as having an air of pro-Boer triumphalism.

At first Asquith assumed that C-B had made an unintentional blunder. He offered to do what he could to discourage reprisals from Liberal Imperialists.¹⁰ However, when it became clear that C-B stood by his remarks, Asquith spoke out in defence of Liberal supporters of the war. He addressed a dinner at Liverpool Street Hotel when, although he did not mention C-B by name, he attacked the National Reform Union meeting. He did not threaten a Liberal imperialist secession from the party, but defended the Liberal credentials of those who supported the war and their claim to be part of the orthodox Liberal movement.¹¹

Asquith's supporters arranged a further dinner in his honour, to be held on 19 July; it was regarded by many as a direct challenge to C-B's leadership. However, C-B outwitted his critics by calling a meeting of the Liberal parliamentary party, which endorsed his leadership while allowing scope for Liberals to express dissenting views. Asquith came under pressure from many Liberal MPs to abandon the dinner in a show of party unity.¹² What followed was an early example of the sort of compromise that became typical of Asquith's career. Pleading that the arrangements had gone too far for cancellation, he insisted that the dinner go ahead, but then used his speech to deliver a conciliatory message, in which he commented: 'I have never called myself a Liberal Imperialist. The name of Liberal is long enough, good enough, and distinctive enough, and always will be for me.'¹³

Relations between Asquith and C-B remained strained for some time afterwards, however. In his public speeches through the autumn of 1901 Asquith, while never directly repudiating C-B's leadership, took an increasingly independent line. At Ladybank on 28 September he raised the question of Irish home rule, advocating a 'step-by-step' approach, arguing that the Liberal Party should disavow any immediate intention to legislate for an Irish parliament and instead consider Irish reforms that were compatible with, but did not go as far as, a separate legislature.¹⁴ This appeared a calculated attack on a long-held Liberal policy and therefore a direct challenge to C-B. In reality, Asquith's view was similar to the policy that C-B had acquiesced in before the 1900 election, at the instigation of Herbert Gladstone.¹⁵ This made clear that home rule would not be an immediately priority of a Liberal government and gave Liberal candidates flexibility in

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their statements on the policy. But whereas C-B was happy to let home rule sit quietly on the back-burner, Asquith and the Liberal Imperialists wanted it to be publicly disavowed, signalling a clear change in Liberal priorities.

On 15 December, Asquith was present at Rosebery's notorious Chesterfield speech, in which the former Prime Minister appeared to point the way to Liberal unity on the war, while at the same time stirring up tensions on domestic policy.¹⁶ The speech was a political sensation, seeming to herald Rosebery's return to front-line politics. On this point both C-B and Asquith had mixed feelings. Rosebery's prestige in the country meant that all leading Liberals had to express the hope, in public at least, that he would rejoin the active ranks of the party. In C-B's case, this was tempered by the knowledge that Liberal Imperialists wanted Rosebery to resume the leadership. Asquith too was aware that Rosebery's return would threaten his own position as the foremost figure on the party's imperial wing. He was frustrated by Rosebery's semi-detached relationship with the Liberal Party, on one occasion describing him as 'afraid to plunge, yet not resolute enough to hold to his determination to keep aloof'.¹⁷ At the same time, Asquith's allies, Grey and Haldane, were also strong supporters of Rosebery.

The Liberal League

If the Chesterfield speech seemed at first to offer hope of Liberal unity, its aftermath saw an increasingly bitter feud between C-B and Rosebery. The most divisive factor was Rosebery's espousal of the 'clean slate' – the view that the Liberal Party should abandon long-held policies that had proved unpopular with the electorate. In practice, C-B was flexible about what the Liberals ought to

do in government, and willing to amend unpopular policies. For example, he agreed to drop the party's commitment to the prohibitionist 'local veto' policy on temperance, at the suggestion of Herbert Gladstone.¹⁸ He was aware of the faults of the party's radical wing. But he saw Rosebery's 'clean slate' position as an abandonment of all that the Liberal Party stood for. Asquith's views were probably somewhere between the two extremes, but, in the wake of Chesterfield, he stood more clearly in the Rosebery camp.

