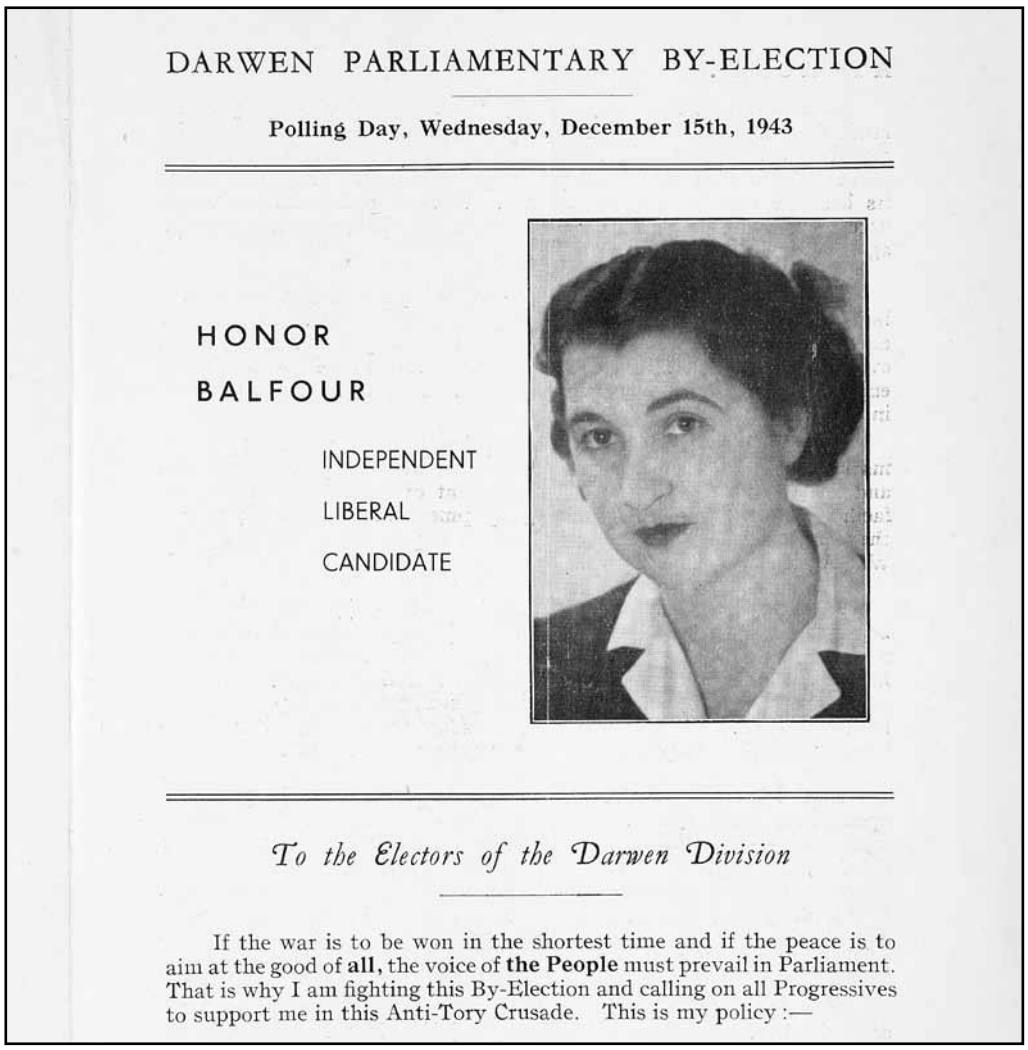
For the study of Liberal, SDP and Liberal Democrat history

Issue 78 / Spring 2013 / £6.00

Journal of Liberal HISTORY



DARWEN PARLIAMENTARY BY-ELECTION

Polling Day, Wednesday, December 15th, 1943

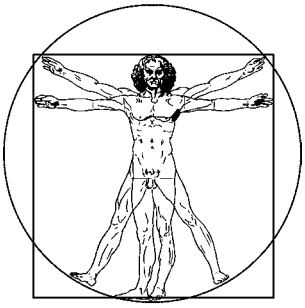
HONOR
BALFOUR

INDEPENDENT
LIBERAL
CANDIDATE

To the Electors of the Darwen Division

If the war is to be won in the shortest time and if the peace is to aim at the good of **all**, the voice of **the People** must prevail in Parliament. That is why I am fighting this By-Election and calling on all Progressives to support me in this Anti-Tory Crusade. This is my policy :—

Champion of Liberalism



Liberal Democrat History Group

Journal of Liberal History

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Liberal Democrat History Group

The Liberal Democrat History Group promotes the discussion and research of topics relating to the histories of the Liberal Democrats, Liberal Party, and SDP, and of Liberalism. The Group organises discussion meetings and produces the *Journal of Liberal History* and other occasional publications.

For more information, including historical commentaries, details of publications, back issues of the *Journal*, and archive and other research sources, see our website at: **www.liberalhistory.org.uk**.

Chair: **Tony Little** Honorary President: **Lord Wallace of Saltaire**

LIBERAL HISTORY NEWS SPRING 2013

Nick Clegg unveils History Group plaque

Nick Clegg, the Liberal Democrat leader and Deputy Prime Minister, braved a bitterly cold night earlier this year to unveil a plaque commemorating the founding of the Liberal Party more than 150 years ago. Report by **York Membery**.

The plaque – the brainchild of of the Liberal Democat History Group – was put up on the building in King Street, St James's, London, which now occupies the spot at which the famous meeting took place on 6 June 1859 which is generally held to mark the foundation of the Liberal Party.

Most historians date the Liberal Party's origin to the meeting at Willis's Rooms, when Whigs, Peelites and Radicals united to bring down Derby's Conservative government, changing the face of British politics forever. Among those attending were Lord Palmerston, John Bright and Lord John Russell – and the meeting paved the way for the political ascendancy of Liberal Prime Minister William Gladstone.

The plaque reads: 'The Liberal Party was founded on this site on 6th June 1859.'

The Lib Dem leader reminded the thirty-strong crowd, which included MPs and peers, among others, that Liberal politicians came together in 1859 to 'bring down the Conservative ministry of the time, while of course we are now in coalition with the Conservative Party of our time'.

He half-jokingly referred to the Peelites of the mid-19th century as 'being comparable to the *Orange Bookers* of today', and the Radicals as people like *Journal of Liberal History* Editor Duncan Brack!

Speaking outside the modern office block, Almack House, which now stands on the site of Willis's Rooms, the DPM went on to observe: 'Much has changed since [1859] but much has endured and remained consistent over the ages as well. And the Liberal Democrats are still a party proud of representing a wide coalition of views, representing the country as a whole.'

The plaque was the brainchild of the Liberal Democrat History Group, whose members contributed generously to the cost of making and erecting it. And while bureaucratic red tape delayed its installation (the original intention had been to put it up in 2009, 150 years after the Willis's Rooms meeting), Clegg was fulsome in his praise of the Group, saying: 'I would like to congratulate the Liberal Democrat History Group which has done so much to raise funds for this sign of our party's rich history.'

Earlier Cllr Robert Davis, Deputy Leader of Westminster Council – which sponsors the Green Plaque scheme – and of its ruling Conservative group, described the occasion as 'momentous' and said: 'When Palmerston, Russell and their Radicals, Peelites and Whigs coalesced around the issue of Italian reunification, at this very location in 1859, I am sure everyone expected the union to be a temporary one.'

Putting aside party differences, he went on to say: 'For generations British political life has been fluid, with numerous changes of government, factions and minority administrations.'

'However, for what was then such a disparate union, the Liberal Party has endured, helping to shape so much of British politics since. And the timing of this unveiling could not be more appropriate, as its successor – the Liberal Democrat party – once more finds itself in government.'

After the unveiling, those attending the event adjourned to the nearby Reform Club for a reception.

Speaking after the event, Duncan Brack said: 'It's been a long road but we got there in the end – and I would like to thank all those people whose generosity and help made tonight's event possible'.

PhD in the political history of early twentieth century Britain

Applications are invited for a fees-only PhD studentship in the field of the political history of early twentieth-century Britain. The successful applicant will be expected to make use of the JH Whitley collection in the University of Huddersfield archives.

JH Whitley was a prominent Liberal politician; in 1917, he was appointed to chair a committee to report on 'the Relations of Employers and Employees' in the wake of the establishment of the shop stewards movement and the widespread protest action against dilution. He served as speaker of the House of Commons in the 1920s.

Research projects on any theme relating to Whitley's life and times will be considered. The successful candidate will be expected to help publicise and organise events related to the Whitley collection. Potential applicants are welcome to contact any of History's specialists in modern British history (http://www.hud.ac.uk/research/research-strengths/history/) to discuss potential projects.

The University of Huddersfield has a generous package of research development funds for research students to enable attendance at conferences and public engagement activities. History has about twenty research students and has an energetic and sociable research culture, in which the successful applicant would be expected to participate.

The studentship will begin on 1 October 2013.

Application should be made through the university's on-line application procedure at http://www.hud.ac.uk/researchdegrees/

Archiving the 'Red Guard'

Three former officers of the National League of Young Liberals and the Union of Liberal Students during the 'Red Guard' era, (Lord) Tony Greaves, George Kiloh and Peter Hellyer, have launched a project to try to collect archive material and memories from surviving YLs of that era.

The objective is to facilitate research into the role of the YLs within the Liberal Party from around 1965–1973 and the longer and broader term impact both on the party and more widely on British politics.

Left: Leader of the Liberal Democrats Nick Clegg MP, and Deputy Leader of Westminster Council, Cllr Robert Davis, speak at the unveiling of the plaque.

It's their view that, while academics have their part to play, they are inevitably going to depend primarily on dusty old documents and press cuttings, along with the occasional interview, whereas participants at a national and local level in YL activity during these years may have something a little bit more accurate to offer.

'It's better to contribute to the telling of our own history than to leave it to academics with no personal knowledge of what happened, and why', they say.

Material collected will, with permission, be added to the Liberal archive held at the London School of Economics, which already has a lengthy manuscript produced by George, and may also be used for the production of papers for this *Journal* and other publications.

Anyone wishing to participate should, in the first instance, contact **George Kiloh**, 2 Old Blackfriars, Marley Lane, Battle, Sussex TN33 0DQ; georgek@lse.ac.uk.

The Liberal Party, Unionism and political culture in late 19th and early 20th century Britain

Graham Lippiatt reports on a one-day seminar organised by Newman University College and the *Journal of Liberal History*, on Saturday 10 November 2012, at Newman University College, Birmingham

On 9 May 1912, at the Queen's Hall in London, the Liberal Unionist Party merged with the Conservatives, finally abandoning their historic connection with the Liberal political tradition in Britain. Yet recent research has confirmed that when the party was formed in 1886, apart from on the crucial dividing question of Irish Home Rule, it was as liberal in outlook and radical in social policy as the Gladstonians.

The formation of the Liberal Unionist Party took place at the same time as British political culture itself was in flux. The gradual emergence of a mass electorate informed by a popular press, debates about the role of the state in social policy, imperial upheavals and wars all had their impact on politics. Parties got more professional, labour more organised, regional and religious identities sharpened. To accompany this turmoil, the formation of the Liberal Unionists not only split the Liberal family, with immediate electoral impact, but it caused a reappraisal of what it meant to be a Unionist.

One hundred years on from the Unionist merger, Newman University College and the Liberal Democrat History Group held a one-day seminar to examine some of the key changes in the political culture of this period, against the background of the formation of the Liberal Unionists, bringing together some of the most prominent young historians working on these issues. Dr Ian Cawood, Head of History at Newman and author of a new book on the Liberal Unionists, had also arranged for Professor Jon Lawrence (Cambridge) and Dr Stuart Ball (Leicester) to act as rapporteurs.

The audience, which included MPs John Hemming and Bill Cash, then heard an introductory paper from Professor Robert Colls (University of Leicester) on political culture in Britain 1884–1914, followed by a presentation from Ian Cawood on the impact of the Liberal Unionists, 1886–1912. There followed papers from Dr Matthew Roberts (Sheffield Hallam), on a 'terrific outburst of political meteorology': by-elections and the Unionist ascendancy in late Victorian England; Dr James Thompson (Bristol) on the Liberal Party, Liberalism and the visual culture of British politics c.1880–1914; Dr Kathryn Rix (History of Parliament Trust) on professionalisation and political culture: the party agents, 1880–1914; and Dr James Owen (History of Parliament Trust) on Labour and the caucus: working-class radicalism and organised Liberalism in England.

Some of the papers from this entertaining and stimulating day will be published in future issues of the *Journal of Liberal History*.

Apology

We would like to apologise for the late arrival of this issue of the *Journal of Liberal History* – it went to press about six weeks later than originally planned.

We'll catch up with the summer issue (due out in mid July) and the autumn issue (mid September).

HONOR BALFOUR AN
AN ARCHIVAL

Well known in her day, Honor Balfour (1912–2001) is still remembered by politicians and commentators of a certain age. She was the first woman to chair the Oxford Unversity Liberal Club, she helped found Radical Action, and stood as an independent Liberal in the Darwen by-election of 1943, in defiance of the wartime truce. In a series of archival snapshots this article outlines the role of the Honor Balfour papers as a historical resource for the study of the Liberal Party's history from the mid 1930s to the late 1950s. It focuses on some of the key events in the career of Honor Balfour as an activist and politician. By **Helen Langley**.

O THE LIBERAL PARTY
PERSPECTIVE

The five sections chart: i) her involvement with the Liberal Party during her student days in Oxford, including her later activities in city politics, and her work with the Basque Refugees Relief scheme; ii) the highpoint of the Darwen by-election fought in 1943, in defiance of the wartime electoral truce; iii) her growing disillusionment with the party in the late 1940s; iv) the nuanced responses that this elicited from her in response to Liberal election campaigns in the 1950s; and v) the final break with the Liberal Party in 1957. Throughout this period and into the early 1970s Honor Balfour, an astute observer of politics, continued to write and broadcast. Her assessment of Eric Lubbock (later Lord Avebury)'s famous by-election victory at Orpington in 1962, and the prospects for a widespread Liberal resurgence, will be included in a future archival study centring on Honor Balfour's distinguished career as a journalist and broadcaster.

Well known in her day, she is still remembered by politicians and commentators of a certain age. She merited an entry in the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, written by Dr. Mark Pottle.[1] Most fittingly, her name lives on in the Fellowship in Politics[2] that she endowed at St Anne's College, Oxford. Honor Balfour was highly adept at spotting up-and-coming politicians, and she was also professionally well-placed – as a journalist for the American *Time-Life International* magazines; The *Observer*, and the BBC – to write about British politics for both domestic and American audiences. Yet looking back over her life in conversations with the present writer in the late 1990s, her own assessments of her achievements were very modest. Perhaps the failure to match the success of the Labour politician Barbara (later Baroness) Castle, an Oxford contemporary whose career initially followed a similar trajectory – political activism, journalism, parliamentary candidate in the 1945 General Election – had left a subliminal mark.[3] She never saw herself as a suitable subject for a biography, rejecting approaches from prospective biographers, and was scarcely less willing to endorse articles which put her centre stage. She did however on at least two occasions grant access to her papers for studies of Liberal Party history: to the American historian, and biographer of Asquith, Stephen Koss, and to the British political historian, Mark Egan, for his article on Radical Action (which was published in this journal in 2009).

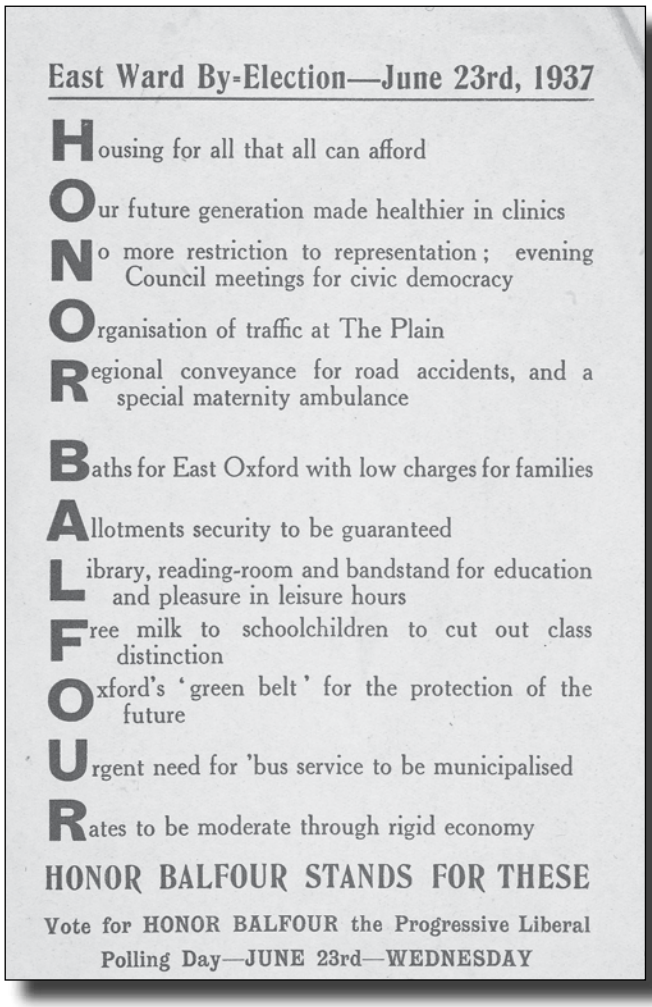
Honor did though enjoy talking about the times through which she had lived and the host of fascinating people she had met. Fortunately for this writer the reflections prompted by discussions about the future of the Honor Balfour archive broadened into friendship and ultimately agreement that an article might be written.[4]

But in her own way Honor Balfour lived a remarkable life and 2012, her centenary year, offers an ideal opportunity to re-examine it with the aid of the private papers that she bequeathed to St Anne's College, Oxford, on the assumption that they would be deposited on long-term loan in the Bodleian Library The collection was catalogued by her good friend and Windrush (weekend) neighbour Diana Rau, now a retired academic, who worked as a volunteer, making a weekly commute from London to Oxford to sift through, arrange and describe the papers, retaining Honor's original arrangement wherever possible. The finished catalogue has been available to researchers since 2009.[5]

Honor Balfour
(1912–2001)

Honor Mary Balfour was born on 4 August 1912 in Liverpool; her father, Robert, a merchant's clerk from sea-faring Balfour stock, was a distant kinsman of the diplomat Sir John (Jock) Balfour,[6] rather than of the Prime Minister A. J. (later first Earl of) Balfour, although it would be this imagined link, wrongly made by her school, that would encourage Honor to take her first steps towards politics. Her father's death in the First World War shortly before the Armistice was declared made a huge impact on her life.

