

Even if Liberal Democrat negotiators had given themselves more time, properly discounted the risk of an early second election and taken care to compare the deals offered to them as a whole, the fundamental problem would have remained that, without a permanent leader, Labour fell apart to the extent that it was incapable of making any deal stick. It was not even clear how it would decide to accept or reject any deal. There is an important lesson here. Unless we can discover how to bind a leaderless party to a coalition deal, it is incompatible to call for a party leader to resign and still to expect the party to negotiate a coalition.

But that still leaves the choice between full coalition and confidence and supply with the Conservatives. More time, better estimation of the risks of a second election and careful consideration of a greater range of institutional arrangements could have produced a different outcome. It may be, however, that the Liberal Democrats would have chosen full coalition anyway, consciously sacrificing their poll ratings, and even their entire future as a party, in exchange for greater influence. But at least they would have made that choice with their eyes open.

David Howarth is a Fellow of Clare College, Cambridge; University Reader in Private Law, University of Cambridge; Associate Fellow of the Centre for Science and Policy, University of Cambridge; Electoral Commissioner; former MP for Cambridge and Leader of Cambridge City Council, Liberal Democrat shadow cabinet member 2007–10; Federal Policy Committee member 1990–2000.

- 1 They are: a pre-election Liberal Democrat draft 'confidence and supply' agreement for use with either other party, the Conservatives' and Labour's opening proposals from Saturday 8 May, the Conservatives' draft of a 'confidence and supply' agreement from the following Monday, their later written offer of a referendum on electoral reform, Labour's revised coalition offer of the same day and the final coalition agreement between the Conservatives and the Liberal Democrats of the evening of Tuesday 11 May.
- 2 There is also a case for reading Laws' narrative before Wilson's, if only for

Even if Liberal Democrat negotiators had given themselves more time, properly discounted the risk of an early second election and taken care to compare the deals offered to them as a whole, the fundamental problem would have remained that, without a permanent leader, Labour fell apart to the extent that it was incapable of making any deal stick.

the dramatic effect of learning how wrong certain people were at various points of the negotiations. The best example is Laws' account of Paddy Ashdown's desperate attempts to enlist a globetrotting Tony Blair to intervene with Gordon Brown to persuade him to facilitate Lib–Lab negotiations. Only when we turn to Wilson's account do we learn that Blair opposed any deal with the Liberal Democrats and told Brown so. Any parallels with 1997–98 are far from coincidental. As Conrad Russell once remarked about Paddy Ashdown's relationship with Blair, 'Love is blind.'

- 3 See Laws' Appendix 5, paragraph 1.4.3. 'Reallocate a proportion of any identified in year 2010–11 savings to the promotion of growth and jobs.' Notice only 'a proportion'.
- 4 Interestingly until the very last stage of the negotiations with the Conservatives all parties seem to have agreed to four-year fixed terms. The idea of a five-year fixed term appeared very late – possibly as a knock-on effect of agreeing a five-year deficit elimination timescale.
- 5 J. Attali, *Tous ruinés dans dix ans?* (Paris: Fayard, 2010) at pp. 127–130.

- 6 See UK Debt Management Office, *Annual Report 2009–10*.
- 7 G. Akerlof and R. Shiller, *Animal Spirits* (Princeton NJ: Princeton UP, 2009)
- 8 The Liberal Democrat negotiating team declined opportunities offered by the Cabinet Secretary to be browbeaten by officials, but only because they were in no further need of persuasion.
- 9 One explanation is that many of leading Lib Dem MPs were themselves economists by background, with a bias to the City rather than the universities (Laws, Huhne, Cable, plus PPE graduate Alexander). Perhaps they felt that consultation with mere academia was unnecessary.
- 10 Aeneid Book VIII, lines 485–499. As Vergil says, this is 'tormenti genus'.
- 11 The two parties later negotiated a set of institutional arrangements whose main characteristic is that they place an immense burden on the leader of the Liberal Democrats, a burden that seems incompatible with his retaining substantive departmental responsibilities.
- 12 Three were absent: Martin Horwood, Chris Huhne and Sir Bob Smith.