In February 1902, Rosebery launched a new organisation, the Liberal League, as a vehicle for his Chesterfield policy, and Asquith joined Grey in becoming one of its vice presidents. From the start the Liberal League's purpose was unclear – was it a putative breakaway organisation or a haven for imperialists within the Liberal Party? The fact that Rosebery, the League's president, pronounced himself 'outside [the official Liberal Party] tabernacle',¹⁹ while its vice presidents remained active Liberals in the House of Commons, added to the confusion. It provoked a hostile reaction from C-B, to whose authority the League seemed a direct challenge. However, Asquith was keen to assert the League's position within the Liberal fold and disavow any intention to break away from the party or be driven out of it.²⁰

Free trade

In May 1902 the South African war came to an end. The Unionist government's Education Act of the same year, with its perceived bias towards Church of England schools, enabled nearly all Liberals to rally to the traditional cause of religious equality. The following year Joseph Chamberlain's tariff reform campaign acted as a further catalyst for unity, as all sections of the party wanted to defend free

trade, one of the party's longest-held and most treasured causes. Relations between Asquith and Campbell-Bannerman thawed, and regular correspondence between them resumed from early 1903, although never quite on the same friendly terms as before the summer of 1901. C-B remained suspicious of the Liberal Imperialists, commenting privately that: 'That section, for their ends, which are mainly personal, exaggerate their zeal in the fiscal quarrel in order to cover their old backslidings.'²¹ However, he encouraged Asquith to follow Joseph Chamberlain round the country with a series of speeches countering tariff reform propaganda, a campaign that revived Asquith's reputation within the party as a whole. C-B valued Asquith's mastery of the facts and detailed arguments on free trade, referring to him as 'the sledgehammer' for his ability to rebut the tariff reformers' arguments.²²

From 1902, the Liberals began to notch up a series of by-election victories and it became increasingly clear that the party was likely to win the next general election. This raised the question of who would be Prime Minister in an incoming Liberal administration. C-B was officially only the leader of the party in the House of Commons, and not an automatic choice to lead a Liberal government. Many Liberal Imperialists hoped that Rosebery would agree to form a government, but as the former Prime Minister still refused to make a political comeback, Asquith became their favoured choice. In 1903, Haldane told Asquith that neither he nor Grey would be willing to serve under C-B either as leader in the House of Commons or as Prime Minister. He claimed that Rosebery refused to consider forming a government and was going to 'work with all his strength for an A.[Asquith] ministry'.²³

The Relugas compact is one of the most controversial episodes in Asquith's career, since he can be charged with duplicity on two counts – conspiring against his party leader and then reneging on the conspiracy as soon as he was offered high office.

In 1903, Herbert Gladstone reported to Asquith a conversation with C-B in which the latter said that 'in the event of Gov^t he did not think that he would be able to take any post which involved heavy & responsible work', adding that he would prefer a largely ceremonial post such as Lord President of the Council.²⁴ C-B's comments are surprising from a party leader who was presumably intending to lead the Liberal Party into the next election and who did in the end serve as Prime Minister. It is possible that, as C-B and his wife were constantly troubled by ill-health, the leader's remarks indicated his state of mind at that moment rather than his settled intention. Asquith relayed the information to Haldane and Grey and it may well have inspired the so-called Relugas compact of September 1905.

The Relugas compact

The Relugas compact is one of the most controversial episodes in Asquith's career, since he can be charged with duplicity on two counts – conspiring against his party leader and then reneging on the conspiracy as soon as he was offered high office. The compact, reached between Asquith, Haldane and Grey in September 1905, at the latter's fishing lodge at Relugas, Morayshire, involved the three men agreeing to refuse to take office under C-B, unless certain conditions were met. These were that C-B should take a peerage, allowing Asquith to lead the House of Commons, and that Haldane and Grey should become Lord Chancellor and Foreign Secretary respectively.