Her mother, Sarah Ellen, née Jenkins (1881–1965) was also Liverpool born and bred. Her father, Brice Jenkins, had been a ship steward, Robert's a ship's carpenter. Brice Jenkins' father had been a mariner but interestingly his (considerably younger) wife's father was a flannel manufacturer.[7]



East Ward By-Election—June 23rd, 1937

Housing for all that all can afford

Our future generation made healthier in clinics

No more restriction to representation; evening Council meetings for civic democracy

Organisation of traffic at The Plain

Regional conveyance for road accidents, and a special maternity ambulance

Baths for East Oxford with low charges for families

Allotments security to be guaranteed

Library, reading-room and bandstand for education and pleasure in leisure hours

Free milk to schoolchildren to cut out class distinction

Oxford's 'green belt' for the protection of the future

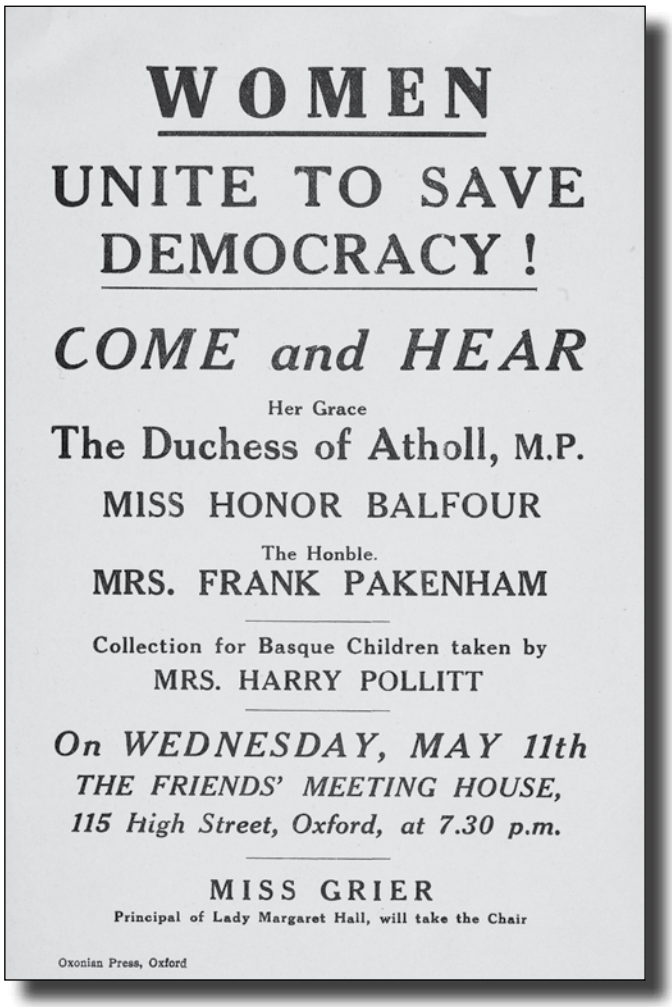
Urgent need for 'bus service to be municipalised

Rates to be moderate through rigid economy

HONOR BALFOUR STANDS FOR THESE

Vote for HONOR BALFOUR the Progressive Liberal

Polling Day—JUNE 23rd—WEDNESDAY



WOMEN

UNITE TO SAVE DEMOCRACY!

COME and HEAR

Her Grace

The Duchess of Atholl, M.P.

MISS HONOR BALFOUR

The Honble.

MRS. FRANK PAKENHAM

Collection for Basque Children taken by

MRS. HARRY POLLITT

On WEDNESDAY, MAY 11th

THE FRIENDS' MEETING HOUSE,

115 High Street, Oxford, at 7.30 p.m.

MISS GRIER

Principal of Lady Margaret Hall, will take the Chair

Oxonian Press, Oxford

Two leaflets from the Oxford by-election campaign, 1937. The one on the left was printed in red. MS. Balfour dep.47. Honor Balfour papers. Bodleian Library, Oxford. Reproduced with the permission of St.Anne's College, Oxford.

With little money Honor and her mother were obliged by necessity to become a partnership, which proved enduring. It was a strong relationship. Honor's personality was very different from her mother's but she remembered her as 'the truest and most wonderful mother'[8] Honor never married. Independence, resourcefulness and tenacity were thus bred into her from an early age, and these traits can be traced throughout her long life.

Honor's was a life largely recorded in her papers: she kept a great variety of documents, which shed light on most of her interests.[9] But evidence of her wit and humour has effectively disappeared with her death. It is as though she had never sat with fellow journalists in the Establishment Club, a seed bed of 1960s' satire, contributing ideas for sketches inspired by events of the week.[10] In old age she was still a gifted mimic. Her impression of Lady Violet Bonham Carter (later Baroness Asquith of Yarnbury), with whom she shared many meetings of the national executive of the Liberal Party, summoned up a milieu in which the rivalry between Lady Violet and Lady Megan Lloyd George, in passionate defence of their fathers' respective achievements, was still palpable.

First political steps

A gifted ballet dancer and musician, Honor Balfour could have pursued either talent professionally. But her ambitions lay elsewhere. At an early age she wanted to be either the Viceroy of India or a journalist. Looking back over the years Honor could not think initially of anyone who had been a great influence on her: she had 'made her own way'. But then she remembered the geography teacher at Blackburn House. Miss C. A. Friend, known to her pupils as 'Chummy': 'a wonderful and profound teacher' who, when Honor was 'around the age of twelve or thirteen, made [her] look at the world beyond books'.[11] As a twelve year old with an inquisitiveness and maturity bordering on precociousness (on holiday in France she had persuaded her mother to allow her to emulate French children and drink watered down wine with meals) she was invited to participate in her school debate, organised by the history mistress around the time of the 1924 General Election. Initially she was nominated to speak for the Conservatives (on the basis of her very distinguished namesake), but a reading of all three parties' election pamphlets led her to opt for the Liberal Party. What it was in the manifesto which made her choose the Liberals is unclear. But whatever it was survived the Liberals' calamitous performance at the polls.[12]

Oxford

Having passed her Higher School Certificate before her seventeenth birthday Honor was too young to apply to Oxford, as she intended to do. In the interval she enrolled for a year at Liverpool University to study social science. To raise funds for her studies at Oxford she taught music locally. Displaying her characteristic initiative she wrote to several women's colleges for their entrance examination papers and used them to practice before

applying to what is now St Anne's College.

Originating as The Society of Home Students,[13] St Anne's provided for those young women whose slender means would otherwise have denied them access to an Oxford education. Its non-residential basis was the main attraction for Honor: she 'couldn't bear the idea of being cooped up'; it also solved the problem, and the associated cost, of maintaining two homes. Honor's mother would instead join her in Oxford. Deterred from applying to read music after being told that the Professor of Music was said to be a misogynist, Honor opted to read English, switching shortly afterwards to read the relatively new degree, Politics, Philosophy and Economics (PPE).

University and city politics

Honor went up to Oxford in October 1931, graduating BA in 1934. Her degree classification was modest, reflecting the amount of time that she expended on activities other than study. One of these extra-curricular pursuits resulted in her election to the Presidency of the University's Liberal Club, which gave her a different kind of 'first': she became the first ever woman to be elected to any of the University's political societies. She also founded the Women's Debating Society. Guest speakers in 1933 included Vera Brittain.[14] Judging from the letters of congratulation extant among her papers Honor was an excellent platform speaker, despite her claims to the contrary. Her connection with the Liberal Party, which began with her Presidency of the Oxford University Liberals, would last until she finally broke with the Party over twenty years later.

The University Liberal Club was her springboard to *ex officio* membership of the party's National Organisation, which from 1942 brought with it a place on the National Executive; and it offered an entrée also into local politics. January 1935 found her as temporary secretary of the Oxford City Liberals. In October she fended off invitations to stand as a candidate in various wards. The coverage in Bodley's collection for these years is patchy. It gathers volume in 1937 with a dramatic convergence of events.

Honor Balfour lived a remarkable life and her centenary year offers an ideal opportunity to re-examine it with the aid of her private papers.

Honor was resolved to be a political journalist, but the opportunities were then few, especially for a woman. *Picture Post* – a new magazine set up by (Sir) Edward Hulton 'to out-*Spectator* the *Spectator*'[15] lay in the future. She would join the editorial staff recruited by the editor, Stefan Lorant, the only woman on the small team – a reward for her risk-taking and a validation of her skills. After graduation she became the music critic for the *Oxford Times*, 'to earn my crust', occasionally contributing 'specials' on other topics. She was also a tutor for the local Workers' Educational Association. Politically she was active in the League of Nations Union as well as the Liberal Party. It was probably because of these political commitments that Honor found herself in the Boars Hill home of the prominent Liberal academic Professor Gilbert Murray[16] and his wife, Lady Mary when the latter's nephew, Wilfrid Roberts, rang in late May 1937 with the news of the arrival in the UK of Basque refugee children and their teachers, fleeing the Civil War in Spain. (In the mining area around Bilbao the largely communist trades unionists' families feared reprisals by Franco's occupying forces.)[17] Roberts was Liberal MP for North Cumberland, and a member of the parliamentary commission to Madrid. He was also a future member of the wartime Radical Action group.

Lady Mary passed the Basque refugee challenge to Honor. For her the timing could hardly be less propitious: she was campaigning in the local elections as the Liberal candidate in the East Oxford ward. It was a campaign fought with the support of the Labour Party, here represented by her friends from university, Frank Pakenham, later Lord Longford and Richard Crossman the future cabinet minister. It would be through Pakenham that Honor went to work for Sir William Beveridge, in the early war years,[18] a role which may well have infused her stance later as a member of Radical Action, and which fed into both her 1943 and 1945 election campaigns in Darwen.

Honor lost the Oxford election but there was little time for disappointment. Her energies were directed towards organising welfare for the Basque refugees in Oxfordshire. Among those she turned to for assistance were her friend Patrick Early, son of the famous Witney-based blanket making family. His father provided an empty farmhouse and mattresses as a stopgap measure, and Patrick became Chairman of the Aston House branch. Honor, having initiated moves to deal with the crisis, became Vice Chairman of the Mayor of Oxford's Spanish Relief Fund, and member of the Oxford Spanish Democratic Defence Committee. Her skills as a platform speaker, honed in the University's Liberal Club and the Women's Debating Society, were deployed too. Much of the material in Honor's papers describing the Basque refugees initiative is printed. Among the relatively few letters is one from 1938 when the Abingdon division of the Liberal Association donated £10 8s.1d. towards Basque relief, praising her for her 'untiring work' on behalf of the Basque children.[19]

Darwen and the national arena

Honor's involvement with Radical Action, as a founder member of the group in November 1941, and her stand against the electoral truce in 1943, have already been extensively described by Mark Egan.[20] Honor's papers – and the author's conversations with Honor – were key sources, even though so few of her outgoing letters for 1943 survive. Her own personal papers on the topic expanded greatly in the 1970s when she stepped in to house, possibly only temporarily, Lancelot Spicer's numerous files: Spicer was one of the originators of Radical Action, and its chairman.[21]

Reading her early postwar correspondence suggests that, although both of her electoral campaigns in Darwen were unsuccessful, she retained political influence in the region. Certainly this influence was considerable enough to induce Barbara Castle to write during the 1959 General Election of the value of Honor's endorsement in encouraging Liberal voters to switch their allegiance to her in the absence of a Liberal candidate for Blackburn.[22]

By 1959 Honor's profile as a journalist and broadcaster may well have been more significant than any recollection of her own electoral campaigns, fought over a dozen

years earlier. But her continuing influence does add an interesting, longer term, dimension to the war time campaigns, and it is from this perspective that the campaigns of 1943, and to a lesser extent 1945, are revisited here.

Several batches of the papers have slips of annotated yellow paper attached by Honor. Touchingly the cheque stubs for the 1943 contest is annotated, 'Mama's £193 gift to me. This was the last she had of her savings. It was the first sum in the campaign on which I started to fight. HB'.[23] She also received a sizeable donation of £150 from the Liberal politician and philanthropist Lord (David) Davies of Llandinam.[24]

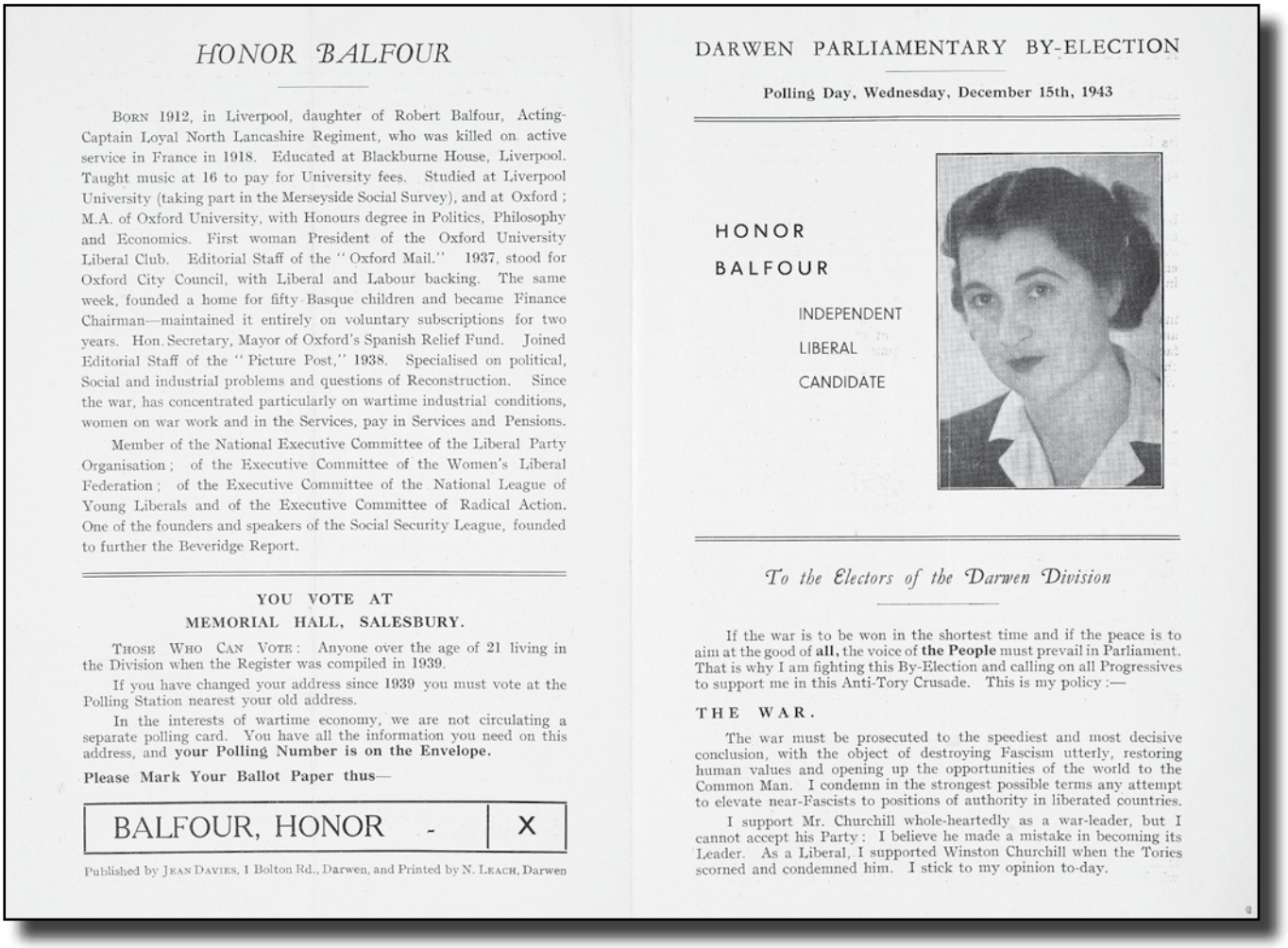
Some of the notes may have been intended by Honor as archival aids for future users, or possibly for the book George (later Lord) Weidenfeld commissioned her to write on the 1945–51 Labour government.[25] The files convey not only the political rhetoric of the campaign, the election addresses, speeches, leaflets and posters, but also the practical minutiae: the cost of the deposit, of use of the telephone, and the hiring of halls.

The 1943 election was called after the death on active service of the incumbent MP, Captain Stuart Russell. A Conservative, Russell had won the seat in 1935, unseating Sir Herbert (later 1st Viscount) Samuel the leader of the Liberal opposition. To Darwen Honor Balfour brought her interest in social matters evident since her pre-Oxford research in Liverpool and which was undoubtedly strengthened by working for Beveridge.[26] A direct influence of a more personal kind may have filtered into her emphasis on old age pensions, although it would have been uncharacteristic of Honor to have personalized, in the arena of public policy, her experience as an only child of a war widow.

Professionally she was very aware, from letters sent to *Picture Post*, of the depth of discontent – bordering on disgust – felt by soldiers and their wives at their disenfranchisement because of the government's continued reliance on an outdated 1935 Electoral Register.[27] In her election address Honor noted that, to date, the wartime truce had seen 120 members returned – a fifth of the House – through nominations, regardless of any expression of the people's will: the people, in effect, were simply not consulted.

In defiance of the official Liberal Party line she, and her good friend and fellow Radical Action member, Donald Johnson, each contested by-elections in December 1943. Both lost by the narrowest of margins; Johnson, at Chippenham, by 195 votes,[28] and Honor at Darwen by a mere 70: 8869 to 8799. It was the closest election result since 1939. Bill Greig, from the *Daily Mirror,* was even of the view that Honor would have won if the campaign had been longer, and she would certainly have been victorious if there had been an up-to-date register, since her appeal to the young was much greater than that of her Government-endorsed Conservative opponent.[29]

Like other members of Radical Action, Honor Balfour emphasised the necessity of planning for the



HONOR BALFOUR

BORN 1912, in Liverpool, daughter of Robert Balfour, Acting-Captain Loyal North Lancashire Regiment, who was killed on active service in France in 1918. Educated at Blackburne House, Liverpool. Taught music at 16 to pay for University fees. Studied at Liverpool University (taking part in the Merseyside Social Survey), and at Oxford; M.A. of Oxford University, with Honours degree in Politics, Philosophy and Economics. First woman President of the Oxford University Liberal Club. Editorial Staff of the "Oxford Mail." 1937, stood for Oxford City Council, with Liberal and Labour backing. The same week, founded a home for fifty Basque children and became Finance Chairman—maintained it entirely on voluntary subscriptions for two years. Hon. Secretary, Mayor of Oxford's Spanish Relief Fund. Joined Editorial Staff of the "Picture Post," 1938. Specialised on political, Social and industrial problems and questions of Reconstruction. Since the war, has concentrated particularly on wartime industrial conditions, women on war work and in the Services, pay in Services and Pensions.

Member of the National Executive Committee of the Liberal Party Organisation; of the Executive Committee of the Women's Liberal Federation; of the Executive Committee of the National League of Young Liberals and of the Executive Committee of Radical Action. One of the founders and speakers of the Social Security League, founded to further the Beveridge Report.

YOU VOTE AT
MEMORIAL HALL, SALESBURY.

THOSE WHO CAN VOTE: Anyone over the age of 21 living in the Division when the Register was compiled in 1939.

If you have changed your address since 1939 you must vote at the Polling Station nearest your old address.

In the interests of wartime economy, we are not circulating a separate polling card. You have all the information you need on this address, and **your Polling Number is on the Envelope.**

Please Mark Your Ballot Paper thus—

BALFOUR, HONOR -	X

Published by JEAN DAVIES, 1 Bolton Rd., Darwen, and Printed by N. LEACH, Darwen

DARWEN PARLIAMENTARY BY-ELECTION

Polling Day, Wednesday, December 15th, 1943

HONOR
BALFOUR

INDEPENDENT
LIBERAL
CANDIDATE

To the Electors of the Darwen Division

If the war is to be won in the shortest time and if the peace is to aim at the good of **all,** the voice of **the People** must prevail in Parliament. That is why I am fighting this By-Election and calling on all Progressives to support me in this Anti-Tory Crusade. This is my policy:—

THE WAR.

The war must be prosecuted to the speediest and most decisive conclusion, with the object of destroying Fascism utterly, restoring human values and opening up the opportunities of the world to the Common Man. I condemn in the strongest possible terms any attempt to elevate near-Fascists to positions of authority in liberated countries.

I support Mr. Churchill whole-heartedly as a war-leader, but I cannot accept his Party: I believe he made a mistake in becoming its Leader. As a Liberal, I supported Winston Churchill when the Tories scorned and condemned him. I stick to my opinion to-day.

Honor Balfour's election address, Darwen parliamentary by-election, 1943. MS. Balfour dep.46.Honor Balfour papers. Bodleian Library, Oxford. Reproduced with the permission of St.Anne's College,Oxford.

post war world; it was not enough just to focus on policies for winning the war.[30] Implementing Beveridge's plan for welfare reform, published in December 1942, was accorded special significance. In her own campaign the focus on old age pensions drew positive responses from potential voters.[31] Yet another of her themes, the necessity of women's involvement in post war planning, attracted women voters. She was an inspirational speaker; her mastery of topics and ease in speaking from a platform were remarked on in press accounts. Petite, with a shapely figure, dark hair framing her intelligent heart-shaped face, and always neatly turned out,[32] Honor cut an impressive figure. Like her contemporary Barbara Castle, appearance was important for Honor – as indeed for all women who aspired to a presence in public life: they, much more than their male counterparts, would be judged by their appearance.