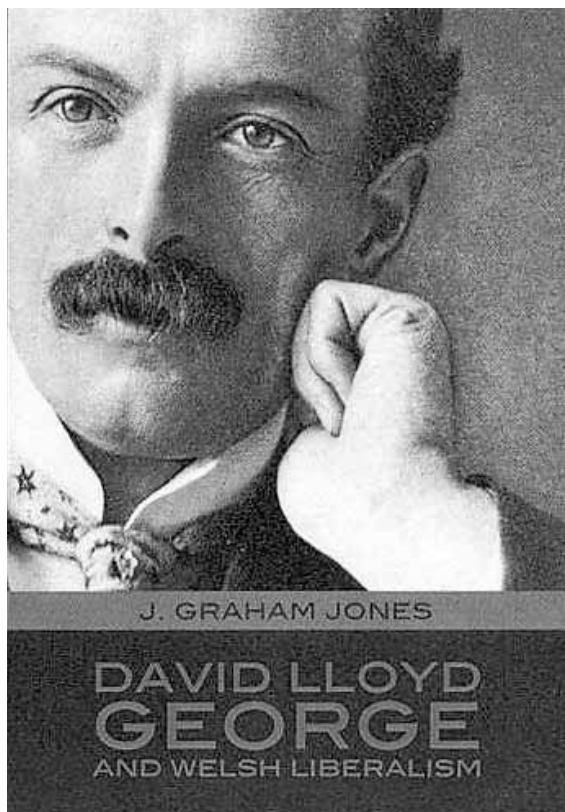
Lloyd George and Wales

J. Graham Jones, *Lloyd George and Welsh Liberalism* (National Library of Wales, Aberystwyth, 2010)

Reviewed by Kenneth O. Morgan

AS VOLTAIRE might have said, if John Graham Jones did not exist he would have had to be invented. As head of the Welsh Political Archive established at the National Library of Wales in 1983, he has become an irreplaceable figure in the scholarly life of Wales. He has a unique knowledge of the rich collections under his care (many of them housed in Aberystwyth as a direct result of his own energy and initiative) and he has been a generous adviser to other scholars working on the archival riches deposited in that monumental Cymric Parthenon overlooking the tranquil waters of Cardigan Bay. Travelling to this Welsh copyright library is a lengthy business, demanding a large volume to while away the time on David Davies' Cambrian railway as it

meanders through mid-Wales. But a meeting with the deeply learned, if deceptively modest, Dr Jones is always *vaut le détour*. For the first time, after selflessly helping other scholars for three decades, he has branched out with a major work of his own. It consists of twenty-eight chapters – all of them essays that have been previously published in local Welsh historical journals save for one that appeared in this journal. The focus is on Welsh politics between the late 1880s and the 1940s. In itself, this is a fascinating theme, on which previous scholars have written during the resurgence of modern Welsh history over the past half-century. But since the main emphasis is on episodes in the career of David Lloyd George, that ever-present magnet for legions of authors from Beriah Gwynfe Evans



to Roy Hattersley, the book has a particular appeal for historians of twentieth-century British politics, and especially of the fortunes of the Liberal Party and its renamed successors. Scholars will thus give Graham Jones' book a warm welcome.

The value of this book lies in the rich local political material that it contains. Dr Jones is a wonderful archivist, and his work pivots on the bulky manuscript collections under his custody, which he himself is often able to work on before other scholars may do so. In particular, his work is inspired by four recent major Lloyd George collections which he has collected and catalogued since 1990: the archive of L.G.'s younger brother, William, who selflessly kept the show on the road in Caernarfon Boroughs and ran the family solicitors; the papers of Lloyd George's second daughter, Lady Olwen; the large collection of papers of Lloyd George's ambitious private secretary, A. J. Sylvester; and a small residue of material retained by Lloyd George's secretary-mistress and eventual second wife, Frances Stevenson. But there are also many other collections which Dr Jones has been through, some long established in the National Library, such as those of Tom Ellis and D. R. Daniel, some of far more recent provenance and taking the story down to the

1979 devolution referendum and beyond.