The Relugas conspirators have not had a good press from historians.²⁵ The clumsiness of their conduct bears the hallmarks of a conspiracy initiated by Haldane, of whom C-B once said: 'Haldane always prefers the back stairs to the front, but no matter, for the clatter can be heard

all over the house'.²⁶ However, it would be wrong to see their agreement as simply the product of treachery and personal ambition. They feared being marginalised within a largely pro-Boer Liberal administration and wished to ensure they had real influence. They believed that a government which could not demonstrate its patriotic credentials would be short-lived, paving the way for the Unionists' return to office on a tariff reform programme.²⁷

Asquith appears to have been a largely passive participant in the conspiracy. Always averse to direct personal confrontation and internal party conflict, he may well have acquiesced with Haldane's plan, hoping that C-B would prove amenable to their requests. Unlike Haldane and Grey, Asquith was not in a position financially to refuse office if it was offered. In addition, as he pointed out in a later letter to Haldane, his refusal to serve under C-B might well undermine the viability of a Liberal administration, something that was not true of Haldane or Grey.²⁸

On 4 December 1905, Balfour resigned office, in the hope of regaining the political initiative by demonstrating that the Liberals were too divided to form a stable government.²⁹ When C-B was invited by the King to form a new government, Asquith accepted his offer of the Chancellorship of the Exchequer without insisting on the Relugas conditions. He argued that the compact was based on an assumption that a Liberal government would be formed after a general election victory; instead, C-B was being asked to form a minority government before the general election, and public disunity might prejudice the party's electoral prospects.

Asquith did urge C-B to take a peerage and to offer Haldane the Lord Chancellorship. However, C-B, having taken advice from his wife, and under

pressure from pro-Boer Liberals,³⁰ resolved to remain in the House of Commons. Haldane and Grey then refused office, with Grey being the more implacable, unless C-B met the Relugas terms. The formation of the Liberal government was therefore stalled by the strange situation in which Grey, although he had been offered his preferred position of Foreign Secretary, would not join the government unless Asquith was made leader in the House of Commons, even though Asquith had agreed to serve without such a precondition and was trying to persuade Grey to take office. Eventually, cajolery from various leading Liberals persuaded Grey that it was his duty to accept the Foreign Secretaryship; Haldane too joined the Cabinet as Secretary of State for War, C-B having denied him the Lord Chancellorship.³¹

It is tempting to conclude that the Relugas compact was a complete failure, with two of its three main objectives not achieved. In fact, the outcome was a compromise. C-B disliked both Grey and Haldane and had at first attempted to pass the former over for the Foreign Secretaryship and to offer the latter the non-Cabinet office of Attorney-General.³² Instead, they had both secured high office; the Relugas triumvirate was in a strong position to influence or even control government policy. And as C-B survived for just two years as Prime Minister before ill-health led to his resignation and death, possibly he made the wrong choice in declining a peerage.

The Liberals in government

In government, relations between C-B and his Liberal Imperialist ministers were more harmonious than they had been in opposition. Asquith was the clear heir apparent and was treated as such by the Prime Minister. There remained, however, some disagreements. One

of the challenges of the new government was to reverse the Taff Vale decision, which had made trade unions liable for damages sustained by employers due to strike action. While Asquith wanted to see trade unions given only limited immunity from legal action, C-B insisted on a Labour-inspired measure that gave them full immunity and which became the 1906 Trades Disputes Act.³³ Asquith and the Liberal Imperialists wanted to see disputes between the Lords and the Commons resolved by joint sittings of the two chambers, while Campbell-Bannerman preferred the more radical policy of a suspensory veto, in which the Lords would merely have power to delay measures passed by the elected chamber.³⁴ Asquith acquiesced without protest in C-B's decision and wound up the debate on the House of Commons resolution in support of the suspensory veto.³⁵ His own government, of course, was to legislate for the veto in 1911.