Her efforts at Darwen may initially have suffered from the decision by a local paper, the *Darwen News*, to boycott her campaign. Arthur Riley, the paper's publisher, had taken his lead from the Prime Minister's official letter in support of Prescott, which claimed that Honor's candidacy threatened national unity. But the move backfired. The national press criticised such an undemocratic act. Local Liberals, irritated by Sir Frederick Hindle, their president, signing Prescott's nomination papers, were stirred into action.[33] The local press ban prompted donations from as far away as Aberystwyth.[34]

More importantly, the Liberal *News Chronicle* rallied to her cause. Other newspapers which reported favourably on her campaign included the *Manchester Guardian*, the *Manchester Evening News* and the *Daily Mirror*. Even *The Times* wrote flatteringly. Honor was deemed by some of the press to have empowered the electorate, giving them the opportunity to send a message to the government and the Tories, who were still regarded by many of the electorate as the party of appeasement and of 'guilty men'. It was a message which one correspondent noted could have been even louder, but for the fact that Darwen's electorate was mainly middle-aged or older. It was an indictment of the outdated electoral register, and aptly demonstrated why Honor had felt compelled to stand in the first place.

Among the huge number of telegrams and letters which flooded in after her narrow defeat were three especially interesting ones: first, Frances Lloyd George, writing on behalf of herself and David Lloyd George spoke for many when she described it as a 'moral victory', and she assured Honor that she would be successful next time; second, a postcard, sent on behalf of 116 electors who felt guilty because they had not voted. The reason they gave was that they all lived in different districts to those of 1939. But if she needed help in the future they could offer £3–5 each. 'We, and many others realize that the best man is down. We only wish you to stand again'.[35] Lastly, and both less bizarre and far more prescient in the longer term, was a letter from A.H. Brown. Writing from Hayling Island he suggested it was better than Honor lost because as a journalist she would have far more power outside the House than 95 per cent of the MPs inside it.[36]

Of all the letters in the files concerning the wartime Liberal Party however those exchanged with Captain George Grey, MP are the most poignant. Grey was Liberal MP for Berwick-on-Tweed, continuing a family tradition. A member of Radical Action, his letters, written from England while serving with the 4th Battalion, Grenadier Guards, are full of life, and promise. But he did not survive the war, dying in the Normandy landings. He is buried where he died, at a crossroads in Le Repas.[37] Somewhat ironically, given Radical Action's earlier stance, the Electoral Truce ensured that in the by-election caused by Grey's death Sir William Beveridge was returned, uncontested, as his successor.

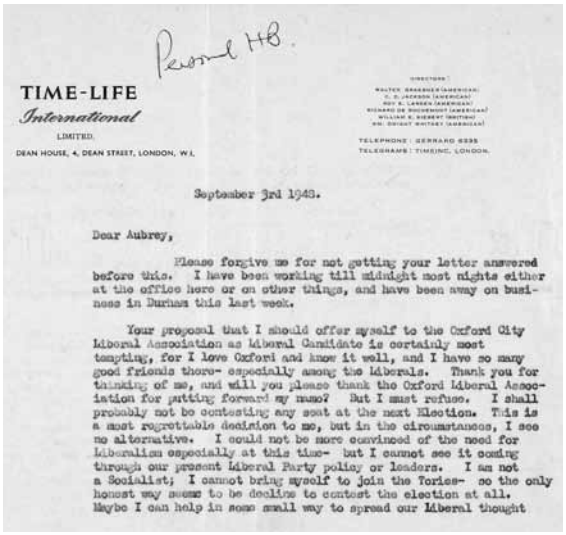
Honor was selected as the official Liberal Party prospective parliamentary candidate for Darwen in June 1944. She assiduously nursed the constituency, spending all her free time there. She was no longer at *Picture Post* – after Lorant's departure for the United States her position on the magazine became untenable. Relations with the new editor, Tom (later Sir Tom) Hopkinson were strained. Matters came to a head during the Bury St Edmunds by-election in April 1944. Radical Action was fielding Mrs (later Dame) Margery Corbett Ashby and Honor was reciprocating the help she had received from Ashby in Darwen. Hopkinson cited her campaigning while technically on sick leave, and rather than be sacked she had resigned.[38] The underlying cause, though, was Hopkinson's style of management, and his inability to put gender to one side when dealing with his talented subordinate. But Honor continued with her journalistic career and shortly afterwards was recruited to *Life* magazine, later transferring to *Time,* alongside which she continued her freelance work.

Honor was profoundly disillusioned with the Liberal Party: its leadership; its organisation, its programme. She was not alone in this nor was it a purely a generational response.

As a parliamentary candidate in 1945 Honor still received letters about old age pension rates, the concerns of soldiers, and other outstanding issues from her 1943 contest. But the 1945 campaign would prove very different. The Labour candidate, Captain R. Haines, came back from Greece to fight the election. Accrington-born, he had left school at fourteen to work in a mill. He became a reporter on the *Manchester Evening News*. Since 1938 he had been the Labour prospective parliamentary candidate. While away fighting he had kept in touch by newsletters. Honor was now fully endorsed by the Liberals; she was regularly in the constituency and was still highly regarded. But all of this was not enough to withstand the dramatic polarisation between right and left that occurred at this election, and which cost the Liberals so dearly. Honor came third, unable to repeat her 1943 showing. Prescott retained his seat from the Labour threat, which had totally supplanted that of the Liberals', both in Darwen and throughout the land.[39] Had she accepted the offer by Harold Laski in 1945 of a safe Labour seat she would undoubtedly have made the 'national impact' projected for her by Robert Ingham in his recent profile of Honor.[40]

Disenchantment

While researching this article it was something of a surprise to come across a batch of letters which revealed just how conflicted in her loyalties towards the Liberal Party Honor had become by the time of



Rec'd HB.

TIME-LIFE
International
LIMITED.
DEAN HOUSE, 4, DEAN STREET, LONDON, W.1.

TELEPHONE: GERRARD 8335
TELEGRAMS: TIMEINC, LONDON.

September 3rd 1948.

Dear Aubrey,

Please forgive me for not getting your letter answered before this. I have been working till midnight most nights either at the office here or on other things, and have been away on business in Durham this last week.

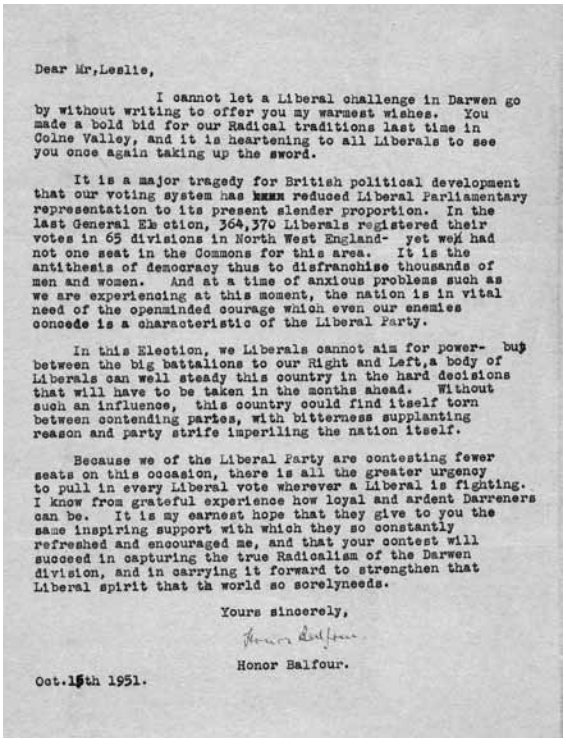
Your proposal that I should offer myself to the Oxford City Liberal Association as Liberal Candidate is certainly most tempting, for I love Oxford and know it well, and I have so many good friends there- especially among the Liberals. Thank you for thinking of me, and will you please thank the Oxford Liberal Association for putting forward my name? But I must refuse. I shall probably not be contesting any seat at the next Election. This is a most regrettable decision to me, but in the circumstances, I see no alternative. I could not be more convinced of the need for Liberalism especially at this time- but I cannot see it coming through our present Liberal Party policy or leaders. I am not a Socialist; I cannot bring myself to join the Tories- so the only honest way seems to be dealing to contest the election at all. Maybe I can help in some small way to spread our Liberal thought through my profession. At least, I feel I have greater freedom and scope there than I would have as a candidate for Parliament.

I should be glad if you would explain my feelings to my Oxford friends.

Yours sincerely,

Honor Balfour

Honor Balfour.



Dear Mr,Leslie,

I cannot let a Liberal challenge in Darwen go by without writing to offer you my warmest wishes. You made a bold bid for our Radical traditions last time in Colne Valley, and it is heartening to all Liberals to see you once again taking up the sword.

It is a major tragedy for British political development that our voting system has ~~xxxx~~ reduced Liberal Parliamentary representation to its present slender proportion. In the last General Election, 364,370 Liberals registered their votes in 65 divisions in North West England- yet we had not one seat in the Commons for this area. It is the antithesis of democracy thus to disfranchise thousands of men and women. And at a time of anxious problems such as we are experiencing at this moment, the nation is in vital need of the openminded courage which even our enemies concede is a characteristic of the Liberal Party.

In this Election, we Liberals cannot aim for power- but between the big battalions to our Right and Left,a body of Liberals can well steady this country in the hard decisions that will have to be taken in the months ahead. Without such an influence, this country could find itself torn between contending parties, with bitterness supplanting reason and party strife imperiling the nation itself.

Because we of the Liberal Party are contesting fewer seats on this occasion, there is all the greater urgency to pull in every Liberal vote wherever a Liberal is fighting. I know from grateful experience how loyal and ardent Darreners can be. It is my earnest hope that they give to you the same inspiring support with which they so constantly refreshed and encouraged me, and that your contest will succeed in capturing the true Radicalism of the Darwen division, and in carrying it forward to strengthen that Liberal spirit that th world so sorelyneeds.

Yours sincerely,

Honor Balfour.

Oct.15th 1951.

Top: Letter from Honor Balfour to Aubrey Herbert,1948. MS. Balfour dep.1. Honor Balfour papers. Bodleian Library, Oxford. Reproduced with the permission of St. Anne's College, Oxford.

Bottom: Letter, from Honor Balfour to Roy F.Leslie, Liberal candidate for Darwen in the 1951 General Election.MS. Balfour dep.2.This is a green carbon copy. MS. Balfour dep.2. Honor Balfour papers. Bodleian Library, Oxford. Reproduced with the permission of St. Anne's College, Oxford.

the 1950 General Election. In the immediate postwar years Honor was still attracting letters inviting her to stand as a parliamentary candidate. One can see why. Even if the ranks of the Liberal Party had not been so badly depleted after 1945, Honor was a 'stand out' candidate, and not only because of her personality and political skills. She was becoming known as a broadcaster on the radio at a time when very few young female voices were to be heard, especially in current affairs programmes.

Honor was profoundly disillusioned with the Liberal Party – its leadership; its organisation; and its programmes. She was not alone in this, nor was it purely a generational response, or limited to the radical wing. Lady Violet Bonham Carter, keeper of the Asquithian flame, older, and on the right of the party,was sharply critical too of divisions between MPs. Disenchantment with the party was widespread. Davies' task, as leader, of holding the party together has been compared with that of Harold Wilson and the Labour movement in the 1960s.[41] Looking back over this phase of her life Honor described how she had seen her journalistic role. It was to act as a conduit, explaining the British to her American readers, and adapting, often simplifying, her journalistic style in the process. For visiting American politicians, and other influential visitors, she arranged informal lunches and dinners (the White Tower's restaurant being one of her favourite venues) where they could meet their British counterparts. In her own way she helped to cement the Anglo–American relations. She could reflect with satisfaction on what she achieved. For arguably through her journalism – both for *Life* and as a freelancer – she may indeed have exercised more influence than many politicians.[42]

After the 1945 defeat, Darwen (where Honor remained a member of the Association) is rarely mentioned in her correspondence. The first such instance is not until 1948. It is a 'thank you' letter from a prize winner at the Darwen Division Liberal Spring Fair, to which Honor had contributed a food parcel. The writer, a volunteer helper in both of Honor's election campaigns, regretted the imminent departure of Mr Meredith, the agent, a 'forthright Liberal, & a worker who treats Liberalism as a crusade.'[43]

Honor had retained her affection for Darwen's Liberals but she began distancing herself from the party nationally. Aubrey Herbert wrote to Honor to ask if, despite telling him at the Bournemouth Assembly that it would be 'some time' before she would consider another candidature, she be persuaded to become the candidate for Oxford, Alistair Buchan having resigned on his appointment to the *Economist* magazine. Oxford, wrote Herbert, was 'clamouring' for her.[44] The answer was firmly no. 'I could not be more convinced of the need for Liberalism especially at this time – but I cannot see it coming through our present Liberal Party policy or leaders.'[45]

The following year she was approached again to stand, this time by W.R. (Robert) Davies, the Directing Secretary of the Liberal Party Organisation. A 'really good opportunity' had unexpectedly occurred. The constituency was not mentioned; only that it had 'an excellent record'. Unfortunately the Liberal candidate had been instructed by his doctor to stand down.[46] The answer was again no. Honor wrote that, while the offer was appreciated:

> I fear circumstances do not permit me to take part in this Election. I shall have to be an onlooker, making my commentary and survey, but otherwise taking no part in the annual activities. In many ways, I regret this of course; yet I feel the reason for my inactivity is very much worthwhile. For if I am to continue having my interpretations of the British political scene accepted by American readers, I must remain non partisan. And it is so urgent to try and keep Anglo–American relations clear at this time, that I am fortunate, as a British journalist, to find my comments accepted by American colleagues … in the hope that my small efforts may be of some use in this direction.[47]

The General Election held on 23 February 1950 returned the Labour Party to government with a slightly decreased share of the vote (46.1 per

Honor Balfour, the first woman president of the university Liberal Club, remained a Vice-President until she resigned from the party in February 1957. This photograph was probably taken at the Oxford Union when (Sir) Robin Day (1923-2000), standing first left, was President of the Union, Trinity Term,1950.MS. Balfour dep.98. Honor Balfour papers. Bodleian Library, Oxford. Reproduced with the permission of St.Anne's College, Oxford.

cent to 1945's 47.8 per cent) and a reduced number of MPs (315 instead of 1945's 393). The number of Liberal MPs fell from 12 to 9, despite fielding 475 candidates (up from 306 in 1945); and even though they were contesting many more seats, their percentage of the vote only rose to 9.1 per cent from 9 per cent in 1945.[48]

A few months later The *Manchester Evening News* reported that Honor Balfour would vote 'Socialist' in the next General Election. The story was picked up by the local press in Darwen. It prompted the victor of her two election campaigns, Stanley Prescott, MP, to write regretting her choice but hoping all was well with her personally, and sending best regards from his wife and himself.[49]

In her reply Honor adopted a position some distance from that outlined to Robert Davies. She too had read the press report seen by Prescott: 'The fuller context might have explained that I'm still a Liberal, but that I am one who is a critical supporter of the Government. In present circumstances, I see no alternative for Radicals of my taste but to vote Labour at the next General Election. As you know, my leaning was never towards the Tories'. She closed the letter by reciprocating his personal good wishes and sending her greetings to him and his wife.[50]

Epiphany on an election platform

Judging from a letter written a few months later, in September 1950, Honor wanted her voting intentions to remain a private matter. It was sent in reply to a letter, which does not appear to have survived, from her successor as Liberal candidate for Darwen, James Booth. On *Time-Life International* headed notepaper the closely typed letter reveals her inner struggle. It was

> most difficult to answer [his letter].Because the fact is that I have concluded that our Liberal Party and the times in which we live are not in keeping with each other. *I have been fighting against this realization for some time* [emphasis added].But it became strong during the General Election in February. Never have I found such difficulty in making a speech that was both honest and convincing as I did when I was speaking in support of Carey-Evans, the Liberal candidate for my own division here in London. I realized as I was speaking from his platform, that the Radical beliefs which I hold no longer have a chance to operate effective through the present Liberal Party. With all their faults – and they are largely the same faults as they've always been – the men and the women of the Labour Party seem to cherish our radical beliefs more sincerely and effectively than do our Liberal chiefs.

After sentences describing the struggle within the Labour Party between the forces of Radicalism and Socialism, with Radicalism the likely victor the longer the Party remained in office, she returned to her own political beliefs. 'Philosophically and economically, I am still as Liberal as ever' but the 'political effectiveness of these convictions can only be achieved to-day

through the continuance in office of a Labour Government.' She had not joined the Labour Party, and her disillusionment with her old party did not 'detract one jot from the fineness of individuals of that party. A decision of this kind is essentially an individual one and … it involves relinquishing any political ambitions one might have had', but she argued 'I am more at peace in my own mind if I choose my political path privately and honestly' than if she were to continue publicly and actively to support an organisation in which she no longer had confidence.

It was a private letter, she made clear, written only because Booth was her successor at Darwen, where she had so many friends, and with whom she had shared so many struggles. On personal grounds she wished him every success when he fought again. 'I know the Darwen Liberals *are* Radicals, your success would further the Radicalism in which I believe.'[51] For the 1951 General Election she would write an open letter of support for the new Liberal candidate at Darwen, Roy F. Leslie, who had previously contested Colne Valley in 1950. She wrote of 'We of the Liberal Party'. Her heart appeared to be pulling her back to her old allegiance, at least in Darwen. The high wire balancing act seemed set to continue.

It could not be sustained indefinitely however. In 1955 it would bring opprobrium.

Honor could have been a parliamentary candidate herself, had she been able to accept the invitation of the Falmouth & Camborne Division Liberal Association. How they fixed on her name may possibly be explained in other archives. Here the chief value of the letter sent to her home address in London on 4 June 1951 by A.G. Davey, the Deputy Chair of that association, is its analysis of the constituency where Nigel Nicolson was the Conservative candidate.

> Strong personalities have at all times made their mark on Cornish electorates. Liberalism is looking for leadership more than anything else. We believe that a good leader could here transform the whole position. It would be fair to say that the Liberal organisation has not been good; it is better now than it has been for a very long time; there is a good deal that would automatically follow from the presence of a leader and a Candidate in the Division.

After detailing the area's industries, and the politics of local mayors – every single one a Liberal – Davey invited her to come down to see for herself. They were keen to work with her to make her the 'first lady MP for Cornwall.'[52]

Apologising for the twelve day delay in replying to Davey's letter – a delay she attributed to 'a spate of work' – Honor began by saying how 'really most honoured' she was to receive their invitation, especially from an area with such a long Liberal tradition and where, as in her two Darwen contests, there would be 'loyal Liberals with whom to work; people with strong personal associations'. But decline it she must. The reasons advanced however make no mention of the loss of faith adumbrated nine months earlier to James Booth. Instead she points again to her 'immers[ion] in Anglo–American work'. Her 'Parliamentary aims' were 'no longer active', for one could not pursue the two things simultaneously without it being to the detriment of both. So she had 'decided for the foreseeable future anyway I shall not again enter Parliamentary conflict … I am so sorry to have to refuse it, for I admit my instincts certainly leapt at the thought.'[53]

Without other supporting documentary evidence in her papers – for example diary entries, or correspondence with others on the topic – it is impossible to know whether Honor's instincts had really leapt at the thought of contesting a Liberal seat again. Was the delay in replying due to more inner wrestling; to talking the offer over with friends? Or was the letter an overly polite refusal – verging on the uncharacteristically disingenuous –sent to party loyalists in a Liberal heartland. The collection is silent on the matter.

Fortunately the coverage of Honor's stance during the 1951 General Election is good. The file which contains the exchange with A.G. Davey reveals that Honor took the unusual step of writing open letters for at least three Labour candidates urging Liberal supporters in their constituencies to vote for them. The future Prime Minister, Harold Wilson, later Baron Wilson of Rievaulx, in Huyton was one beneficiary. The letter, dated 12 October 1951, and addressed 'To … all Liberal Voters' continues:' Your attention is invited to the following letter to Mr HAROLD WILSON from Miss HONOR BALFOUR, famous Liberal ex-Candidate.'

With no chance of forming a government the role of the Liberals was 'to steady this country in hard decisions that will have to be taken in the month ahead'.

With no Liberal candidate standing 'some people … had been advising Liberals not to vote at all.' This advice disturbed Honor 'deeply'. She felt she 'must raise my voice against it … Not to use one's vote is deliberately to betray our democracy. Liberals of all people should realize this – and, however difficult the decision where there is no candidate of their own, they cannot and must not escape it.'

