

## REVIEWS

strident opposition to trade unions is highlighted as one example of this point of view. Pickard is also sure-footed in his discussion of the complex topic of the intra-presbyterian sectarianism which was such a defining feature of McLaren's outlook. He was a member of the United Presbyterian Church, the leading Voluntary denomination in Scotland from 1847, and a vocal opponent of both the established Church of Scotland and the Free Church of Scotland. The latter attracted his ire due to its adherence to the principle of established churches. Gladstone's failure to commit to Scottish disestablishment was a source of disappointment, as was his commitment to Irish home rule, which McLaren opposed (along, of course, with John Bright). This sectarian outlook is another way in which he can be viewed as a rather narrow politician in some ways. Although he was known as 'the Member for Scotland' because of his frequent speeches and questions on Scottish matters during his parliamentary career, he was especially vigorous in his pursuit of local Edinburgh matters. His political career encountered difficulties with the change in culture in the 1880s with the expansion of the electorate, the quickening pace of political debate

and a more vibrant daily journalism, especially in his home city. As Willis Pickard brings out in this important book, McLaren's career peaked in the years between the reforms of 1868 and 1885. The importance of the book goes beyond the biographical treatment of an important figure from nineteenth-century Scottish political history. It also serves as a reminder that there are many aspects of this period which are still to be studied

in depth by modern historians. Willis Pickard has performed a signal service in providing a detailed picture of the political and religious culture of the period when Scotland was a Liberal nation.

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## Gladstone and Ireland

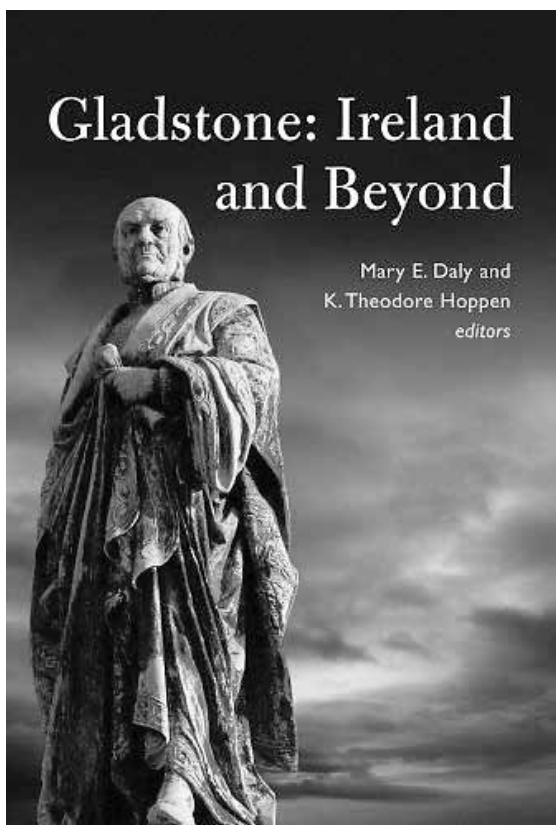
Mary E. Daly and K. Theodore Hoppen (eds.) *Gladstone: Ireland and Beyond* (Four Courts Press, 2011)

Reviewed by **Iain Sharpe**

**T**HE GRAND OLD Man's longevity has given Gladstonian scholars a treat over the past few years – the commemoration of the centenary of his death in 1998 being quickly followed by the 2009 celebrations of the bicentenary of his birth. Both were marked by conferences, seminars and other events, leading to a plethora of publications. This volume is a collection of papers delivered at a symposium at St Deiniol's Library, Hawarden (Britain's only prime ministerial library) in September 2009.

Some might wonder, given how much has already been written about Gladstone's engagement with Ireland, what more there is to say. The evidence of this volume gives the resounding answer that there are plenty of new avenues to be explored, from how Gladstone was portrayed in Irish newspapers (including unionist ones) to the interaction of political and family relationships, to how Gladstone's legacy influenced subsequent generations who had to deal with the complexities of Irish–British relationships. Contributors range from established names in Gladstonian and Irish studies to those who have only recently completed their doctoral research. The quality of contributions is consistently high, although one might quibble that the theme of 'Gladstone, Ireland and beyond' is so broad that this is clearly a collection of papers, not a work with a clear unifying framework.