The correspondence between Asquith and C-B during the latter's premiership shows a friendly collaboration.³⁶ Indeed, in government the mutual suspicion between C-B and Haldane and Grey largely disappeared.³⁷ During C-B's final illness in 1908, Asquith deputised for him, presiding over Cabinet meetings and leading the House of Commons. According to Asquith's official biographers, C-B's parting words to his successor were to thank him for being 'a wonderful colleague, so loyal, so disinterested, so able', adding: 'You are the greatest gentleman I have ever met. This is not the last of me; we will meet again, Asquith.'³⁸ C-B resigned on 6 April 1908 and died on 22 April, with Asquith taking over as Prime Minister.

Conclusion

C-B's resignation and Asquith's accession to the premiership ended what had been a successful

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political partnership – one that was often tense and difficult but which yielded great dividends for the Liberal Party. Although they belonged to different social circles and differed in their political style and on some policy issues, there was far more that united than divided them. Both were practical politicians, more comfortable in government than with broad political theory or the posturing of opposition. Despite Asquith's imperialism, he was also a Liberal in the Gladstonian tradition, and like C-B had been strongly influenced by Gladstone himself.³⁹

Both were highly partisan Liberals and believed in the benefit to the country of Liberal government. This contrasted with the radical pro-Boer left of the party, who often appeared to prefer opposition, and with Grey, Haldane and Rosebery, whose semi-detached attitude to the party gave the impression that they were willing to participate in Liberal politics on their own terms or not at all. Asquith and C-B alike believed strongly enough in the goal of Liberal electoral success to make personal and political compromises in order to achieve it.

Whereas Haldane, Grey and Rosebery viewed C-B with thinly veiled contempt for his intellectual and oratorical shortcomings, Asquith's correspondence suggests that he either did not share this view or kept such thoughts to himself. Likewise, C-B recognised the importance of Asquith to the success of the Liberal Party and did not regard him in the same light as the other Liberal Imperialists. Although C-B privately used disparaging nicknames for Haldane (Schopenhauer, to make fun of his pretensions as a philosopher) and Sir Edward Grey (Sir E. Hur), Asquith escaped his leader's mockery.⁴⁰

One interesting question is whether, had C-B lived and continued as Prime Minister, he might have kept Britain out of

the European war in 1914. One contemporary supporter of C-B, F. W. Hirst, was in no doubt, writing in his memoirs that C-B 'would have wished ... to follow up the Entente with France by a similar Entente with Germany' and highlighting the reluctance with which C-B appointed Grey as Foreign Secretary.⁴¹ Such counterfactual speculation can never produce definite answers, but there are strong reasons to doubt this conclusion. C-B was aware of the need for the Liberal Party not to appear unpatriotic. His election address in 1906, which was effectively the Liberal manifesto, committed the party to 'continuity' with the previous administration's foreign policy.⁴² Of the two alternative candidates for the Foreign Secretaryship that C-B considered, Lord Cromer was a Unionist and Lord Elgin, although a Liberal, was an essentially non-partisan figure who had spent much of his career, like Cromer, in colonial administration. Any Liberal Foreign Secretary would have had to maintain a delicate balance between showing that a Liberal administration was committed to defending Britain's interests abroad and not alienating the anti-war left of the party by appearing excessively belligerent.

The course of the First World War led to the demise of the Liberal government that C-B and then Asquith had presided over for nine years, when Asquith formed a coalition government in May 1915. Although, as with any administration, it had its failures as well as successes, its achievements were considerable: it introduced old age pensions, laid the foundations of the welfare state, established the democratic principle of supremacy of the House of Commons, enacted both home rule for Ireland and Welsh disestablishment (although both of these were suspended for the duration of the war), established the

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principle of progressive taxation and succeeded in defending free trade. But for the intervention of the First World War it could have claimed to have completed much of the unfinished business that the Liberal Party had accumulated over the previous quarter of a century. Asquith and C-B's willingness to work together when other elements in the party sought to pull them apart was essential in ensuring that the Liberal Party was in a position to take office in 1905, win an election and enjoy its longest ever continuous period in government.