If she had to make such a choice she would unhesitatingly '*choose Labour*'. The Labour government was not perfect but she gave it credit for its solid achievements; a record infinitely better than the Tory (Honor seldom used 'Conservative') record after 1918.

She appealed through 'Harold' to her 'Liberal friends in Huyton', urging them to 'rally behind and help return Labour.' Honor's intervention was significant. Writing to thank Honor, Wilson commented that her letter had 'caused quite a stir' in the local press. Instead of defeat (expected because of the national trend) his majority had increased by 400.[54] In Darwen, where the Liberals were fielding their new candidate Roy Leslie, Honor wrote yet another letter of endorsement for publication, but this time for the Liberal.

> I cannot let a Liberal challenge in Darwen go by without writing to offer my warmest wishes. You made a bold bid for our radical traditions last time in the Colne Valley, and it is heartening to all Liberals to see you once again taking up the sword …
> It is a major tragedy for British political development that our voting system has reduced Liberal Parliamentary representation to its slender proportion. In the last General Election 364,370 Liberals registered their votes in 65 divisions in North West England – yet we had not one seat

> in the Commons for this area. It is the antithesis of democracy thus to disenfranchise thousands of men and women. And at a time of anxious problems such as we are experiencing at this moment, the nation is in vital need of the openminded courage which even our enemies concede is a characteristic of the Liberal Party.

With no chance of forming a government the role of the Liberals was to 'steady this country in the hard decisions that will have to be taken in the month ahead'. Because they were contesting fewer seats there was 'even greater urgency to pull in every Liberal vote wherever a Liberal is fighting. I know from grateful experience how loyal and ardent Darreners *(sic)* can be'.[55]

A week earlier it had looked as though Honor would be endorsing the Labour candidate for Darwen. But at the last minute the Liberals had secured Leslie. Acting quickly Honor contacted Darwen's Labour organiser, Ronald Haines, who promptly replied: 'Your telegram received stop unreservedly withdrawn plan to issue leaflet. I am honouring our bargain [made in Scarborough at the Labour Party conference where Honor was reporting events].' He followed this up with a letter of the same date, 8 October, repeating the assurance about the leaflet and promising not to make any references in public to any statement reportedly made by her to support Labour in the constituency at this election. 'It is something of a tragedy that the Liberal Association have decided to enter the contest, first because it will undoubtedly split the progressive vote, and secondly because it does not give Leslie a fighting chance to conduct a proper campaign in support of his candidature, though I gather he is an enterprising young man.'[56]

Barbara Castle, facing a difficult contest in Blackburn, also sought to enlist Honor's support. 'I was delighted to read your spirited appeal to vote Labour. Is there any chance of persuading you to come and speak for me here or at any rate to send me a personal message? There is no Liberal fighting in Blackburn East this time and there are 2,600 votes going begging which may be vital in *what is proving a tough fight* (emphasis added).Would you be a dear & ring me Blackburn 6964 (transfer charge)? Here's hoping.'[57]

From Honor's pencil annotations to the handwritten letter from Castle we know that she was 'Unable to speak for you but sending message Monday provided no Liberal'.

Honor's endorsements of Labour candidates were not limited to the north western constituencies of people she had known for years. Xenia Field (later Noell) the Labour candidate for Colchester, and Bernard Bagnari in Tonbridge also had her letters of public support. In the case of the deeply grateful Mrs Field, who signed off her telegram with 'love Xenia', Honor's choice may have been influenced by friendship as much as the likelihood of success or location.[58]

Honor's independent political thinking proved too much for some Liberal Party members. Strong criticism by R. D. Ottley, the Honorary Secretary of the Lewisham Liberal Association,[59] of her endorsement of Labour candidates was a foretaste of what was to be directed at her in 1955 in the run up to the General Election in May, which was called by the new leader of the Conservatives, Anthony Eden, later 1st Earl of Avon. Even more significantly her actions would be used by Jo Grimond to minimise the impact of her resignation from the party in 1957.

Not all the correspondence survives about the earlier 1955 furore, but there are newspaper cuttings from The *Western Telegraph*, based in Haverfordwest, that relate to the controversy that Honor entered into over the election in Pembrokeshire. This may have risen, initially, from her endorsement of Desmond Donnelly. He had won the seat for Labour in the 1950 General Election, defeating Gwilym Lloyd George, later 1st Viscount Tenby, who had stood as an Independent Liberal in alliance with the Conservatives.

From the cuttings, and a poor quality copy of Honor's lengthy letter written from the Press Gallery, House of Commons, on 8 April 1955, to the editor, for publication and in riposte to letters published from readers, it appears that Honor was engaged in a highly charged debate about the Liberals' relations with the Conservatives. Not 'wish[ing] to make specific points – for such an argument would be endless', Honor returned fire against her critics fiercely condemning those Liberals 'who have drifted from the true faith. It is both sad and tragic … what savage castigation would be hurled upon them by (the spirit of) David Lloyd George' he would remind them 'that it was the Tory Party which would have strangled at birth the very Liberal reforms that contemporary Tories are attempting to cash in; that it was the Tory party that appeased Hitler until it was too late, despite Liberal warnings … and that it has been the Tory Party whose tactics have persistently flaked off layers of Liberals from their own true party to their own advancement … as they are again attempting to do in this issue of Pembrokeshire'.

Perhaps it was 'too late for some erstwhile Liberals to be saved from Tory wiles … but for those in whom the old flames of individual justice and opportunity still burn[ed]' she hoped that it was not, and ended by recalling a conversation with Lloyd George on his eightieth birthday in which he had said: "whatever happens always be a radical". That is your answer."[60]

Honor held true to that advice. 1956–57 were watershed years for her relations with the Liberal Party. For some while efforts had been made to entice her to join the Labour Party. Sir Dingle Foot was the major mover in the strategy which would have seen three senior Liberals join the Labour Party at the same time to maximize the impact of their defections: Lady Megan Lloyd George, Honor, and Foot himself. Honor was actively involved in discussions to coordinate defections to the Labour Party where they hoped optimistically to counter the Bevanites' influence. But it did not go to plan. Lady Megan left before the 1955 General Election, diluting the effect of the others leaving. Honor could not make the leap and sign the letter drafted by Foot. For her Clause IV of the Labour Party's constitution, its historic commitment to nationalisation, was an insuperable barrier. Later she recalled being 'horrified' by Lady Megan's premature departure.[61] In the letter Foot eventually sent on 9 July 1956

To Honor her independent stance, especially marked since1950, made perfect sense.

to the Labour Party leader, Hugh Gaitskell, only the names of Foot, Wilfrid Roberts, by then no longer an MP, and Philip Hopkins were included in the letter applying to join the Labour ranks.[62]

The break

Jo Grimond became leader of the Liberals in November 1956. He was immediately plunged into marshalling the Party's response to the British government's conduct of the Suez crisis, then in its final stages. The Liberals had been divided over whether to lend their support to the Eden government but Grimond, to his credit, put the party firmly in the opponents' camp. He would go on to lead the Liberals out of the doldrums, presiding over a series of spectacular by-election successes as the Macmillan era of government faded. But it would be his stance over the Carmarthen by-election in 1957, in the aftermath of the Suez crisis, which would convince Honor that she must cut all her formal links with the Liberal Party. Forty years later she described how Grimond, a 'good thinker, good writer … with a certain charisma' made what she considered his 'great error of judgement' in supporting John Morgan Davies.

The by-election had been called following the death of the MP, Sir Rhys Hopkin Morris, in November 1956. The tiny band of Liberal MPs was reduced to five. Lady Megan Lloyd George was put forward as the Labour candidate (in itself an interesting development in the story of the planned defection by the trio outlined above). The selection by the local Liberals of Davies, a supporter of the government's Suez policy, placed Grimond in a dilemma. He opted to support him. As he later wrote to Honor in a letter for publication: 'I have never believed that Suez was the only political issue before the country nor the most important. It is certainly not the issue in the Carmarthen by-election'.[63]

Labour won the seat with a majority of 3,069 (Jennie Davies stood for Plaid Cymru; the Conservatives did not put up a candidate). For Honor, Grimond had made the wrong call, forfeiting an 'opportunity to make the Liberal position clear when the country and families were cut down the middle' over Suez.[64] Their (published) exchange of letters at the time of her resignation in February 1957, and Honor's related correspondence with other Liberals about whether it was better to present a united front over the selection, even if it risked undermining the Party's basic principles, are doubly interesting. The additional and, in some part, new elements of the Suez story shed yet more light on one the great defining benchmarks of Britain in the twentieth century. Viewed with the earlier letters narrating Honor's gradual disengagement from the Liberals, they also raise questions about how we, as individuals, perceive ourselves and how others react to our self-image.

Honor Balfour's papers are a window through which we can access, in varying degrees of depth, over forty years of Liberal Party history.

Honor was surprised, even stung, by Grimond's reference (which in a letter to Miss Mather she termed 'inaccuracies') that for some years she had been 'inactive' as a Liberal, doing nothing more than pay her subscriptions to the party. No. She had 'gone to the Oxford University Liberal Club [where she was still a Vice President] from time to time and done a few minor things of that nature and *just being a vocal Liberal in the political and journalistic circles in which I mix* … [emphasis added] itself denies the allegation'.[65] Worse however was the way Grimond had described her writing letters of support to Labour candidates. These 'few selected instances' were only 'where there had been *no Liberal candidate*'. This was 'a vitally essential' distinction; the omission of which she interpreted as 'prevarication' by Grimond."[66] To Honor, her independent stance, especially marked since 1950, made perfect sense. To others however, in both the Liberal and Labour parties, it could be perceived differently. Even in the less stridently ideological politics of the time it may have been too subtle for (some) Liberals. It was also politically useful to (some) Labour candidates.

Conclusion

Honor's retrospective assessment of Grimond was part of a wider conversation about the Liberal Party's leaders, starting with the first she had known, Sir Archibald (Archie) Sinclair. From the outset (she had first met him as an undergraduate) her expectations of him had not been high: he was too much of the 'old country house era'; 'he wasn't with the people at all'.[67] This failing, compounded by what Paul Addison has described as Churchill's tendency to treat Sinclair 'like a subaltern and social companion' rather than a wartime coalition partner[68] must surely have fed into Radical Action's frustrations with Sinclair's leadership and Honor's resolve to break the electoral truce in 1943.

David (now Lord) Steel and Paddy (now Lord) Ashdown emerged as the two leaders who Honor admired most: Steel dealt 'admirably' with his 'uphill task'; Ashdown was a 'strong leader of vision and courage'.[69] She did not, on this occasion, comment on the revival of the Liberal Party in the late 1950s and early 1960s but at the time she was sceptical. In her articles for *Life* she warned her readers that, however well the Liberals did in elections, however many Labour candidates they forced into third place, they would not dislodge Labour from its overall position. Protest votes were not to be confused with genuine belief in the party, even as the Liberals edged up again towards double figures in the House of Commons. Shortly after Eric Lubbock's famous win in 1962 at Orpington, Honor asked him in a short radio interview whether he thought the level of constituency organisation could be replicated across the country. He said yes; but Honor may not have shared his optimism.[70]

Honor Balfour's papers are a window through which we can access, in varying degrees of depth, over forty years of Liberal Party history. Her independent streak, and her anti-Tory stance (which did not carry over into her friendships with up-and-coming Conservative politicians, but was especially marked during elections), strongly influenced the relationship. In the Honor Balfour Papers' description of one person's (albeit one exceptionally well-placed person's) intense engagement and then gradual disillusionment, they convey more than just a commentary on the party's past, to be consulted with other collections held elsewhere. Some of the issues explored, such as Radical Action's concern that the Liberals would retain their separate identity after

the wartime coalition ended; how Liberals defined themselves in relation to the Conservatives; and what does 'being a radical' mean – have uniquely contemporary resonances.

As a historical resource for the history of the Liberal Party and the Liberal Democrats the collection takes its place alongside other major Bodleian collections for the period – the papers of Roy (later Baron) Jenkins,[71] a current cataloguing project and a topic in the 2012 modern papers seminar series;[72] the Bonham Carter archive[73] which includes the papers of both Lady Violet and her son Mark (later Baron) Bonham Carter, himself a notable by-election victor with his win at Torrington in 1958. There is also the recent accession of a smaller collection, the papers of Philip Fothergill. But above all the collection is the archival legacy of a remarkable woman whose modesty belied her role in making history, not just once or twice, but on numerable occasions as a student, an aspiring politician, and as a journalist and broadcaster.

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Acknowledgments and copyright permission

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Cassette recordings and notes of conversations with Honor Balfour, 1997-99.These are presently in the author's possession. If the sound quality can be improved by transferring them into digital format they will subsequently placed in the Bodleian Library.

For permission to quote from the collection, and from letters written by Honor Balfour, I am grateful to St Anne's College, Oxford, owners of the both the collection and Honor's copyright, and to the Bodleian Library. Permission to quote from the letters written by Barbara Castle and Harold Wilson was kindly provided by their respective literary executors. Efforts to identify the owners of copyright in other letters from which sizeable extracts were quoted were unsuccessful.

1 Mark Pottle, 'Balfour, Honor Mary (1912–2001) *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, Jan 2005 [http://www.oxford dnb/view/article/75651, accessed 4 August 2011].

2 In accordance with Honor's wishes the post of the Honor Balfour Fellow in Politics was established.

3 Although Honor of course knew of Barbara Castle, they did not associate, and pursued different paths: Honor Balfour in conversation with the writer, 25 July 1997. Coincidentally Honor's papers in the Bodleian are stored just metres away from those of Baroness Castle.

4 The projected article, *The Time of her Life*, was nearing completion at the time of Honor Balfour's death. It informed a short piece for *Oxford Today*: 'Bright Honor' 14 March 2002, p. 52.

5 Available at www.bodley.ox.ac.uk/dept/scwmss/wmss/online/modern/balfour-honor.html

6 Their paths did not cross until they met in the Washington Embassy in the late 1940s. His profile was so like her father's it made Honor gasp when she first saw him reflected in a mirror.

7 MS.Balfour dep.31 contains copies of birth, marriage and death certificates obtained during Honor's researches in 1953. Mary Burd, her maternal grandmother, born at Abermule, Montgomery, was twenty-two when she married the thirty-three year-old Brice Jenkins.

8 MS.Balfour dep.31. Notice in *The Times*,12 July 1966, on the anniversary of her mother's death. 'Mama' signed Honor's birthday and Christmas cards as 'Mommie and Daddie'. Looking back Honor could not see much of her mother's personality in her own but assumed she had 'imbibed' something by being an only child and spending so much time with her. Conversation, 19 May 1999.

9 Honor was very discrete about her relationships. Her papers include bills for wines purchased (she was a connoisseur and kept an excellent 'cellar'). Her art collection included several Graham Sutherlands. Henry Moore was another friend. Music was a lifelong passion; she helped to finance events at the Cheltenham Music Festival.

10 For example there is no reference to her in Humphrey Carpenter, *That Was Satire That Was, Beyond the Fringe, the Establishment Club, Private Eye, That Was The Week That Was* (London: Victor Gollancz, 2000). The club was like 'the prefects' room'. John Bird, Richard Ingrams and the late Ned Sherrin, were among those recalled by Honor, who added typically that none of them would remember her. Conversation, 11 November 1998.

11 Conversation, 17 April. 1998, prompted while going through her appointment diaries (now catalogued as MS. Balfour dep.72–73).Vijaya Lakshmi (Nan) Pandit, Indian politician and diplomat, was the only other person singled out as a major influence. Honor valued her 'wordly wise, level-headed' personality.

12 Honor spoke only of collecting the three parties' literature. Conversation 12 December 1997. A 'disorganized rabble' was how Lloyd George described the party's appearance. Focusing on temperance and free trade did nothing to attract non-unionised rural workers – the group of voters David Dutton describes as their 'best hope'. Dutton, *A History of the Liberal Party*, p.101.

13 In 1942 The Society of Home Students became St. Anne's Society; it has been a college since 1952.

14 MS. Balfour dep 1.6 October 1933. Vera Brittain's daughter is Baroness (Shirley) Williams.

15 Conversation, 25 July 1997.

16 Professor of Greek, Oxford University founding member of League of Nations Union (LNU). Lady Mary was the daughter of the 9th Earl of Carlisle. Honor had been honorary secretary of the Merseyside junior LNU. The Murrays were noted social hosts. The telephone conversation was recounted to the writer, 9 November 1998. Honor recalled Lady Mary as 'fey'. Roberts' contribution included persuading the Foreign Secretary, Anthony Eden (later 1st Earl of Avon) that government assistance would be unnecessary. Additional information, 19 April, 2 August 2012, from Joanna Matthews, Roberts' daughter.

17 The ship landed at Southampton on 27 May 1937. The refugees were initially taken to a makeshift camp near Eastleigh. During the next few weeks they were allocated to various 'colonies' financed and run by volunteers, trades unions and other organisations (www.basquechildren.org). Fundraising for the Oxford contingent was incorporated into Honor's election campaign.

18 Conversation, 9 November 1998. Although described as 'editing' Beveridge's papers it may have been more of a research role. Harold Wilson provided statistical advice to Beveridge, and at tea-time Lady Beveridge used to ask Honor to take some cake to 'that nice quiet man'. Honor had known Wilson since university (additional information, Diana Rau, 9 August 2012).

19 MS.Balfour dep.1. 1 April 1938.

20 Mark Egan, pp. 5–17.

21 Fortunately many of Honor's 1943 incoming letters (often handwritten) survive. Correspondence exchanged between Spicer and Anthony Penny June–July 1974 (MS. Balfour dep.68) indicate concern for the future of his papers, regarded as Radical Action's official archive. Honor and Penny had suggested approaching the Library of the Reform Club (the Liberal Party deemed unlikely to have the resources). In his final years Spicer lived not far from Honor so it would have been easy to transfer the papers for safekeeping after his death.

22 MS. Balfour dep.3. Letter from Barbara Castle, 24 October 1959. There was no Liberal candidate in 1955 or 1959. After apologising for delay in sending thanks (her secretary has been ill) she noted 'As you rightly surmised it was very useful in mobilising the Liberal Vote'.

23 MS. Balfour dep.46, candidate elections. Today's approximate value would be £5,542.96 – (based on the National Archives' online historical currency converter for 2005 (the latest available), and on a 1940 comparison).

24 Mark Egan, p.9.

25 Conversation 17 April 1998. The book was never finished, work stopped when Honor's mother became ill and died in 1965. The ring binders of notes made in the 1970s including press reports of speeches by leading political figures in the 1945 national campaign may be some of Honor's working papers. MS. Balfour dep.64/1-4.

26 This period cannot be dated exactly. Honor described how she and her mother moved to Oxford after they were bombed out of their London home. Frank Pakenham found Beveridge a difficult man to work for and was very keen that she take over from him which she eventually did. Conversation 9 November 1998.

27 Many of the wives worked in factories. Sixty years later Honor was still moved by recalling the sense of injustice expressed in the letters sent to *Picture Post*. Conversations, 25 July 1997; 12 December 1997.

28 The by-election was caused by

the death of the Conservative MP, Victor Cazelet. David (later 1st Viscount) Eccles won 8310 votes, Johnson, 8115. Johnson later joined the Conservatives, serving as MP for Carlisle from 1955 to 1963 and sitting as an Independent Conservative from 1963 to 1964.

29 Letter, 18 January 1944. MS. Balfour dep.46.

30 MS. Balfour dep.46. This drew an approving letter from Liverpool University Liberal Society's guild of undergraduates written by the Honorary Secretary, E. Rex Warner.

31 MS. Balfour dep.46. For instance Mrs Lucas of the Chorley branch of the National Old Age Pensioners Association who hoped all OAPs would vote for her: Letter 11 December 1943. Under Beveridge's reforms universal pensions, partly funded by individual contributions, would increase; they would not be means tested. Some women at the national party level would have liked to have helped Honor at Darwen, but their allegiance to the official line was stronger: see the apologetic letter from Miss H. Harvey, Women's Liberal Federation, 17 December 1943.