It is the older hands who offer the most insightful perspectives. Theodore Hoppen's chapter on 'Gladstone, Salisbury and the end of Irish assimilationism' highlights the similarities in approach to Ireland offered by the Liberal and Conservative parties, just at the moment when home rule appeared to polarise them. Hoppen argues that both Gladstone and Salisbury fundamentally departed from a previous British consensus that aimed at integrating Ireland into the United Kingdom, making it more like England, or perhaps Scotland. While Gladstone's conversion to Irish home rule was portrayed by opponents as a dangerously radical departure, in fact the Unionists' policy of 'killing home rule by kindness' equally involved recognising that Ireland was different from the rest of the United Kingdom. It focused on land purchase – effectively using large amounts of public money to buy out Irish landlords, transferring property to the tenants, in a way that was if anything more out of keeping with nineteenth-century rules of political economy than was home rule. Hoppen advances here an important, and in my view justified, argument, concluding that late-Victorian party conflict over Ireland was, in the words of Jorge Luis Borges regarding a different conflict, like 'some very angry bald men fighting over a comb'.



On a similar theme is Professor Alvin Jackson's chapter comparing Gladstone's attitudes towards Ireland and Scotland. Gladstonian Liberal support for Irish home rule was discussed at the time in the context of 'home rule all round' for the nations of the United Kingdom. Historians have tended to focus on the extent to which

Gladstone's Irish policy offered a model that might have then been followed in Scotland. Jackson turns this round to show how Gladstone (and others) wanted Ireland to come to the same degree of acceptance of the Union that Scotland had reached. This extended to Gladstone, during his first administration, seriously considering

whether Ireland should have a royal residence, as Scotland had at Balmoral. More substantially, Jackson argues, Gladstone valued the way in which Scotland had developed a distinct patriotic identity within the Union, and the disestablishment of the Church of Ireland was an attempt to match the Scottish religious settlement

## 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/cobdenproject](http://www.uea.ac.uk/his/research/cobdenproject)). Dr Anthony Howe, School of History, University of East Anglia, Norwich NR4 7TJ; [a.c.howe@uea.ac.uk](mailto:a.c.howe@uea.ac.uk).

### Dadabhai Naoroji

Dadabhai Naoroji (1825–1917) was an Indian nationalist and Liberal member for Central Finsbury, 1892–95 – the first Asian to be elected to the House of Commons. This research for a PhD at Harvard aims to produce both a biography of Naoroji and a volume of his selected correspondence, to be published by OUP India in 2013. The current phase concentrates on Naoroji's links with a range of British progressive organisations and individuals, particularly in his later career. Suggestions for archival sources very welcome. Dinyar Patel; [dinyar.patel@gmail.com](mailto:dinyar.patel@gmail.com) or 07775 753 724.

### 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](mailto:brian63@inbox.com).

### The emergence of the 'public service ethos'

Aims to analyse how self-interest and patronage was challenged by the advent of impartial inspectorates, public servants and local authorities in provincial Britain in the mid 19th century. Much work has been done on the emergence of a 'liberal culture' in the central civil service in Whitehall, but much work needs to be done on the motives, behaviour and mentalities of the newly reformed guardians of the poor, sanitary inspectors, factory and mines inspectors, education authorities, prison warders and the police. Ian Cawood, Newman University College, Birmingham; [i.cawood@newman.ac.uk](mailto:i.cawood@newman.ac.uk).

### The life of Professor Reginald W Revans, 1907–2003

Any information anyone has on Revans' Liberal Party involvement would be most welcome. We are particularly keen to know when he joined the party and any involvement he may have had in campaigning issues. We know he was very interested in pacifism. Any information, oral history submissions, location of papers or references most welcome. Dr Yury Boshky, [yury@gel-net.com](mailto:yury@gel-net.com); or Dr Cheryl Brook, [cheryl.brook@port.ac.uk](mailto:cheryl.brook@port.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](mailto:N.M.Cott@ncl.ac.uk).

### Four nations history of the Irish Home Rule crisis

A four nations history of the Irish Home Rule crisis, attempting to rebalance the existing Anglo-centric focus. Considering Scottish and Welsh reactions and the development of parallel Home Rule movements, along with how the crisis impacted on political parties across the UK. Sources include newspapers, private papers, *Hansard*. Naomi Lloyd-Jones; [naomi.n.lloyd-jones@kcl.ac.uk](mailto:naomi.n.lloyd-jones@kcl.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](mailto:gjf6@le.ac.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 Boyer, CUFR Champollion, Place de Verdun, 81 000 Albi, France; +33 5 63 48 19 77; [cynthia.boyer@univ-jfc.fr](mailto:cynthia.boyer@univ-jfc.fr).

### The Liberal Party in Wales, 1966–1988

Aims to follow the development of the party from the general election of 1966 to the time of the merger with the SDP. PhD research at Cardiff University. Nick Alderton; [nickalito@hotmail.com](mailto:nickalito@hotmail.com).