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1 An achievement eclipsed by the Labour administration of Tony Blair in 2006.
 2 John Wilson, *C-B: A Life of Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman* (London, 1973) pp. 350–58.
 3 Roy Jenkins, *Asquith* (London, 1964; third edn., 1986).
 4 Asquith–Campbell–Bannerman, 19 December 1898, BL Add. Ms. 41,210 ff.155–56.
 5 *The Times*, 7 February 1899.
 6 Herbert Gladstone–Campbell–Bannerman, 16 January 1900 ff.205–06 and 18 January 1900 ff.209–10; Campbell–Bannerman–Gladstone 21 January 1900 ff.216–17 (copy).
 7 H. C. G. Matthew *The Liberal Imperialists: The ideas and politics of a post-Gladstonian elite* (Oxford, 1973) pp. 52–53.
 8 The speech is reprinted in full in Duncan Brack and Tony Little (eds.), *Great Liberal Speeches* (Politico's, 2001), pp. 211–14.
 9 See Herbert Gladstone–Grey 28 December 1901 BL Add Ms 45,992 f.91.
 10 Asquith–Campbell–Bannerman, 15 June 1901, BL Add Ms 41,210 f.206–07.
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12 See *Daily News*, 2 July 1901 for Asquith's reply to a letter from forty Liberal MPs urging him to abandon the dinner.
 13 For the Asquith dinner, see *The Times*, 20 July 1901.
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 15 See Herbert Gladstone Autobiography BL Add Ms 46,118 ff.79–80.
 16 See Brack and Little, *Great Liberal Speeches*, pp. 217–27.
 17 Asquith–Herbert Gladstone 7 October 1900, BL Add. Ms. 45,989 f.44.
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 19 Rosebery letter to the Editor, *The Times*, 21 February 1902.
 20 Wilson C-B, p. 388; Asquith speech at St Leonards, 14 March 1902, reported in *The Times*, 15 March 1902.
 21 C-B–Vaughan Nash, 29 August 1903, quoted in Wilson C-B, p. 408.
 22 A. G. Gardiner, *Priests, Prophets and Kings* (London, 1914).
 23 Haldane–Asquith, 5 October 1903, National Library of Scotland, Haldane papers, 5906 ff.58–59.
 24 Herbert Gladstone–Asquith, 29 October 1903, Asquith papers, Bodleian Library, Asquith 10 f.98.
 25 See, for example, Matthew, *The Liberal Imperialists*, pp. 112–120.
 26 F. W. Hirst, *In the Golden Days* (London, 1947), p. 264.
 27 Richard Burdon Haldane, *An Autobiography* (London, 1929), p. 174.
 28 Asquith–Haldane, 7 December 1905, quoted in Spender and Asquith, *Life of Lord Oxford and Asquith* vol. 1 (London, 1930), pp. 174–75.
 29 It was a common tactic during this period of Prime Ministers in difficulty to resign rather than seek a dissolution, giving the opposition the dilemma of whether to form a potentially weak minority administration or to risk the accusation of being unable to form a government.
 30 A. G. Gardiner papers, British Library of Political and Economic