32 Being 'spruce'– to use Honor's word – but not 'dressy' was part of her professional identity. She wore skirt suits (usually dark-coloured), sometimes adorned with a brooch. High-heeled court shoes and often a hat (she bought them in threes) completed the look. For the evening, lace, silk or brocade dresses. She visited her Spanish hairdresser in Kensington three times a week. Conversation 12 December 1997; photographs in MS.Balfour dep.94.

33 Mark Egan, pp.8–9.

34 Ethel Silburn sent a small donation. MS.Balfour dep.46.

35 MS. Balfour dep.46.

36 MS. Balfour dep.46.

37 http://battlefieldsww2.50megs.com/grey_memorial.htm

38 Honor, recovering from flu, went to Bury St Edmunds and wrote a piece in the *Observer* which Hopkinson saw. Honor maintained her contract permitted freelance work but decided to resign anyway. For some while she had been consigned to the office attic writing obituaries: it was time to leave. Conversation, 25 July 1997. Mrs Corbett Ashby polled 9,121 to G.M. Keatings' 11,705 votes, losing by 2,584.

39 Prescott secured 41.4 per cent with 13,623 votes; Haines 34.3 per cent (11,282 votes) and Honor 24.3 per cent (7,979 votes). Her result was part of a pattern: over 40 per cent of the Liberal candidates came third. Prescott retired from parliament in 1951; he committed suicide in 1962.

40 Robert Ingham's biographical essay in *Mothers of Liberty*, p.53. The offer is intriguing. Honor did not mention it in conversations with this writer. Presumably her strong objection to the party's commitment to nationalisation was a major factor in her rejection.

41 Dutton, p.154. Jane Bonham Carter, in *Mothers*, ibid., pp.42–43.

42 Conversation, 17 April 1998.

43 MS.Balfour dep.1.[Mr] Shorrock added that he had bought a book of Darwen Division Liberal Association's raffle tickets in her name; he wanted to see how, if she won, locals responded to her name.

44 MS. Balfour dep.1.Letter from Herbert, 11 August 1948. It has proved difficult to establish more about Herbert other than he was a journalist. Buchan wrote for The *Observer*. Later he ran the International. Institute for Strategic Studies. From 1972–76 he was Montagu Burton Professor of International Relations at Oxford.

45 MS. Balfour dep.1.3 September 1948.

46 MS. Balfour dep.1.Davies' letter, 23 November, 1949

47 MS. Balfour dep.1.24 November 1949

48 David Butler & Anne Sloman, *British Political Facts, 1900–79* (London: Macmillan, 1980 (fifth edition)).

49 MS. Balfour dep.2.2 May 1950.

50 MS. Balfour dep.2. Writing on 12 May 1950, from her home address 25 Royal Crescent, London W11.

51 MS. Balfour dep.2. Letter 21 September 1950.

52 MS. Balfour dep.2.

53 MS. Balfour dep.2. 16 June 1951.

54 MS. Balfour dep.2. Letter from Harold Wilson, 9 November 1951.

55 MS. Balfour dep.2 Letter 15 October 1951.We know from a letter, 22 October 1951, from Leslie's agent, Edward White, that she also sent him a donation but the amount is not mentioned.

56 MS. Balfour dep.2. Letter from Ronald Haines, 8 October 1951.

57 MS. Balfour dep.2. Letter from Barbara Castle, 9 October 1951.

58 Mrs Field lost by 3,846 votes to the Conservative candidate, C.G.P. Smith, slightly increasing his 1950 majority. Gerald Wellington Williams held Tonbridge for the Conservatives with a majority of 10,268.

59 MS. Balfour dep.2.Letter from Otley [October 1951]. Honor had written to rally Liberal support for the Labour candidate, Trevor Williams.

60 MS. Balfour dep.2. Letter in reply to those received after her letter of 31 March published. Lloyd George, a younger son of Earl Lloyd George, later became a Conservative; he was Home Secretary from 1954–57.

61 It was not until the Labour party under Tony Blair's leadership revised Clause IV in 1995 that Honor could countenance joining the Labour Party, but even then she held back. Lady Megan's friendship with Gaitskell may have added to the pressure to make her move, but not its actual timing (Dingle Foot was away). Conversation, 14 November 1997. In his article on Honor, Robert Ingham, op.cit., p.53, suggests she also felt responsible, by introducing Lady Megan to Labour's general secretary, Morgan Phillips. See also in the same study J. Graham Jones' biographical essay on Lady Megan, p.51.

62 Philip M. Williamson, ed., *The Diary of Hugh Gaitskell, 1945–1956* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1983), p.415. During a conversation on 17 April 1998 Honor recalled her friendship with Gaitskell. He was always asking her to join Labour, but she remembered that there was 'something she couldn't quite swallow' about him; moreover he never understood her 'point of view'. Though friendly – sometimes lunching at Bertorellis with him and his wife Dora (later Baroness) Gaitskell – she definitely admired him less than the rising Conservative politician Iain Macleod. These personal reservations may have also influenced her decision.

63 MS. Balfour dep.116. Folder 1. First of two letters (12, 25 February 1957) from Grimond. Honor formally resigned from the party on 23 February, simultaneously informing and resigning from the Darwen Liberal Association and the Oxford University Liberal Club.

64 Conversation 12 December 1997 (with 'synopsis' made by Diana Rau). Lady Megan had been Liberal MP for Anglesey between 1929 and 1951.

65 MS. Balfour 116, folder 1. Letter, 14 March 1957, replying to Miss Mather.

66 Ibid.

67 Conversation, 12 December 1997

68 Paul Addison,' Sinclair, Archibald Henry Macdonald, first Viscount Thurso (1890–1970)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004; online edn. Jan 2008 http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/36108, 16 March 2012]

69 Conversation, 12 December 1997.

70 MS. Balfour dep.30. Imperfect copy of transcript [March 1962].The fact that Orpington adjoined Macmillan's own constituency of Bromley added extra piquancy to the win, appearing to underlie the Conservatives vulnerability to the Liberal resurgence.

71 www.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/bodley/library/special/projects/roy-jenkins

72 http://www.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/bodley/library/special/seminars/authorship,-memory-and-manuscripts-2012

73 http://www.bodley.ox.ac.uk/dept/scwmss/wmss/online/modern/bonham-carter/bonham-carter.html

C. E. MONTAGUE, LIB
AND THE G

C. E. Montague, in *Disenchantment* (1922) and his essays, novels and short stories of the 1920s, was one of the most prolific early critics of the way the Britain waged the First World War militarily, politically, and morally. The works we most closely associate with prose 'war literature' are those published from 1928, for example by Robert Graves and Siegfried Sassoon. In the past, historians associated Montague with these 'anti-war' writers, whose work they often accused of naivety and romanticism in its treatment of war, prejudicing public opinion against the conflict. By **Will Pinkney.**

ERAL WAR WRITERS
REAT WAR

Yet Montague was part of an older generation of writers that criticised aspects of Britain's participation in 'the war to end all wars' from the standpoint of veteran Liberal journalists. Their work highlights the controversial and politicised debate in the early 1920s over the understanding and commemoration of the war in British public life.

Montague was one of a number of influential Liberals who were quick to publish war reminiscences in the early 1920s, including Philip Gibbs of the *Daily Chronicle*, one of Britain's most widely-read and influential war correspondents, and H M Tomlinson of the *Daily News*. Montague described the war to readers as an exercise in comradeship across class and sectarian boundaries. Joining up in 1914, A J P Taylor considered that Montague personified 'the zest and idealism with which nearly three million Englishmen had marched forth to war'.[1] His commitment to the ostensibly liberal purpose of the war gave an edge to his criticisms of the reactionary politics of the peace, and fuelled his desire to shape public understanding of the conflict. He felt it had been a lost opportunity to heal class divisions at home and to achieve comity of nations, wasted by the class prejudice of the army and the terms of the Versailles treaty. While the Liberal Party was gravely wounded by wartime infighting, Montague and other professedly Liberal writers adapted the classless ethos of pre-war Liberalism to influence public understanding of the war as a noble aim paid for with the lives of ordinary, usually working-class men.

Liberal war writers faced resistance in print from Conservatives who insisted, amid the social strife of the early 1920s, that the cost of the war did not justify wholesale social change in the peace. The war correspondent Colonel Repington claimed that he coined the term 'First World War', denying the war a unique or exceptional bearing on domestic politics by suggesting that there may be more in future.[2] Montague and others condemned literary depictions of the war like the self-exculpatory account published by the controversial Field Marshal Lord French and Repington's memoirs of a Unionist aristocracy that had sacrificed few of its material comforts. The politics of its writers primarily defined the Liberal canon of war literature, but it also contained celebrations of the sacrifices made by all ranks and criticisms of the generals and Coalition government politicians, both ideas of central importance to British public understanding of the war ever since.

However, historians have since downplayed the role of politics in the formation of public attitudes towards the war. The historiography of war memory has only recently admitted the effect of the 'evolving mnemonic culture' of the years after 1918 on the way the war was remembered.[3] Historians neglected the domestic political arguments in Montague's writings in particular by treating literary critics of the war as romantics disillusioned by the experience of war itself. A J P Taylor and Corelli Barnett compare Montague's disillusion to that of the war poets, implying that he was as shocked by the unchivalrous nature of twentieth century warfare as they supposedly were when 'the war turns out to be like war, and not like Lady Butler's paintings'.[4] Dan Todman criticises Barnett's caricature of how middle class writers were affected by their experiences.[5] The 'military historian's view' of Montague and others obscures how pre and post-war political life influenced their writings and impedes our understanding of the early political influences on public conceptions of the war in British society.

Charles Edward Montague (1867–1928)

The context of Liberal politics in the pre-war years had a direct bearing on Montague's presentation of the war in the 1920s. He found himself a 'war writer' in middle age, already head leader writer for the *Manchester Guardian*, the Liberal mouthpiece, and established writer of didactic novels for middle-class readers on brotherhood with the working classes. Asquith's government faced bitter Unionist opposition over Irish home rule, culminating in a shocking breakdown of military discipline in the months before the outbreak of war in Europe.[6] In August 1914, Montague took the rare position among former 'pro-Boers' (opponents of the Boer War) of supporting British intervention in Europe, justifying it in the *Manchester Guardian* as the culmination of an existential struggle between liberal democracy and 'Prussianism'. He described the purpose of the war in terms from the Liberal lexicon: an affirmation of public service and a moral foreign policy, forging 'new patriotism' without class 'selfishness'.[7] The white heat of war, he believed, would strengthen national unity by undermining class consciousness

and religious bigotry. Montague's first criticisms of the conduct of the war were aimed at the War Office for its sectarian recruiting policies in Ireland.

Though Liberals were divided on the question of intervention in August 1914, both enthusiasts like Montague and those more sceptical Liberal war writers who came to support a 'just war' both staked their support on the achievement of liberal war aims. Montague's pro-Boer colleagues like L T Hobhouse and the *Manchester Guardian*'s legendary editor C P Scott opposed intervention, which seemed to them to undermine European progress and civilisation. In *World in Conflict* (1915) Hobhouse expressed his disgust that 'force had a greater part to play than we had allowed'.[8] However, while the war exposed fault lines between Liberal thinkers over foreign policy and the use of force, future Liberal war writers could at least hold their noses when war was declared, and were even enthusiastic about defence of the 'liberal comity of modern Europe'.[9] When a new liberal Europe did not materialise in the peace, their frustration informed their retelling of lofty aims forfeited.

Montague was concerned with using the war to define English national identity in Liberal terms, a claim that would become even more controversial after the war as commentators debated the motivation of British combatants. The struggle to wrest control of patriotic rhetoric from the Tories was already a longstanding feature of Victorian and Edwardian Liberal rhetoric in the era of high empire.[10] Facing claims by the Tories and the anti-war clique to represent 'the nation' in a time of crisis, Montague argued the case for war by associating intervention with historic English identity, weaving Gladstonian foreign policy into a narrative of a shared European liberal heritage: the war was 'Garibaldi's cause in Italy … Gambetta's in France, and it would be a strange countryman of Hampden's whom it would not thrill'.[11] Montague's political faith was idiosyncratic and romantic, but his belief in the case for war would remain fundamentally unchanged over time. The importance of classless participation in patriotic service and the defence of republican and democratic values in Europe would define the manner in which he presented the 'meaning' of the war to readers in the 1920s.

Aged forty-seven Montague dyed his white hair brown to enlist, a story retold in the international press. Though Oxford-educated, he enlisted without commission and was accepted into a volunteer 'Kitchener' battalion, the 24th 'Sportsman's', Royal Fusiliers. Montague lost his moustache to a grenade he dropped during training, and spent three weeks at the front before his health gave way. Scott, his father-in-law, had him assigned to Intelligence. From June 1916 he worked as a press censor and propaganda writer, escorting visitors including H G Wells, George Bernard Shaw, J M Barrie and the press baron Lord Northcliffe to the front. The visitors were left in no doubt as to Montague's physical bravery when he brought them dangerously close to artillery fire. Field Marshal Douglas Haig was bemused by 'our white-haired lieutenant's' zeal for service, surprised that 'the Radical paper's anti-militarist should have joined up at once'.[12] Contrary to Barnett's suggestions about his experiences, Montague left France in 1918 with only the growing suspicion that 'the British nation's greatest chance of distinction in all its history would be thrown away' in the peace.[13]

However, in the reactionary political atmosphere of 1919, Montague felt that the war aims of 1914 as he understood them had been betrayed. The Versailles treaty had levied astronomical reparations on the war's losers, encouraging the famine and political extremism wracking central and eastern Europe. Republican violence in Ireland was met with the brutality of the Black and Tan paramilitaries, whilst labour unrest gripped British industry as ex-servicemen re-entered the depressed economy. Montague was further embittered by the collapse of the Liberal Party's claim to moral authority, split between the former Prime Minister Asquith and the Coalition government leader Lloyd George. He had not retained his pre-eminent position on the *Manchester Guardian* and did not believe, as Scott did, in the possibility of a Liberal resurgence. He turned to essays with *Disenchantment* and to further fiction in *Rough Justice* (1926) and *Right Off The Map* (1927), among others, writing primarily on the wartime experiences of British and Irish fighting men.

In the reactionary political atmosphere of 1919, Montague felt that the war aims of 1914 as he understood them had been betrayed.

Though there were varying opinions on the war's justification within the stable of Liberal war writers, its apparently liberal purpose meant that they had generally supported it in print. The *leitmotif* of the Liberal literary response to the war and the peace was that politicians and diplomats had betrayed the hopes of the men who had volunteered in 1914. They articulated and amplified wider discontent among Liberals that the war's exceptional cost had not been recompensed by a peace to distinguish it from imperialist or dynastic squabbling. In Disenchantment, Montague quoted General Sir Ian Hamilton's belief that the Versailles treaty contained 'Not a line … to show that those boys … had been any better than the emperors; not one line to stand for the kindliness of England'.[14] In foreign and domestic policy, the Coalition seemed to Montague to represent an illiberalism alien to British tradition: 'You finish the long race, and only then you find out that the "you" who has won it is not even the same "you" who once had it to win … Prussianism, in its own fall, has infected its executioners.'[15] To Montague, the failure to achieve a liberal peace settlement and domestic polity was a condemnation of the nation's moral stature.

His response was to propagate a Liberal interpretation of what the war had been fought for, as a condemnation of post-war politics. In doing so, his criticisms of the peace treaty and of politicians, and his demand for greater respect for those who had fought, helped shape the way the war was perceived in Britain. In the unsettled atmosphere of the early 1920s, amid mass unemployment and working class discontentment, anti-war Liberals like Norman Angell criticised democracy and the working classes as threats to, rather than expressions of, liberal England.[16] By contrast, Montague recounted the war as a battleground between conservatism and liberalism in which British society had failed to address the class divisions that he blamed for post-war illiberalism and the revolutionary Left. Alienated from the bickering Liberal Party, Montague's

rallying cries of liberal national identity, public service and humanity, derived from his pre-war politics, were redirected to defend ex-servicemen without jobs or homes, who found themselves vilified as 'Bolsheviks' by the Right and ignored by the Liberals.[17] Montague was quick to point out that strikers, socialists and even IRA volunteers had previously been British servicemen and were not served by the reactionary tone of the post-war parliamentary classes. In *Ten Years After: A Reminder* (1924), Philip Gibbs noted how wartime phrases like 'homes for heroes' and 'a world safe for democracy' had been abandoned by Coalition and Conservative governments in peacetime.[18]

Montague and other Liberal war writers were prolific participants in the contemporary debate over the collective character of ex-servicemen, defending them from charges that they had been brutalised by war, resulting in demobilisation riots and accusations of Bolshevism in the press and Commons. The writer Henry de Man warned of the damage done to the working class mind in war, contravening the Edwardian Liberal assumption of man and society's forward progress.[19] Gibbs described this as a 'foul libel', and argued that most soldiers had never accepted the normality of killing.[20] Montague presented ex-servicemen in his writings as heroic and humane representatives of a national identity defined by liberal values. He described to H M Tomlinson how he sympathised not with 'intellectual reasons' for patriotism, a 'blasted "rough island story"'. Instead, 'my England is … the crowd at a League football match … and the look of the common soldier in France … that special kind of good-temper and humour and relating decency that the man of the working classes has here'.[21] Montague's sympathetic representation of working class soldiers foreshadowed the wider acceptance in the 1920s of 'peaceableness', and particularly the peacefulness of the working class, as a facet of Englishness. Gibbs echoed a common perception that the peaceful resolution of the General Strike in 1926 was the product of working class moral character and good humour, which weathered the national crisis as it had endured during the war.[22]

Montague's writings and their reception are evidence of the resurgence of liberal values divorced from the Liberal Party in the settling polity of the 1920s.

Liberal war writers drew less of their political sentiment from their experiences of war, as Barnett suggests, than from pre-war Liberalism, which Barnett holds had essentially failed them. As he had done before the war, Montague contested Conservatives' use of the language of patriotism and national identity, and attacked the partisan use of state apparatus like the military. He cried foul when Ian Hay, a Kitchener volunteer and author of the popular war book *The First Hundred Thousand* (1916), wrote a pamphlet for the Board of Trade entitled 'The New Hundred Thousand', which appropriated the memory of wartime national struggle for use in peacetime against striking miners.[23] He also denounced Churchill's attempt to use the Territorials to widen Britain's military intervention in revolutionary Russia. To varying degrees, Liberal war writers were distanced from the party, but influenced public understanding of the war in distinctively Liberal terms. Gibbs felt that Labour's victory in 1924 was attributable to the failure of Conservatives and Liberals to sense anger 'among ex-soldiers who had not received reward for service'. Yet Montague and Gibbs asserted that working class ex-servicemen constituted a peace party that believed in 'anti-militarism and world peace … democratic liberties' and 'more pay for less work', all phrases which echoed pre-war Liberal campaigns.[24] Liberalism infused the Labour Party while overlapping with the moderate Conservative leader Baldwin's outlook. Montague reflected both the dissipation of the Liberal vote and the wider dissemination of Liberal assumptions. He supported both Baldwin and Labour as forces that addressed the question of what was owed to ex-servicemen.

Criticism of the generals became particularly important to public understanding of the war in later decades, but was formatively influenced by Liberal viewpoints. Contrasted with working class decency in Liberal war literature is the theme of aristocratic bungling and inhumanity that defeats the enthusiasm of working and middle class volunteers. Philip Gibbs's *Ten Years After* attacked the bloodiness of contemporary tactics that wasted the ardour of volunteers and allowed what had originally been seen as a 'conflict between idealism and brutality' to become a 'crime against humanity'.[25] The cynicism displayed by the aristocracy recalled in Colonel Repington's memoirs galled Tomlinson and Montague and sparked controversy about the war record of the ruling classes, which Montague claimed had been common in the New Army in 1914.[26] Sir John French's unchivalrous attacks on Kitchener and the New Army provoked Montague to criticise the 'honest, plodding … ungifted tactics' of the Regulars that he felt had starved the army of new ideas.[27] Barnett criticises Montague for such statements that passed retrospective judgement on the war and showed little sympathy for the generals. However, this evaluation ignores the didactic purpose of Liberal war literature: even faulty grenades, Montague felt, had 'moral reverberations'.