### Policy position and leadership strategy within the Liberal Democrats

This thesis will be a study of the political positioning and leadership strategy of the Liberal Democrats. Consideration of the role of equidistance; development of policy from the point of merger; the influence and leadership strategies of each leader from Ashdown to Clegg; and electoral strategy from 1988 to 2015 will form the basis of the work. Any material relating to leadership election campaigns, election campaigns, internal party groups (for example the Social Liberal Forum) or policy documents from 1987 and merger talks onwards would be greatly welcomed. Personal insights and recollections also sought. Samuel Barratt; [pt10seb@leeds.ac.uk](mailto:pt10seb@leeds.ac.uk).

# JO GRIMOND: THE LEGACY

Jo Grimond, leader of the Liberal Party from 1956 to 1967, holds a particularly affectionate place in the collective memory of the Liberal Democrats. His charisma, charm, good looks, political courage, intellect and inherent liberalism inspired many to join the Liberal Party in the late 1950s and 1960s and gained him a national reputation as someone who could give politics a good name – which has endured to the present day.

One hundred years after his birth in 1913, this meeting will examine in more detail the legacy of Jo Grimond, not simply for the modern Liberal Democrats but, more widely, for British politics and political ideas.

Speakers: **Dr Peter Sloman** (New College, Oxford) on Grimond's ideas, with a focus on his thinking around the role of the state and free market; **Harry Cowie** (former Liberal Party Director of Research and speechwriter to Grimond) on the development of policy under Grimond's leadership; **Michael Meadowcroft** (Liberal MP for Leeds West 1983–87) on Grimond's leadership of the Liberal Party, 1956–67, and its legacy. Chair: **William Wallace**, Lord Wallace of Saltaire (press assistant to Jo Grimond during the 1966 general election).

**7.00pm, Monday 10 June** (following the History Group AGM at 6.30pm)

Lady Violet Room, National Liberal Club, 1 Whitehall Place, SW1A 2HE

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in which the distinctive Scottish religious allegiances were recognised within the Union. Similarly, Irish land reform and home rule were intended to permit the landed class on the island to resume a position of political leadership and to 'provide the needed focus for patriotic feeling within the structure of an ongoing constitutional bond with Britain'. One could object that at least some of this is conjecture with little direct evidence cited, but given Gladstone's close connections with Scotland (by ancestry and through his family continuing to have estates there) it would be surprising if there were not close similarities in his attitude to both Unions.

By no means all of the essays deal with such wide-ranging themes: others consider more specific aspects of Gladstone's thought and career. Kevin McKenna discusses Gladstone's surprisingly little-studied trip

to Ireland in 1877 (his only substantial visit to the island). This highlights the combination of political virtue admired by Gladstone's supporters with the opportunism of which his opponents constantly suspected him. The visit, ostensibly a private one, turned into a very public affair, culminated in Gladstone receiving the Freedom of the City of Dublin and seizing an opportunity to woo the Irish vote. McHugh speculates that Gladstone may have intended this all along: had he been received unfavourably by the Irish public he could have continued his round of country house visits. Once given the opportunity for political advantage, he seized it readily. Commenting on the outcome of the visit to his Liberal colleague Lord Granville, Gladstone wrote: 'I think my announcement of "strict privacy" may ... have promoted a prosperous publicity.'

Other chapters consider an eclectic range of aspects of Gladstone's career, from Devon McHugh's discussion of how female relationships within the extended Gladstone family helped to smooth over political tensions, through to Quentin Broughall's discussion of the different influences of classical studies on Gladstone and Disraeli. Bernard Porter is as thoughtful and provocative as ever in his assessment of Gladstone's relationship with empire, arguing that as a result of the invasion of Egypt in 1882, he was 'more responsible for the long, unfortunate and ultimately self-destructive imperialist episode in Britain's history' than any other statesman, including Disraeli.

Overall, there is plenty here to debate, and every reader will find much to agree or disagree with. In my case, while I found Eugenio Biagini fascinating on the changing attitudes of the

*Irish Times* (representative of moderate Irish protestant opinion) towards Gladstone, I am less convinced that this was 'a rediscovery of Protestant patriotism and liberalism'. Given that resistance to home rule had actually led to something rather worse from a unionist point of view, it seems more likely that this is merely the wisdom of hindsight – if only they had listened to Gladstone, they might have avoided the horrors of civil war and independence. But in this, as in the other topics discussed in this volume, there is more work for historians to do.

*Iain Sharpe completed a University of London PhD thesis in 2011 on 'Herbert Gladstone and Liberal party revival 1899–1905'. He is a Liberal Democrat councillor in Watford.*