The emphasis is overwhelmingly on elections and by-elections – indeed, excessively so – rather than on the social composition, economic interests or political ideology of Welsh Liberals. These Liberals, too, are overwhelmingly from rural, Nonconformist Welsh-speaking North and mid-Wales – Caernarfonshire, Anglesey, Denbighshire, Merioneth, Cardiganshire, Montgomeryshire, and also from Carmarthenshire in the south during the 1920s – significantly all of them counties which voted for the continued Sunday closure of pubs in the local referendum in 1961. This is all very fascinating, but it is only part of the reality of Welsh Liberalism. The cosmopolitan urban centres of the south – Newport, Cardiff, Barry and Swansea – seem an alien world, while we hear little of Merthyr or the mining valleys or indeed of the Labour movement in any respect. The maverick coalowner, D. A. Thomas, Lord Rhondda (who is mistakenly said to have been 'an uninterested observer' moored on the sidelines of Welsh politics after 1896) is a bit player, while the great mining Lib-Lab patriarchs like 'Mabon' and Brace, are absentees, as are the socialist ILP and the notorious Chief Constable of Glamorgan, Lionel Lindsay. This was the violent era of Taff Vale and Tonypandy, after all, yet no strike is discussed, not even the traumatic events in Thomas's own Cambrian Combine pits in 1910, nor the railwaymen shot down by troops at Llanelli in 1911. The South Wales Liberal Federation gets many mentions; the South Wales Miners' Federation, like the 225,000 workforce, does not feature in the index even once.

Most of the articles are solid and well constructed: about half a dozen, though, consist of the reprinting of documents of limited value almost for the sake of it, including some typically manic comments by Margot Asquith in the twenties. In short, this book covers some, though by no means all, key aspects of Welsh Liberalism from the late-Victorian period, but it does so through generous documentation set out by a uniquely expert guide. As a source book, therefore, it is of much value. Lloyd George's life odyssey is well

depicted, and perhaps the two most interesting chapters are the first two. We read of the emergence of the young rural firebrand in the backwoods politics of Caernarfonshire and Merioneth in the late eighties, and of the affinities of Lloyd George and Tom Ellis with Michael Davitt, both as an Irish nationalist and even more as a land nationaliser.

Davitt, an agrarian socialist, was to make his last appearance in Wales speaking for Keir Hardie in Merthyr in 1906. A full account of the Caernarfon Boroughs general election contest in 1892 illustrates the various cross-tensions between the six boroughs in the constituency (there was a major gulf between the cathedral-bound world of Bangor and Calvinist Methodist Criccieth and Pwllheli), and the uncomradely sniping within the chapels at the free-thinking Campbellite Baptist who had captured the seat by eighteen votes in a dramatic by-election in 1890. Lloyd George's seat was a distinctly marginal one down to 1906 and this article graphically illustrates why. Later chapters offer material, of varying importance, bearing on some of Lloyd George's later activities in national British politics, including his pioneering work at the Board of Trade in 1905–8 (a formative period which still needs close examination), the People's Budget, the suffragettes (where many Welsh Liberals responded with a disgraceful exhibition of violent bigotry), the 1916 conscription crisis which divided the party so fatefully, the post-war coalition of 'hard-faced men', the Green Book and other campaigns in the twenties, the Council of Action for Peace and Reconstruction crusading for economic renewal in 1935, the Abdication crisis in the following year (Edward VIII's backers included, variously Lloyd George, Churchill and, remarkably, Aneurin Bevan) and the crisis of May 1940. It cannot be said that earlier interpretations are challenged on these issues, but we understand them in more detail after the material that Dr Jones has accumulated.

These articles reflect once again the vibrant culture that was late-nineteenth and early-twentieth-century Wales. It was truly an Antonine Age of political vitality,

economic enterprise, revivalist religion, cultural innovation and growing national awareness. From its All-Black-beating rugby team to the revival of the national eisteddfod, it was the Welsh Golden Age. Its monuments still dominate the nation today, one being the National Library at Aberystwyth itself, located there to balance the museum set up in faraway Cardiff.