Montague's writings and their reception are evidence of the resurgence of liberal values divorced from the Liberal Party in the settling polity of the 1920s. *Disenchantment* was well received on the Liberal and Socialist Left on its publication in February 1922, praised by Gibbs, Tomlinson, Bernard Shaw, John Masefield and Wells. The most successful early books on the war were generally conventional military overviews like Kipling's *The Irish Guards in the Great War* (1923). Tomlinson felt that the wooden literary depiction in the immediate post-war years of the 'Nobodies', working-class soldiers, who had won the war would 'disgrace pantomime'.[28] While *Disenchantment* had sold under 10,000 copies by autumn 1927 – far fewer than the celebrated books to be published the next year – it was recognised by contemporary critics as being one of the most respected and influential works of its kind.[29] The importance to Left and Right of adapting public memory of the war to political needs is encapsulated in Montague's recollection of how his more conservative wartime colleague John Buchan, author of *The 39 Steps*, halted Montague's plan to write a school textbook on the war in 1923, telling him that he had already begun one himself at Stanley Baldwin's invitation.[30]

The critical debate that met Liberal war literature was to an extent a proxy battle between parties. Conservative commentators, sensing that Coalition government with Lloyd George would not long serve their interests, began 'appropriating part of the new story of the war emerging and using it to blame the declining Liberals'. Orlo Williams, a Conservative and major in the Middle East, railed in the *Times Literary Supplement* against the perceived wisdom of the soldier-writer's critical viewpoint as early as 1919, almost a decade before Remarque, Sassoon and Graves published novels that were taken by many to represent 'the truth' about the war.[31] To defuse the Liberal claim that soldiers had been ill-used, Williams asserted that *Disenchantment* told 'what everybody knows' about the war, and suggested that Montague and Tomlinson were bound to be disappointed by their experiences, given their lofty notions of for what the war had been fought.[32] Robert Lynd in the *New Statesman* gave Montague the double-edged compliment of being 'a soldier of chivalry, [who] hated all those who were doing their best to make him a soldier of shabby spite'.[33] Political opponents duelled over the actual importance in wartime of the ideals attributed to combatants in Liberal literature, with Conservatives claiming that Liberal writers imposed their idealism on those who had not, in reality, found the war's finale disillusioning.[34]

Yet the suggestion that ex-servicemen had been ill-used by generals and politicians became less controversial in the 1920s and 1930s, finding expression in the Oxford Union's resolution in 1933 to refuse to take up arms for King and Country. This interpretation of the combatants' experience drew heavily from Liberal commonplaces of the post-war era. It was widely believed among Liberals that Liberalism and 'classless' politics had been smothered between Socialism, Conservatism, unemployment and high income tax. The embattled self-perception of middle class readers, argues Alison Light, encouraged pride in war literature in the status of the 'disenfranchised and dispossessed'.[35] Contemporary conservative critics denied that the war should have been understood as a sea change in British politics: that a pre-war 'Arcadia' was destroyed by 'a horror that was transitory, though bad enough'.[36] However, the commercial success from the late 1920s of novels critical of the cost of the war suggests that the tastes of the reading public were increasingly sympathetic to what had been the Liberals' argument: that profiteers and imperialist adventurers had squandered wartime sacrifices and the peace.

The assumption that Liberalism's decline meant that Liberal writers had no ideas to offer the post-war world ignores the debt that influential early accounts of the war owed to pre-war Liberalism.

Historians of Liberal war literature, though, have tended to describe the books as a counter-cultural undercurrent that existed solely in relation to dominant conservative interpretations of the war as a war like any other. Clearly, conservative critics did not regard the books as an undercurrent, but a dangerous grab by Liberals for moral authority.

Montague has been contextualised in the 'inky war' between conservative and Liberal writers.[37] However, the most influential interpretation of Liberal war writers is that of Samuel Hynes, which obscures the crucial political dimension. Hynes argues that books like *Disenchantment* were attempts to expose a 'reality' in the war distinct from the 'value-bearing abstraction' contained in such forms of commemoration as 'buildings or statues or soldiers' graves', which Hynes assumes represent 'celebrations' of the war. Hynes understands the debate over the legacy of the war to be between 'a conservative culture that clung to and asserted traditional values, and a counter-culture, rooted in rejection of the war and its principles', that included Montague and Gibbs.[38] Yet Gibbs and Montague did not reject the war or its principles; and while Gibbs and Tomlinson did express a desire to expose the 'truth' about the horrors of war, Montague was sceptical about presumption by writers to suggest what the war 'really' signified and anticipated the wave of 'prickly' books about the war that was to come.[39] While Liberal war writers were divided on whether or not they were exposing the 'truth' of what they had seen as journalists or otherwise, they were largely united by their opposition to Coalition and Conservative policies, and their desire to draw attention to the condition of ex-servicemen.

The importance of Liberal political thought in the formation of understanding of the war is not fully recognised in Hynes's account. Alex King has drawn attention to the implications of Hynes's argument, that 'anti-monument makers' like Gibbs only reacted against permanent expressions of war memory and did not shape them, left lamenting the failure of an irrelevent political philosophy.[40] Rather, Liberal war writers made positive claims to influence war memory, in literature and public ceremony. Illustratively, Gibbs and Montague both wrote prolifically on war memorials: Montague wrote in the *Manchester Guardian* in support of Lutyens's Cenotaph and the controversial decision to forbid individualised headstones in British war cemeteries to avoid class distinctions among the dead. The ubiquity of simple war memorials and classless commemoration of the dead in British public life is lasting evidence of how far Liberal values moulded the way the British public understood the war.

The debates over the public commemoration of war dead, over criticism of British strategy, and the peace, provoked comment from across the political spectrum, from art and literature without party politics, from religious organisations, from debate within rural and urban communities and elsewhere. Yet the early post-war years were an identifiable moment of Liberal cultural influence when pre-war Liberal ideals, no longer so closely associated with the struggling party, influenced the changing way the war was described in print, and subsequently perceived and commemorated. Montague longed for his books to place the war in its British and European context, alongside Marlborough and Wellington's campaigns, and for *Disenchantment* to be 'a book that could be read for ever' as a testament to liberal European values.[41] Yet the assumption that Liberalism's decline meant that Liberal writers had no ideas to offer the post-war world ignores the debt that influential early accounts of the war owed to pre-war Liberalism. Our understanding of war literature and remembrance would benefit from more fully acknowledging the influence of contemporary political ideas on lasting traditions.

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LETTERS

D. S Macdonald

Reading David Dutton's fascinating account of Liberalism in Dumfriesshire in *Journal of Liberal History* 76 I was struck by his references to a 'D.S. Macdonald' in the 1930s. This must surely have been the same elderly man who in 1959 was agent to the Hon Simon Mackay (now Lord Tanlaw) in the by-election in Galloway when we secured a creditable second place. Eight student Liberals from Edinburgh University, of whom I was one, spent a good deal of time campaigning there.

D.S. Macdonald conducted it from his house, and I recall him barking down the telephone to party HQ in London: 'Macdonald, Galloway here'. He also nearly killed several of us with his erratic driving, when he mistook a single oncoming headlight to be a motorbike and it turned out to be a tractor. He was a truly unforgettable and dedicated fighter for Liberalism.

David Steel

Immigration policy

I would counter what Nick Clegg has suggested about requiring a cash deposit from certain visa applicants by quoting what Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman said about the Conservatives' Aliens Bill in the House of Commons on 18 July 1905:

'The hardest working man, the most laborious and intelligent man, the man most likely to make a good citizen if he settles here … has no chance to come into this country unless he has money in his pocket. But the worthless man, the scamp, the lazy man … can come in if he has money in his pocket.'

Dr Sandy S. Waugh

Roy Jenkins and Lloyd George

In his review of Roy Hattersley's biography of Lloyd George (*Journal of Liberal History* 77), Ian Packer repeats the comments Hattersley attributes to Roy Jenkins about Lloyd George. But was Lloyd George 'a politician he disliked so heartily'?

Lord Hattersley does not give us the date or context of the comments. Was it over a claret-fuelled lunch or in more serious discussion? If this was the substantial view of Jenkins, the author of major biographies of Gladstone, Churchill and, most relevantly, Asquith, it might contribute to an assessment of LG. But in his only significant review of LG (*The Chancellors*), Jenkins rates him

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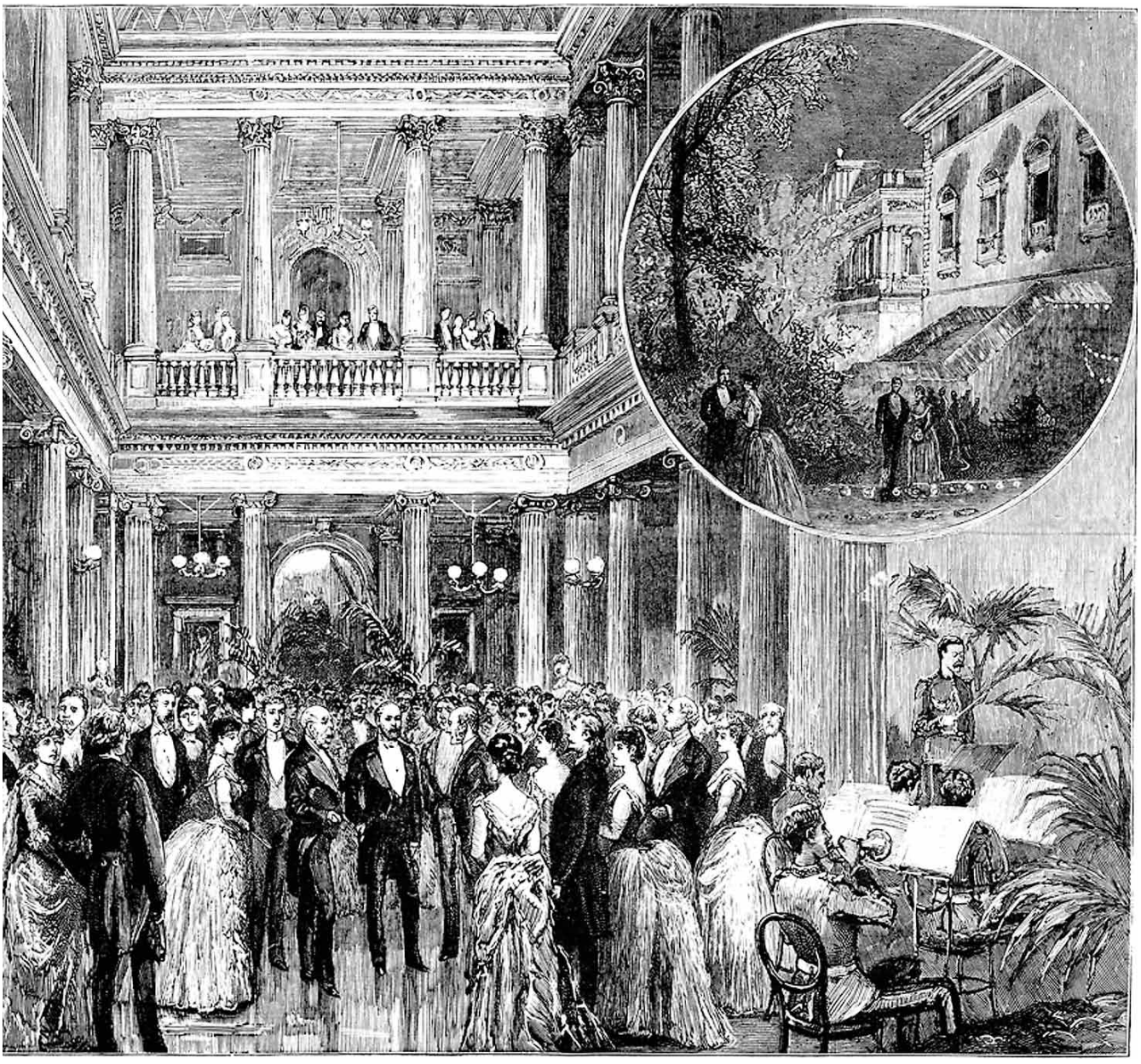


B'S JUBILEE BALL
OF AN ERA

The ball held at the Reform Club in London on the balmy night of Wednesday 15 June 1887 to celebrate Queen Victoria's Jubilee, as well as being the Club's own fiftieth anniversary, was a watershed in the history of the Club, marking the moment, in the contemporary assessment of *The Times*, when it gave up its role 'as a militant Liberal organisation' and became 'to a great extent neutral.' **Peter Urbach** traces The Reform Club's evolution from a Liberal political to a liberal social institution.

The Jubilee Ball at the Reform Club – the Club Chairman greets the royal party; 'Buffalo Bill' (pony tail and goatee beard) in the middle foreground; Henry Irving and Ellen Terry at the left (*The Graphic*, 25 June 1887).

In itself, the ball was a remarkable and memorable event. *The Graphic*[1] thought it would probably be remembered as one of the chief entertainments of the year. For *The Lady's Pictorial*[2] it surpassed anything yet seen in that season of Jubilee festivities, and presented a spectacle so splendid that it would be long remembered in the annals of London Society. And *The Times*[3] thought it had eclipsed all the historically important entertainments that had hitherto taken place in the clubhouse.

The ball, which cost the Club over £600,[4] was attended by more than 2,000 members and guests, comprising the most celebrated in politics, fashion, the stage, literature, music and art. They arrived to a blaze of light that lit up the whole of Pall Mall and were waited upon by a small army of footmen who ushered them up the steps into the Saloon, where they were greeted by the popular Club chairman, Mr Inderwick, QC. The Saloon was illuminated as if by brilliant sunlight, masses of palms and coloured flowers decorated the space, and members of the band of the 2nd Life Guards, resplendent in their red coats, discoursed gay military strains.[5]

The occasion was unique in the history of any London political club, in that party distinctions were for the first time set aside, so allowing the presence of royalty, whom it would have been highly improper to mix up in any proceedings tinctured with the colour of party.[6] Thus, the Prince of Wales, his eldest son, Prince Albert Victor, and the Queen's cousin, the Duke of Cambridge, Commander-in-Chief of the British Army, attended by Earl and Countess Spencer and the Duchess of Manchester, felt able to honour the entertainment with their presence.

Indian nobility was represented too: the Rao of Kuch; Maharajah Holkar; Maharajah and Maharanee of Kutch Bihar; Maharajah Sir Pratap Singh, the famous warrior; Nawab Asman Jah Bahadur, Prime Minister of Hyderabad; and the Thakur Sahibs of Morvi, of Limri and of Gondal. The Lord Mayor of London, the United States' Minister, and most of the foreign ambassadors to the Court of St James were also in attendance.

The genial neutrality that the Reform Club loyally observed for the Queen's Jubilee was signalled too by the presence of prominent figures from both sections of the recently fractured Liberal Party, now out of power, as well as by leaders of the current Conservative government.[7] So Lords Herschell, Hartington, Granville, and Rosebery, Sir Charles Russell, and Joseph Chamberlain shared the Club's hospitality with Conservative Cabinet ministers: Earl Cadogan (Lord Privy Seal), Lord Halsbury (Lord Chancellor), Lord Stanley (President of the Board of Trade), W. H. Smith (First Lord of the Treasury), Henry Matthews (Home Secretary), Sir Henry Holland (Colonial Secretary), Charles

Ritchie (President of the Local Government Board), A. J. Balfour (Irish Secretary), Viscount Cross (Secretary for India), and Edward Stanhope (Secretary for War).

Lions of the stage were also present: Henry Irving, who was piloting about Kate Terry and her sister Ellen; the actor-managers Mr and Mrs Kendal and Mr and Mrs Squire Bancroft; and Colonel Cody, who as 'Buffalo Bill' was taking London by storm with his Wild West show. Art was represented by Sir John Millais, John Tenniel, and Arthur Stockdale Cope and by the directors of both the National Gallery and the South Kensington Museum.

'One of the Guests' reflected that such a list on such a full night (for it was the night of Lady Salisbury's reception at the Foreign Office and many other entertainments) was a remarkable and refreshing sign of the times.[8]

The occasion was unique in a second respect, as *The Graphic* noted. Although ladies had occasionally entered the club, they had never before danced within its precincts. The Coffee Room, with its slippery polished floor, made a capital ballroom. Again, flowers, palms and ferns were used for decorative effect, music was provided by the remaining portion of the red-coated musicians, and the windows had been removed altogether, in order to keep the dancers comparatively cool. State chairs had been placed at the top of the ballroom from where the Indian visitors were amused spectators of the scene. Maharajah Holkar, gorgeous in turban and jewels and accompanied by a numerous suite, watched the dancers for a considerable time.

The Library was reserved for a splendid supper for all except the royal party, which was served privately in the Card Room, while other club rooms were thrown open as lounging places for the weary. But the great success of the evening, preventing it from turning into a terrific crush, was the garden. To the irreverent it suggested a *café chantant* in the Champs Elysée, with its small tables and groups of men in evening dress, strings of coloured lamps, and refreshments supplied from a huge tent. The Prince of Wales, the Duke of Cambridge and Prince Albert Victor (who bye the bye, looked more of a 'masher' than ever, much bronzed after his stay at Gibraltar), sat in the garden quite a long time watching the ball through the open windows.

They were no doubt also captivated by the elegantly dressed ladies, an aspect of the evening that *The Lady's Pictorial* analysed closely. Lady Berwick looked extremely effective, as usual; Baroness de Worms, who wore a beautifully made white gown and a great many splendid jewels, was literally ablaze with diamonds; Miss Ellen Terry wore a picturesque gown of deep amber brocade made with puffed sleeves and a high Medici collar; Mrs Bottomley Firth a low black gown; and Mrs Warren de la Rue a gown of pale green brocade and exquisite diamonds. Pretty Miss Fortescue appeared in white and pearls, looking all the better for her American tour. The Misses Hepworth Dixon were dressed alike in pale lilac silk and tulle, with bouquets of mauve rhododendrons, while Mrs Holland, the wife of the member for Brighton, was in green and pink and carried a bouquet made entirely of reeds and grasses.

So much for contemporary accounts of the Jubilee Ball, whose picturesque phrases I have plundered wholesale in order to convey the breathless excitement that the event aroused.

The Times, however, repeatedly struck a more serious note as it reflected on the social and political significance of the ball: 'Liberals cannot help feeling that the event marks decisively the close of the militant phase of reform … The Reform Club, which was established … as a militant Liberal organisation … has become to a great extent neutral.' And in a second article, published on the same day: 'The pugnacious political spirit which animated the original members of the Reform has given place in their successors to a spirit of tolerance or indifference. They agree to differ among themselves as well as with their political opponents. The club has sobered down.'[9]

The Club had indeed changed. Political divisions that might have destroyed it were being set aside, and it was starting to loosen its exclusive ties to the Liberal Party.

Opposite page: *Punch* (18 June 1887) devoted a full page to whimsical sketches intended to illustrate the Reform Club's Jubilee Ball and to lines of doggerel (one stanza is reproduced here) aiming political darts at William Gladstone and his former Cabinet colleagues. Gladstone was no longer a member of the Club at this date and was not among the guests.

Terpsichore at the Reform Club?
Verily,
'Twill puzzle
Party now to foot
it merrily,
Although 'tis
clearly obvious at
a glance
GLADSTONE has
led us all 'a pretty
dance'.

The first fifty years

Let us consider the course that the Reform Club took during its first fifty years. It was established initially as the principal social and administrative arm of the reforming party – a coalition of Whigs and Radicals that eventually became the basis of the Liberal Party – in the wake of its triumph in securing the passage of the Great Reform Bill in 1832.

The Reformers did not act immediately to form a club. The huge majority that they won in the general election of December 1832 under the new electoral rules had induced a degree of complacency that their opponents did not share. The Tories rose more quickly to the challenges presented by the Reform Act, especially its requirement that a register of electors be compiled for every constituency. They worked hard to encourage their own supporters to register, and did all in their power to frustrate the registration of Reformers by raising legal challenges wherever possible against their eligibility. The effectiveness of these efforts was demonstrated at the next general election, held early in 1835, when the government's majority was greatly reduced.