- Science, letter from Herbert Gladstone—A. G. Gardiner, 6 December 1905, and subsequent note by Gardiner of exchange of letters with Campbell-Bannerman.
- 31 See T. Boyle 'The Formation of Campbell-Bannerman's Government in December 1905: a Memorandum by J.A. Spender', *Bulletin of the Institute of Historical Research*, 45 (1972), 283–302.
- 32 For C-B's view of Haldane and Grey, see Herbert Samuel's memorandum on a conversation with Asquith on the formation of the Campbell-Bannerman government, Herbert Samuel papers, Parliamentary Archives, A155 III ff.99–100. Also see Margot Asquith, *An Autobiography* (London, 1962; originally published 1920 and 1922), p. 236; Margot Asquith diary, 5 December 1905, Bodleian MS. Eng. d.3204 f.85; Haldane *Autobiography* pp. 170–71.
- 33 Ian Packer, *Liberal Government and Politics, 1905–1915* (Basingstoke, 2006) pp.157–58.
- 34 *Ibid*, pp.79–80.
- 35 See *The Times*, 27 June 1907.
- 36 See Asquith–Campbell-Bannerman correspondence, Campbell-Bannerman papers British Library, Add. Ms. 41,210 ff.256–314
- 37 See, for example, Haldane's tribute to C-B in his memoirs: Haldane, *Autobiography*, p.182.
- 38 Spender and Asquith, *Life of Lord Oxford and Asquith*, vol. 1, p. 196.
- 39 For Campbell-Bannerman's political outlook, see R. W. Strong, 'Campbell-Bannerman as opposition leader' (unpublished Ulster Polytechnic PhD thesis, London: Council for National Academic Awards, 1983). For Asquith, see Roland Quinault (1992) 'Asquith's Liberalism', *History* 77 (249), 33–49.
- 40 See Spender and Asquith, *Oxford and Asquith*, vol. 1, pp. 144–45.
- 41 Hirst, *In the Golden Days*, p. 252.
- 42 *British General Election Manifestos, 1900–1974*, compiled and edited by F.W.S. Craig (London: Macmillan, 1975) p. 13.

LIBERAL HISTORY QUIZ 2008

This year's Liberal history quiz attracted a fair amount of attention at the History Group's exhibition stand at the Liberal Democrat conference in Bournemouth in September. The winner was Robin Young, with an impressive 19½ marks out of 20. Below we reprint the questions – the answers, and some observations on what the entrants thought were the answers, are on page 27.

- Which Liberal Democrat leader had been an Olympic athlete?
- Which was the first by-election won by a Liberal Democrat (constituency and year)?
- The Liberal Party was founded in 1859. Where?
- Whose Dimpleby Lecture was instrumental to the foundation of the SDP?
- Who did David Steel beat to become the leader of the Liberal Party?
- Who was the Liberal Leader in the Lords at the end of the Second World War?
- What was the year of the Orpington by-election?
- In which twentieth-century elections did the Liberal Party achieve its:
 - highest share of the poll?
 - lowest share of the poll?
- In 1929, Lloyd George published a pamphlet advocating a programme of public works which formed the basis of the Liberal manifesto in that year's general election. What was its title?
- Which Liberal leader proclaimed, 'I intend to march my troops towards the sound of gunfire'?
- Which Liberal Democrat leader described his party as 'confused, demoralised, starved of money and in the grip of a deep identity crisis'?
- Which Whig Prime Minister had seventeen children?
- In 1905, which three leading Liberal MPs plotted against Campbell-Bannerman in the agreement known as the Relugas Compact?
- At the time of its formation in March 1981, how many MPs formed the SDP's Parliamentary Party?
- In a piece of prose associated with the Liberal Party's presidency, which poet wrote 'Give me the liberty to know, to utter and argue freely according to conscience, above all liberties'?
- In what year did William Beveridge become a Liberal MP?
- For how long, in years and days, was David Lloyd George MP for Caernarfon Boroughs?
- Which Liberal Prime Minister said of which other Liberal premier –
 - He is one of the ablest men I have ever known;
 - He is of the highest honour and probity;
 - I do not know whether he really has any common sense?
- Who was the first president of the National Liberal Federation?
- Who wrote: 'I am not aware that any community has a right to force another to be civilised'?