Attention, however, was far from monopolised by Lloyd George, political colossus though he was. There are other dramatis personae, vivid and compelling. Thus we read of the public-spirited Herbert Lewis, who illustrates – as do C. P. Scott, Seeböhm Rowntree or H. A. L. Fisher – the kind of honest,

dedicated public figure who could work well with Lloyd George. Alan Taylor's dismissive judgement of Lloyd George – 'He had no friends and did not deserve any' – was, like other of my old mentor's epigrams, vividly compelling but deeply untrue. We are told of Sir Alfred Mond, deeply engulfed in Welsh politics for all his involvement with his metallurgical empire, a bold Lloyd Georgian reformer before the war, but a case of Liberalism lapsing into a crude anti-socialism after 1922. We encounter David Davies of Llandinam, a Welsh Andrew Carnegie, millionaire industrialist, but also a philanthropic idealist who spent millions on combating lung disease, ending the national

university and, finally, campaigning for the League of Nations and world peace. Dr Jones also tells us of Llewelyn Williams, the visionary Oxford-bred 'Young Wales' Liberal who broke with Lloyd George over conscription in 1916 and fought the Coalition despairingly in a historic by-election in Cardiganshire in February 1921. Unfortunately, Dr Jones's relentless emphasis on party politics and by-elections leads him to neglect Williams's wider role as a rare kind of Welsh Thomas Davis, a cultural nationalist, writer of charming children's stories and a scholarly historian of Tudor Wales with a revisionist view of the Act of Union. Welsh Liberalism could have done more like Llew.

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.

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.

The political career of Edward Strutt, 1st Baron Belper

Strutt was Whig/Liberal MP for Derby (1830–49), later Arundel and Nottingham; in 1856 he was created Lord Belper and built Kingston Hall (1842–46) in the village of Kingston-on-Soar, Notts. He was a friend of Jeremy Bentham and a supporter of free trade and reform, and held government office as Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Commissioner of Railways. Any information, location of papers or references welcome. Brian Smith; brian63@inbox.com.

Liberal Unionists

A study of the Liberal Unionist party as a discrete political entity. Help with identifying party records before 1903 particularly welcome. Ian Cawood, Newman University College, Birmingham; i.cawood@newman.ac.uk.

Liberal policy towards Austria-Hungary, 1905–16

Andrew Gardner, 17 Upper Ramsey Walk, Canonbury, London N1 2RP; agardner@ssees.ac.uk.

Recruitment of Liberals into the Conservative Party, 1906–1935

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

Beyond Westminster: Grassroots Liberalism 1910–1929

A study of the Liberal Party at its grassroots during the period in which it went from being the party of government to the third party of politics. This research will use a wide range of sources, including surviving Liberal Party constituency minute books and local press to contextualise

the national decline of the party with the reality of the situation on the ground. The thesis will focus on three geographic regions (Home Counties, Midlands and the North West) in order to explore the situation the Liberals found themselves in nationally. Research for University of Leicester. Supervisor: Dr Stuart Ball. Gavin Freeman; gjf6@le.ac.uk.

The Liberal Party in the West Midlands December 1916 – 1923 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.

'Economic Liberalism' and the Liberal (Democrat) Party, 1937–2004

A study of the role of 'economic liberalism' in the Liberal Party and the Liberal Democrats. Of particular interest would be any private papers relating to 1937's *Ownership For All* report and the activities of the Unservile State Group. Oral history submissions also welcome. Matthew Francis; matthew@the-domain.org.uk.

The Liberal Party's political communication, 1945–2002

Research on the Liberal party and Lib Dems' political communication. Any information welcome (including testimonies) about electoral campaigns and strategies. Cynthia Messeleka-Boyer, 12 bis chemin Vaysse, 81150 Terssac, France; +33 6 10 09 72 46; cynthia.boyer@univ-jfc.fr.

The political career of David Steel, Lord Steel of Aikwood

David Steel was one of the longest-serving leaders of the Liberal Party and an important figure in the realignment debate of the 1970s and '80s that led to the formation of the Liberal Democrats. Author would like to hear from anyone with pertinent or entertaining anecdotes relating to Steel's life and times, particularly his leadership, or who can point me towards any relevant source material. David Torrance; davidtorrance@hotmail.com.