The Carlton Club, which the Tories had established in 1832, did duty as their party's headquarters and centre of operations. The Reformers learned the lesson from their opponents' success and in May 1835 they launched their own central organisation – the Reform Association – under the leadership of Joseph Parkes, and with the solicitor James Coppock employed as full-time election agent. The Association was superseded in May 1836 by the Reform Club. The Club was intended to act as a central base for the reforming parties, the equivalent of the Carlton Club, whose premises were next door in Pall Mall, and to provide a meeting place for men of a liberal, reformist outlook. James Coppock was its first secretary.[10] The Club's political function was further underlined by the large number of Whig MPs who soon joined the club – 237 out of a total of 385.

From then, the Reform Club served as home to the Whig and later to the Liberal Party, as a place for numerous party meetings, and as a base for political grandstanding. For example, the banquet for Lord Palmerston in July 1850 was the party's way of confirming

publicly its confidence in him and his foreign policy after the Don Pacifico affair. And in March 1854, the Reform Club laid on a banquet for Vice-Admiral Sir Charles Napier to celebrate his appointment to the command of the Baltic fleet and to enable the government to re-emphasise Britain's alliance with France and Turkey against Russia. One commentator remarked that 'The dinner decidedly smelt of gunpowder.'[11]

The Reform's political role was reiterated in May 1862 by a circular to members announcing the intention to establish a voluntary association among the members of the Club, to 'promote Unity of Action among the Liberal Party' and to 'assist in the Conduct of Election Petitions, and in the Prevention of Bribery and Corruption'. The following year, in another circular, the Committee recommended that 'apartments in the Club should be made use of, as heretofore, for political purposes, in order that the head quarters of the Liberal party may be known and understood to be in the Reform Club, where advice may be available in cases where liberal constituencies may seek it'.[12] These initiatives led to the formal establishment of the Reform Club's Political Committee in 1869.

In February 1875, the Reform was the venue for a general meeting of Liberal members of parliament to elect a successor to Gladstone as leader.

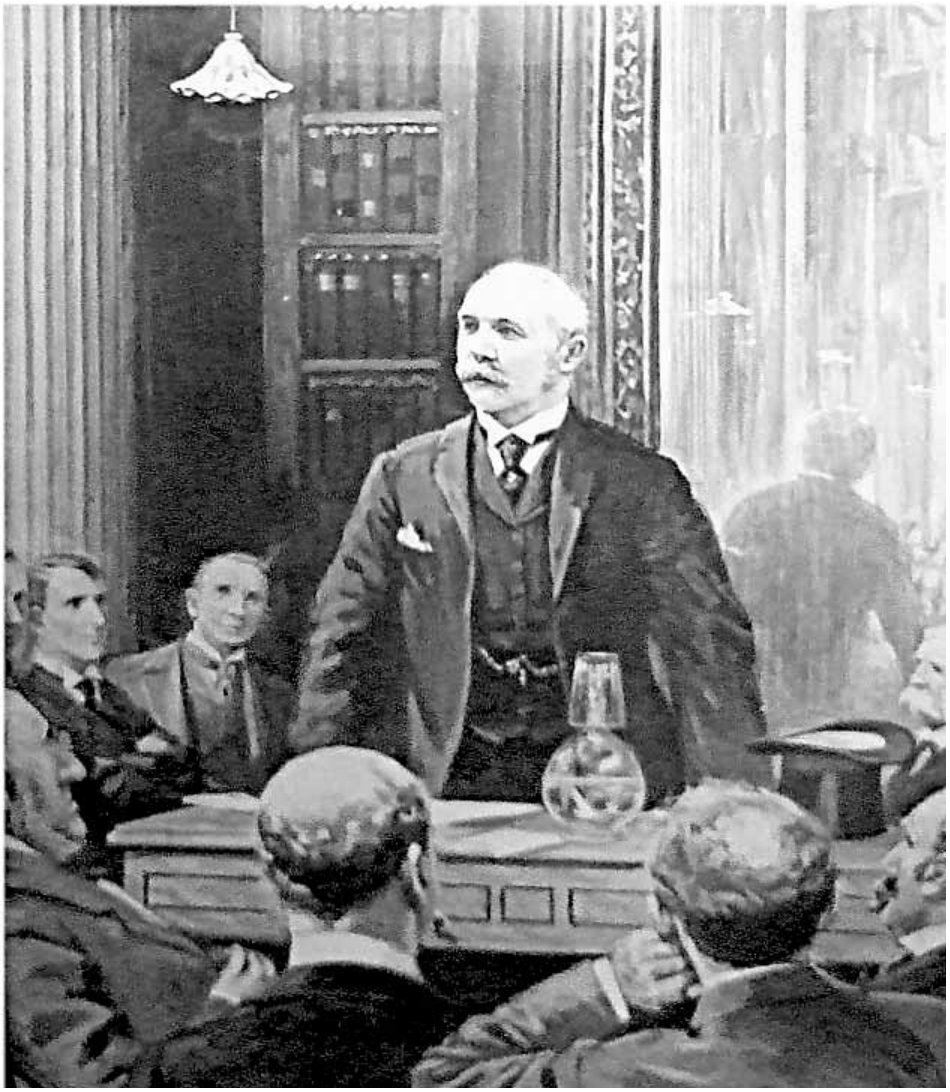
A notable event in 1879 occurred when the Reform Club entertained the Earl of Dufferin shortly before he took up his post as ambassador in St Petersburg. The Liberals were out of office at this date and uneasy that one of their number had been appointed by one of their opponents, namely, Disraeli, especially as Gladstone had lately begun a ferocious assault on the government's Eastern policy which Dufferin was now bound to defend. The banquet gave the Liberal Party an opportunity to trumpet Dufferin's achievements as Governor General of Canada, and afforded him the opportunity to declare publicly that although he was now an agent of the Conservative government in foreign affairs, he remained a Liberal in domestic politics.

The Home Rule split

Over the years, political disagreements and tensions appeared within the party and, hence, within the Reform Club, not least on electoral reform, which some wished to advance further, while others felt had gone far enough. But nothing divided Liberals so sharply and caused more dissension than Gladstone's desire to grant Home Rule to Ireland. At the beginning of 1886, Lord Hartington and Joseph Chamberlain led a breakaway faction of Liberal members of parliament in rebellion against the policy, so much so that by allying themselves with the Conservatives these 'Liberal Unionists' helped ensure Gladstone's defeat in the general election of June 1886.

These political divisions resonated in clubland. The recently formed National Liberal Club opened its imposing new clubhouse to some 6,000 members in June 1887, a few days before the country celebrated the Queen's Jubilee, but by the end of the following year the two sections of the Liberal Party concluded that they could not coexist there and, led by Lord Hartington, 400 Liberal Unionists seceded en masse.

Things developed differently at the Reform, where disagreement over Irish policy was more evenly balanced. Before deciding how to mark its own jubilee, efforts were made 'to introduce harmony amongst the rival sections of the Liberal party in the club,' in



Campbell-Bannerman addressing the meeting of the Liberal Party that was held at the Reform Club in July 1901 (*The Illustrated London News*, 13 July 1901).

the hope that 'both sections of the party will take part in the jubilee celebration.' To this end a special dinner was given in late April 1887 for leading Liberal Unionists and Home Rulers.[13]

At about the same time, the rivalry between the two sections was played out in a less direct, rather comical, gentlemanly way. Sir Henry Lucy described what happened: 'Just after the split in the Liberal party opened, the Dissentient Liberals at the Reform set in foot a scheme to present the Club with a portrait of Lord Hartington. Thereupon the Home Rulers opened a subscription for a portrait of Mr Gladstone. Subscription was limited to a guinea, the list, of course, open only to members. An interesting and occasionally exciting race followed. Lord Hartington having got the start, kept it for a few weeks. But the Gladstonians doggedly forged ahead, till the two favourites were running neck and neck, finishing, as a sporting member put it, so that an umbrella would have covered both.'[14]

Reform Club records confirm Lucy's account. A portrait of Hartington was in fact commissioned by the committee and completed, and one of Gladstone (who refused to sit for the commissioned artist) was purchased, the costs of each being met out of the guineas that members had subscribed. Today, Hartington and Gladstone hang fraternally side by side in the clubhouse.[15]

The two Liberal factions within the Reform Club had evidently found a modus vivendi which, by mid-1887, gave it the appearance of political neutrality, sufficient at any rate for both royalty and representatives of all the political groups to feel able to accept the Club's hospitality to celebrate its own and the Queen's Jubilee.

A brief political revival

But political neutrality proved hard to maintain, and within a few years, the old political allegiances and controversies were stirring again in the Reform. They stirred, for example, on the occasion of the 'Gladstonian' banquet at the club in March 1892 to celebrate the success of 'Progressive' candidates at the county council elections. Many grandees of the Liberal Party were invited to attend, as well as Liberal members and candidates. *The Times*'s correspondent expected that the event would provoke 'great indignation amongst the Unionists of the club, who consider that their forbearance has been grossly imposed upon.'[16] And indeed it seems to have done just that, for six club members let it be known 'on behalf of a large number of … fellow-members' that they dissociated themselves 'from all complicity in proceedings which violate the usages and comity of club life.' And they protested against 'the inference, perhaps not unnatural in these circumstances, that the Reform Club has … been turned into a Separatist caucus.'[17]

Controversy also arose over the Liberal Party meeting to elect a new leader – in the event, Campbell-Bannerman – that took place on 6 February 1899 in the same club room where Gladstone's successor had been elected party leader in 1875. And those former times were further evoked by the invitations, which employed exactly the same wording as had been used to summon members of the parliamentary party twenty-four years earlier.[18]

Members of the Opposition bench who were anxious 'to see the glories of the Reform Club revived as the acknowledged headquarters of the Liberal party,' considered their cause to have received a great stimulus from the success of the meeting. But the return of the Club to a political role continued to be controversial, and hostility was voiced by 'a small Radical faction' and by 'the large Liberal Unionist section in the club, including some of the wealthiest and most influential members, many of whom have welcomed the apparent supersession of the political by the social element.'[19]

The most significant Liberal Party meeting at the Club after this was in July 1901, during another, major party crisis. On this occasion the Liberal Imperialists and the pro-Boers managed to paper over their bitter differences on the

legitimacy of the war in South Africa by means of 'resolutions which convey the smallest amount of logical meaning,' followed by a unanimous vote of confidence in Campbell-Bannerman.[20]

The 'sedative concoction' that was mixed at the meeting seems to have satisfied the party, but many club members were furious. One of them had objected in advance to the committee's plan to exclude members from a club room for the purpose of holding a political meeting 'which, presumably, will be largely composed of Radical and pro-Boer members of Parliament,' giving rise thereby to 'the presumption … that the Reform Club is the headquarters of Radicalism in England, which it distinctly is not.' He urged the committee for the sake of 'the welfare … if not the existence' of the Club to respect the feeling of 'the great majority' of members and not grant facilities for any more such meetings.[21]

'Another Member of The Reform Club' added that 'the so-called Liberal party in the House of Commons does not now, even approximately, represent the views of the majority of the club. Far from it … The Liberal party, of which we used all to be so proud, was destroyed in 1886, and the party which now claims to represent it has since become so discredited that the majority of the club have the strongest objection to it being looked upon or used as the headquarters of that party.'[22]

These protests had their effect and very few more Liberal Party meetings took place in the Reform Club. The Club itself invited Campbell-Bannerman in 1906 to be fêted by his fellow members on his landslide victory over the Conservatives in the recent general election, a meeting that was so popular that members had to ballot for a place. Two years later the Liberal Party convened at the Club to welcome Asquith as its new leader, and as Prime Minister, after Campbell-Bannerman's death. And in December 1916 Asquith summoned Liberal members of both Houses of Parliament to the Club to secure a vote of confidence in his leadership of the party and in Lloyd George as the new Prime Minister. That was the last time that the Liberal Party held any significant official meeting at the Reform Club.[23]

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The Reform Club had weathered the storms of two major schisms and numerous lesser divisions in the Liberal Party. But it had managed this only by gradually casting off its historic political role, opting instead to continue as a social club, though still retaining a liberal character.

Peter Urbach is the Reform Club's Honorary Archivist. A former research chemist and lecturer, he has published Francis Bacon's Philosophy of Science *(1987); a new translation and edition of Francis Bacon's* Novum Organum *(jointly with John Gibson, 1994); and* Scientific Reasoning: The Bayesian Approach *(jointly with Colin Howson, third ed., 1996), as well as numerous academic articles.*

1 *The Graphic*, 25 June 1887.
2 *The Lady's Pictorial,* 25 June 1887.
3 *The Times,* 16 June 1887.
4 George Woodbridge, *The Reform Club 1836–1978* (Reform Club, 1978).
5 *The Lady's Pictorial,* 25 June 1887.
6 *The Times*, ibid.
7 *The Times*, ibid.
8 *The Times*, letter, 21 June 1887.
9 *The Times*, 16 June 1887.
10 Philip Salmon, *Electoral Reform at Work. Local Politics and National Parties 1832–1841* (Royal Historical Association/Boydell Press, 2002).
11 *The Times*, 16 Mar. 1854.
12 The Reform Club Archive.
13 *The Manchester Evening News*, 19 Apr. 1887.
14 Henry Lucy, *A Diary of the Salisbury Parliament 1886–1892* (Cassell & Co., 1892).
15 Peter Urbach, 'The Reform Club's portrait of the Grand Old Man', *Reform Review*, Winter 2009/10, pp. 4–5.
16 *The Times*, 12 Mar. 1892.
17 *The Times*, 15 Mar. 1892.
18 *The Times*, 1 Feb. 1899.
19 *The Glasgow Herald,* 16 Feb. 1899.
20 *The Times,* 10 July 1901.
21 *The Times,* 5 July 1901.
22 *The Times,* 13 July 1901.
23 Michael Sharpe, *The Political Committee of the Reform Club* (Reform Club, 1996), p. 72.

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highly as Prime Minister, with no suggestion of hearty dislike. Nor is there any such indication in Jenkins' biography of Asquith.

It would be a pity if this comment were to be accepted as Jenkins' real judgement. Perhaps John Campbell, in his forthcoming biography of Jenkins, will help.

Alan Mumford

C. L. Mowat and Lloyd George

I much enjoyed the issue dedicated to David Lloyd George (*Journal of Liberal History* 77); it was interesting, informative and, rightly, contentious.

If I was disappointed it was at the lack of an article exploring LG's role at the very start of the 1914–18 war, when he was Chancellor of the Exchequer. Such an article would be much appreciated by a wide readership, particularly since the present Governor of the Bank of England, Mervyn King, observed in 2008 that: 'Not since the beginning of the First World War has our banking system been so close to collapse.'

I was a history student at Swansea University in the mid 1950s where, to our immense benefit, Professor C. L. Mowat spent a sabbatical year. I still recall with pleasure the inspiring lectures of a great historian – and the friendliest of men.

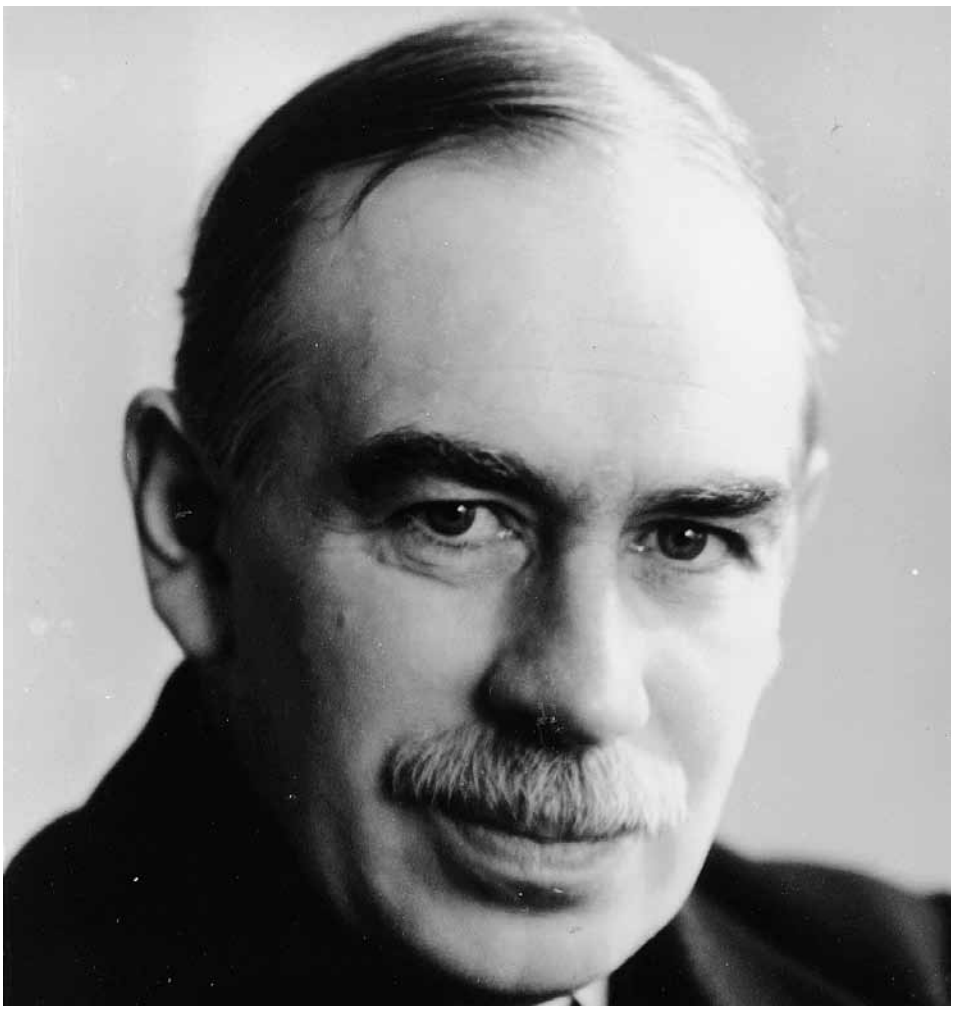
Although his excellent and very popular book, *Britain Between the Wars 1918–40*, published in 1954, did not deal directly with the LG–Asquith split he makes it abundantly clear that he sided with Lloyd George. He contrasts Neville Chamberlain's attitude to Churchill after his fall in 1940 to that of Asquith's to Lloyd George after 1916.

His brief book on Lloyd George in the Clarendon Series, published in 1964, underlined his pro-Lloyd George interpretation of the December 1916 split. I think his outstanding publications should at least have been acknowledged when Chris Wrigley examined the much changed attitude towards Lloyd George.

Rufus Adams

'RELUCTANT' OR LIBE
THE SOCIAL LIBERALISM OF KEYN

At the 1945 British General Election, held in the wake of the Allied victory in Europe, the Liberal Party addressed the electorate in an assertive, even confident, spirit. Its election campaign, chaired by Sir William Beveridge, promoted a clear and radical programme which involved, in several important respects, a broadly collectivist approach towards the nation's acute economic and social problems. That approach was itself consistent with the kind of social liberalism which both Beveridge and Maynard Keynes, by 1945 the Liberal Party's most influential policy intellectuals, had, in their different ways, advocated during the interwar and wartime years. **Tudor Jones** examines their approach.



Their social liberal creed prescribed an extended role for the State in both economic and social policy, involving commitments to a managed market economy, to the goal of full employment, and to a welfare society. But this expansion of the State's role was justified by Keynes and Beveridge not for its own sake, but because, in their view, it would entail productive forms of state activity that were compatible with liberal values – with the defence of individual freedom and the pursuit of rational progress in promoting the common welfare.