The Lib-Lab Pact

The period of political co-operation which took place in Britain between 1977 and 1978; PhD research project at Cardiff University. Jonny Kirkup, 29 Mount Earl, Bridgend, Bridgend County CF31 3EY; jonnykirkup@yahoo.co.uk.

FORGOTTEN HEROES FOR A GOVERNING PARTY

Some forgotten figures of Liberal history may deserve their obscurity, but most remain an unmined source of reference, quotation and inspiration for the contemporary Liberal Democrat – especially now, when the party is participating in national government for the first time in more than a generation.

At this year's Liberal Democrat History Group summer meeting, two senior party figures and two well-known academics will rescue their own forgotten heroes from the twilight of history and tell us how their champions' public lives can influence today's Liberal Democrats.

Speakers: **Lady Floella Benjamin; Lord Navnit Dholakia; Dr Matt Cole; Dr Mark Pack.**

The meeting will also mark the launch of Matt Cole's new biography, *Richard Wainwright, the Liberals and Liberal Democrats*; copies will be available for sale.

6.30pm, Monday 20 June

David Lloyd George Room, National Liberal Club, 1 Whitehall Place, London SW1A 2HE

The Lloyd George legacy in its different guises is shown in the later careers of Megan, a genuine radical who joined Labour, and Gwilym, who became a hyphenated Tory, and a Home Secretary who retained capital punishment. Truly their father's house contained many mansions.

What general conclusions can we reach about Welsh Liberalism in its era of greatness and glory? This book shows, of course, the centrality of popular Nonconformity in the public life of the nation, leading ultimately to the downfall and even discredit of the chapels as religious communities. Liberalism emerges as invincibly bourgeois, even with its populist grass roots, its shipowners and coalowners, preachers and teachers, journalists and the inevitable lawyers all increasingly out of touch with Labour, leading to a calamitous electoral collapse in the valleys

after 1918. It was always sternly anti-socialist. Lloyd George's quasi land nationalisation manifested in the 'cultivating tenure' proposed in his Green Book in 1925 left Alfred Mond apoplectic. Significantly, the New Liberalism flourished in urban centres in England, notably L. T. Hobhouse's Manchester, not in Wales, where the prevailing tone was Old Liberalism – just as it was to be Old, not New, Labour eighty years on. Above all, there is significantly little here on ideas of home rule, even the most modest forms of devolution. It was not a major theme in Welsh history before Kilbrandon in 1973. Lloyd George's great defeat at Newport in 1896, when the quasi-nationalists of Cymru Fydd were shouted down, left a dark shadow over movements for devolution, still evident in the referendum of 1979 (and even in 1997 when the 'Yes' vote triumphed by

only 0.5 per cent on a low poll). Wales was not Ireland, not even Scotland. It sought national equality within the United Kingdom not exclusion from it. Lloyd George, far from being the Parnell of Wales, became prime minister of Great Britain and a belligerent, even racialist, head of the Imperial War Cabinet. Even today, the Welsh Assembly lags well behind its counterpart in Edinburgh.

Finally, and of current relevance, coalition was always bad news for Liberalism. Lloyd George's 'couponed' peacetime coalition with the Tories after 1918 led to massive internal divisions, and left Coalition Liberalism in the valleys an open target for Labour. The so-called National government after 1931 was even more divisive, with only Lloyd George's family group of four left as a rump of independent Liberalism. But, at least in Lloyd George's day, almost

all his fellow Liberals loyally backed up his People's Budget to promote social welfare and redistributive direct taxation, set up children's allowances, and invest in national development to generate employment. Today, after George Osborne's anti-working-class budget has taken precisely the opposite path on all these issues, Liberals in Wales and elsewhere are voting haplessly to undermine Lloyd George's legacy. It is a mournful comment on the glories of the Edwardian Liberal high noon that John Graham Jones's fascinating book so movingly describes.

Kenneth O. Morgan is Fellow of the British Academy, honorary fellow of The Queen's and Oriel Colleges, Oxford, and a Labour peer. He is the author of several books on modern history, most recently Ages of Reform: Dawns and Downfalls of the British Left (I. B. Tauris, 2010).