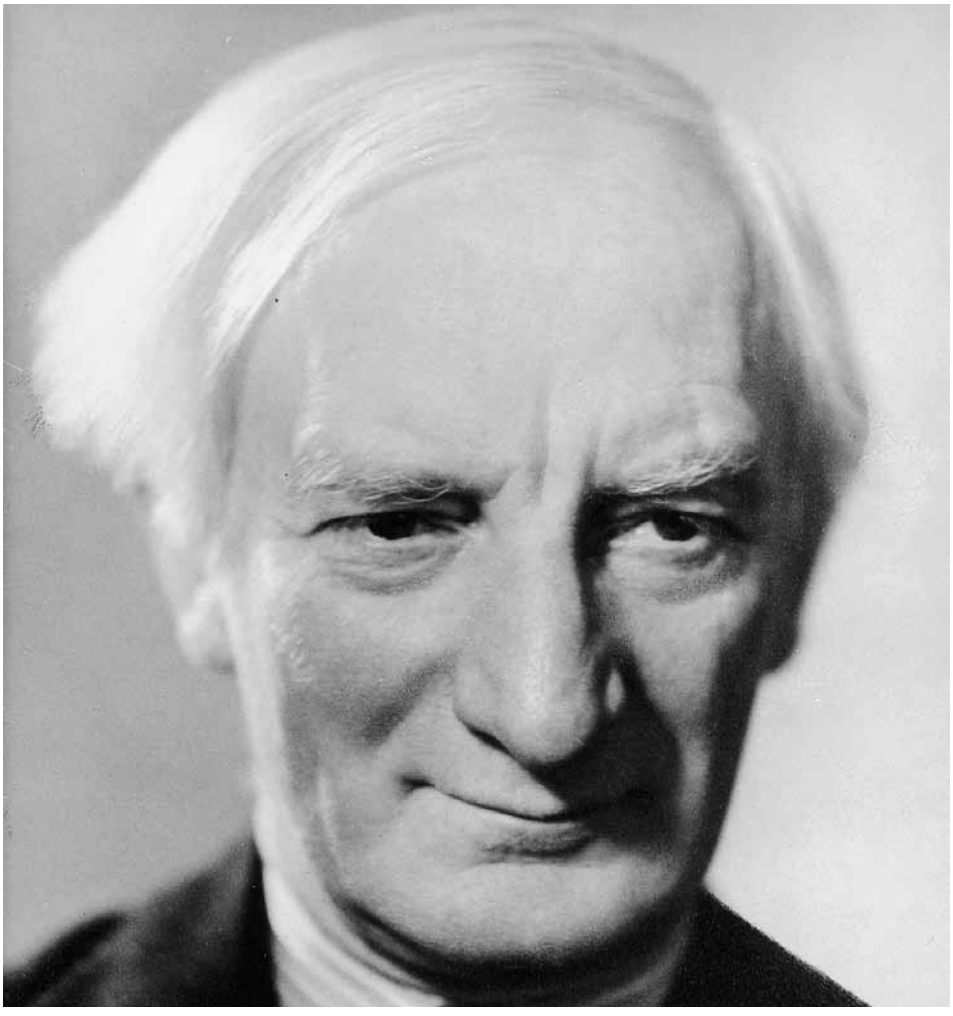
Reflecting, then, those ideological influences, as well as the prevailing climate of popular

ERAL COLLECTIVISTS?
IES AND BEVERIDGE, 1922 – 1945

opinion, the Liberal manifesto stressed the need for post-war social reform and reconstruction, declaring that:

> mankind is a prey to Fear – fear of poverty and want through unemployment, sickness, accident and old age. With the Beveridge schemes for Social Security and Full Employment, the Liberal Party leads a frontal attack on this Fear.[1]

In addition, the Party advocated a Ministry of Housing to oversee a post-war housebuilding drive, including an expansion of affordable housing, in a country in which more than 500,000 dwellings had been destroyed or damaged beyond repair during World War II. Land development rights outside built-up areas were to be 'acquired for the public' and 'a periodic levy on all increases in site values' was proposed in order to secure for the community any appreciation in the value of land that was due to communal action.[2]



The Liberal manifesto also called for the public ownership of the coal-mining industry, depicted as 'the key to the health of our basic industries and our export trade', and therefore accorded the status of 'a public service'. The railways and electric power similarly should be organised as public utilities, and in general it was argued that where there was 'no further expansion or useful competition in an industry', or where an industry had become a private monopoly, it should become a public utility.[3] In British industry Liberals believed in 'the need for both private enterprise and large-scale organisation under government control', and, in deciding which form was necessary, identified as the tests to be applied in each particular case 'the service of the public, the efficiency of production and the well-being of those concerned in the industry in question'.[4]

All in all, the Liberal election manifesto of 1945 was thus, as Alan Watkins later noted, 'surprisingly leftist both in content and in tone'.[5] Certainly, by 1945 a more collectivist strand of thought was widely evident within the Party. It underlay both its economic and its social policy proposals, reflecting the

highly influential contemporary ideas of Maynard Keynes and William Beveridge.

To some extent, too, the shift to state collectivism in Liberal policy and thought by 1945 was due to the influence of a pressure group within the Party originally established in 1941 under the name, the Liberal Action Group, and renamed Radical Action in 1943. It sought to campaign for imaginative and radical policies for post-war social and economic reconstruction and, more immediately, to question or challenge the Party leadership's support for the wartime electoral truce between the three main parties. Founded by Donald Johnson, a doctor and publisher, Honor Balfour, a journalist, and Ivor Davies, another publisher, the group later included among its most prominent members the Liberal MPs, Clement Davies, Dingle Foot and Tom Horabin. In 1942 Lancelot Spicer replaced Donald Johnson as the group's chairman. By the time of the dissolution of Parliament in 1945, six of the 19-strong Parliamentary Liberal Party were members of Radical Action.[6]

Aiming to radicalise the party in respect of its policy, strategy and organisation, Radical Action strongly supported the Beveridge Report and its far-reaching proposals for social security after its publication in December 1942. It also claimed credit for encouraging the party leader, Sir Archibald Sinclair, and other senior party figures eventually to support Beveridge's proposals. It succeeded, too, in pressurising the Liberal leadership into fighting the forthcoming 1945 General Election as an independent political organisation, and into keeping free of any subsequent coalition arrangements once the war had ended.[7]

But more significantly, the ascendancy of Liberal collectivist ideas in 1945 could be traced back to the currents of social liberal thought that flowed during the interwar years. In that period of electoral decline and internal strife, the Party had nonetheless continued to display its intellectual vitality. The years from 1922 to 1929, in particular, had witnessed the development and dissemination of Liberal ideas through three overlapping institutional networks, in each of which Maynard Keynes played a leading part.[8] These consisted of, first, the Liberal Summer School movement, established in 1921 and running from 1922 onwards; second, the Liberal periodical, *The Nation*, founded in 1907 and managed by Keynes as active chairman from 1923 until its absorption into *The New Statesman* in 1931; and third, the Liberal Industrial Inquiry, financed by David Lloyd George, and culminating in *Britain's Industrial Future*, published in 1928, the key proposals of which later appeared in *We Can Conquer Unemployment* and *Can Lloyd George Do It?*, the pamphlets that launched the Liberals' 1929 general election campaign.

Like their Edwardian New Liberal predecessors, these intellectual movements and influences may be described as social liberal, rather than classical liberal, in character since, while supporting a market economy, they advocated a significant measure of state intervention in modifying or supplementing market outcomes in order to reduce mass unemployment and to promote social welfare.[9] During the 1920s the Liberal Summer School movement thus sought to build on the foundations of Edwardian New Liberalism by recommending selective state intervention in the cause of social reform whilst turning away from the path of doctrinaire state socialism.[10]

The Liberal Summer School movement was, as Michael Freeden has observed, 'the linchpin of liberal and progressive thought during the 1920s'.[11] Its leading lights were drawn partly from Manchester - including Ramsay Muir, Ernest Simon and Edward Scott - and partly from Cambridge – including Keynes, Hubert Henderson and Walter Layton. The movement became particularly influential after Lloyd George assumed the Party leadership in 1926. During that year he personally initiated and financed the Liberal Industry Inquiry which resulted in the publication of *Britain's Industrial Future*, 'the Yellow Book' as it was popularly known, in February 1928.[12] That 'formidable and … exceedingly interesting document', as the socialist thinker G.D.H. Cole described it in his review in *The New Statesman*,[13] was to a large extent the product of active members of the Liberal Summer School movement – including Keynes, Henderson, Layton, Muir and Ernest Simon.

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Rejecting the traditional antithesis between individualism and collectivism, *Britain's Industrial Future* offered radical proposals for state intervention in the British economy without recourse to the orthodox socialist remedies of large-scale state or collective ownership of industry or central state economic planning. In addition to advocating joint consultation in industry between workers and managers, the Yellow Book put forward as its key proposal a Board of National Investment, which would oversee a wide-ranging programme of state investment in public works. This anticipated Keynes's case in *The General Theory of Employment, Interest and Money*, published eight years later, for large-scale public investment as a crucial means of stimulating economic activity and reducing mass unemployment.

The authors of *Britain's Industrial Future*, published a few months before the Wall Street Crash, succeeded, as Ed Randall has observed, in 'fashioning a Liberal programme for national recovery calibrated to needs of their own times'.[14] Their most significant proposals were popularised a year later in the two 1929 election pamphlets, *Can Lloyd George Do It?*, co-written by Keynes and Hubert Henderson, and *We Can Conquer Unemployment*, published in Lloyd George's name.[15] The latter document's centrepiece was its proposal for massive public investment in road-building, housing, electrification and other public works. The Yellow Book, and the documents that it generated, thus reflected the major influence that Keynes had exerted during his period of closest involvement in the politics of the Liberal Party, that is, between 1924 and 1929 – years in which he had set out, in Robert Skidelsky's words, 'to supply it with nothing short of a new philosophy of government'.[16]

In ideological terms, Keynes saw the central task of this governing philosophy, his version of social liberalism for the 1920s, as one of managing and reforming a market economy that was producing instability and high levels of unemployment in Britain and throughout the rest of the industrialised world. Part of the theoretical basis for this

ambitious project had already been laid in his 1926 essay, *The End of Laissez-Faire* (partly based on a 1924 Oxford lecture), which provided both an incisive critique of unregulated capitalism and an attempt to set out, in Bentham's phrase, 'the Agenda of the State'. In Keynes's view, the latter ought to relate 'to those functions which fall outside the sphere of the individual, to those decisions which are made by *no one* if the State does not make them'.[17]

In his major treatise of 1936, *The General Theory of Employment, Interest and Money*, Keynes later proceeded to specify the kind of economic 'agenda of the State' which he considered appropriate for unstable times. Developing new methods and ideas for effecting the transition from 'the economic anarchy' of the prevailing system of 'individualistic capitalism', he rejected the traditional socialist policy instrument of state ownership of industry on the grounds that it would prove to be inefficient and authoritarian.[18] In its place, he advocated more indirect yet, in his judgement, more effective methods of controlling a market economy. These would involve the use of fiscal and monetary policy, and, in particular, government management of demand – by stimulating both investment and consumption – to levels at which full employment could be attained.

Ideologically, then, the economic approach of British social liberalism as developed by Keynes during the 1920s, and as endorsed and advanced politically by Lloyd George, amounted, as Paul Addison has observed, to a '"middle-way" of imaginative reform within capitalism', offered as an alternative both to the perceived economic sterility of free-market Conservatism and to the 'socialist way of abolishing capitalism'.[19]

Keynes's contribution to British Liberal thought thus provided a movement away from classical liberal tenets towards the advocacy of forms of state intervention compatible both with liberal values and with the achievement of what he considered a more humane and more efficient system of managed capitalism. In this respect his ideas can be regarded as extending the social liberalism of the Edwardian era into the field of economic policy. However, he himself did not accept the philosophical basis of Edwardian New Liberalism, disdaining it 'as a typical example of Oxford Idealist muddle'.[20] His own empiricist philosophical leanings meant that his distinctive efforts to revise and update British Liberalism therefore 'stemmed from a different background, and a different intellectual style'.[21]

Keynes's contribution to British Liberal thought thus provided a movement away from classical liberal tenets towards the advocacy of forms of state intervention compatible both with liberal values and with the achievement of what he considered a more humane and more efficient system of managed capitalism.

Deeply influenced as a student at Cambridge by the philosophical ideas of G.E. Moore and Bertrand Russell, Keynes shared, as Skidelsky has noted, their distaste for the idealist basis of the ethical belief, associated at Oxford with T.H. Green and his followers, 'that the good of the individual and the good of the whole are interconnected'. Keynes instead maintained, with Moore, 'that good states of mind could be enjoyed by individuals in isolation from social states of affairs'. More generally, too, Keynes and his Cambridge contemporaries found 'repellent' the 'mixture of Hegelian and biological language' in which the New Liberal thought of Green and his followers was philosophically expressed.[22]

Developed, then, without the intellectual foundations of the Oxford-based New Liberalism, Keynes' own liberal 'via media' nonetheless clearly involved the acceptance and advocacy of state collectivist ideas and policies during the 1920s and 1930s, and the legacy of that intellectual process was later evident in Liberal thinking and policy-making. However, both he and Beveridge have been described, with some justification, by Vic George and Paul Wilding as 'reluctant collectivists'.[23] Keynes's ideological approach has thus been portrayed as 'a collectivism not of principle, but of necessity', for while it involved widening the field of economic activity in which state collectivist remedies could be applied, it confined their use 'to issues where the normal solutions of private enterprise and the free market' had been unsuccessful.[24] Skidelsky has made a similar observation with a different emphasis, characterising Keynes's 'reconstructed liberalism' as a creed concerned with 'grafting technocratic solutions to specific problems on to an individualist stem', and with 'confining state intervention to spaces left vacant by private enterprise'.[25]

Moreover, in *The General Theory* Keynes firmly emphasised 'the traditional advantages of individualism', pointing out that:

> They are partly advantages of efficiency – the advantages of decentralisation and of the play of self-interest … But, above all, individualism, if it can be purged of its defects and its abuses, is the best safeguard of personal liberty in the sense that, compared with any other system, it greatly widens the field for the exercise of personal choice. It is also the best safeguard of the variety of life, which emerges precisely from this extended field of personal choice, and the loss of which is the greatest of all the losses of the homogeneous or totalitarian state.[26]

In *The End of Laissez-Faire*, too, Keynes had concluded his trenchant critique of the workings of unregulated capitalism by making clear his qualified support for a market economy as a form of technical organisation, maintaining that 'capitalism, wisely managed, can probably be made more efficient for attaining economic ends than any alternative system yet in sight', even though 'in itself it is in many ways extremely objectionable'. 'The important thing for government', he maintained, 'is not to do things which individuals are doing already … but to do those things which at present are not done at all.'[27] 'The Agenda of the State' in the economic field should thus be concerned with remedying the technical faults of an unregulated market economy – the most serious of which, in his view, was its inability to ensure a sufficient level of demand to avoid depression and unemployment. In the context of the economic and political instability of the 1920s and 1930s, Keynes, as J.K. Galbraith later observed, therefore 'sought for nothing so earnestly as to save liberal capitalism',[28] a point reinforced by his biographer's choice of the title of his second volume.[29]

After the fragmentation of the Liberal Party in 1931, and with it Lloyd George's departure from the Party leadership, Keynes retreated to Cambridge, convinced 'that

politics having failed, the world could be saved only by thought'.[30] While remaining 'a semi-detached Liberal',[31] he believed that his 'middle way' of a reformed capitalism could best be advanced by academic scholarship and through official governmental channels rather than directly through the Liberal Party. The fruits of his academic endeavours emerged in 1936 in *The General Theory*, the most influential economic treatise of the twentieth century. His contribution to public life, meanwhile, culminated in his achievements as both leading economic adviser to the British Treasury between 1940 and 1946 and as Britain's most important international representative on economic affairs, who shaped the institutional foundations of the post-1945 international financial and trading system – including the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund and the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade.

In 1942 Keynes renewed his formal connection with the Liberal Party when he became a Liberal peer, writing to Lord Samuel, party leader in the Lords: 'in truth I am still a Liberal, and if you will agree, I should like to indicate that by sitting on your benches'.[32] By 1945, a year before his death, the kind of social liberalism that he espoused, and which his economic theories epitomised, had become one of the most important intellectual influences on Liberal thought and policy.

During the 1940s Sir William Beveridge, social reformer, social scientist, senior civil servant and university administrator, fostered the spirit of Keynes's social liberalism in the field of social policy. At the 1945 General Election his ideas provided a further and, in the immediate post-war climate the most powerful, influence on the radical and collectivist tone of the Liberals' manifesto and campaign.

Beveridge had only become a member of the Liberal Party in July 1944. He had not done so before because he considered membership of a political party inconsistent with his professional roles of civil servant and university teacher and administrator.[33] Moreover, he had had little formal connection with the Liberal Party in the past. He had, it is true, been briefly associated with the Liberal Summer School between 1922 and 1924,[34] but he was not involved with Keynes, Henderson and others in the preparation of either *Britain's Industrial Future* or the documents that launched the Liberals' 1929 election campaign, being at that time unsympathetic to the unorthodox ideas of expansionist public finance which they promoted.[35] Beveridge was later, in 1936, critical of Keynes' *General Theory*. He disliked, in general, what he considered to be Keynes' reduction of the economic concepts of 'unemployment' and 'demand' to the level of abstractions. In particular, too, he was unimpressed by Keynes' concept of 'the multiplier'.[36]

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Beveridge's unfavourable reaction to Keynes' *General Theory*, as well as to Sidney and Beatrice Webb's *Soviet Communism*, published in the same year, intensified, as José Harris has observed, Beveridge's 'sense of estrangement from current economic and political thought.' This in turn led to an 'almost total withdrawal into political agnosticism...which dovetailed with Beveridge's growing conviction that academic social scientists should refrain from dabbling in current politics'.[37]

Such an attitude was already firmly rooted since, during most of the interwar years, Beveridge had tended to adopt what Harris has described as 'a self-consciously neutral stance on questions of party politics', which he believed appropriate in view of both his professional responsibilities and his respect for the role of the expert. That approach, albeit with underlying Liberal sympathies, was reflected in his statement, when successfully standing for the Vice Chancellorship of the University of London in 1926, that 'I am as nearly non-political as anybody can be, but when I have any politics I am a Liberal'.[38]

By 1944, however, those vague Liberal sympathies had been strengthened. His own political principles, as well as his cordial personal relations with Clement Davies, Herbert Samuel, David Lloyd George and Dingle Foot, had drawn him closer to the Liberal Party.[39] In addition, as Beveridge later acknowledged, the Liberals were 'the first political party to accept the Beveridge Report without reservations',[40] including his plans for a national health service.[41] Indeed, shortly after the Report's publication in December 1942, a Liberal Party spokesman had stated that its underlying principles and objectives were entirely consistent with resolutions passed by the Liberal Assembly in September of that year.[42]

Furthermore, Beveridge's newly-found Liberal commitment was in tune with more deep-rooted ideological convictions since, as his biographer has noted, he had always seen the Liberals as the 'Party of ideas' and of 'national interests' – as opposed to the sectionalism of both Conservatives and Labour'. In addition, the broad and flexible character of Liberalism as a political creed, and hence 'the tensions' within it 'between individualism and collectivism, radicalism and traditionalism … appealed to Beveridge's own personal slant upon the world'. He tended, too, 'to idealize the Liberal past, and he looked back in particular upon Edwardian Liberalism as a golden age of radical innovation'.[43]

All these factors, then, had helped to reinforce his sense of affinity with the Liberal Party by 1944, when, in his own words, he had become 'committed in mind to the adventure of putting Liberalism on the map again as an effective political force, for international as well as for domestic issues'.[44] That commitment had been confirmed in July of that year following the death in military action of George Grey, the young Liberal MP for Berwick-upon-Tweed. In September 1944 Beveridge was adopted as candidate to be Grey's successor, and was elected the following month as Liberal MP, unopposed by the Conservatives or Labour under the terms of the wartime party truce.[45]

In the subsequent General Election, announced on 24 May 1945 and to be held on 5 July, Beveridge, whilst defending his own seat of Berwick, also assumed the responsibilities of chairman of the Liberal Party's Campaign Committee.[46] Morever, he had already provided, too, the intellectual basis of the Liberals' radical election platform in the form of, first, his pioneering report on social policy, *Social Insurance and Allied Services* (1942) and, second, its sequel of 1944, *Full Employment in a Free Society*. These documents provided

the focus for the Liberal campaign and embodied popular issues and causes – freedom from both want and unemployment – to put before the voters in the most radical Liberal election programme since 1929. At the same time, the ideals underlying those causes – social reform and progress and personal freedom – were enduring liberal ideals that could unify all sections of the Party.

The Beveridge Report itself had its origins in a rather obscure interdepartmental enquiry, set up in June 1941 and chaired by Beveridge himself, for co-ordinating social insurance. The enquiry was gradually broadened in scope to become a full-scale and, so it was to prove, ground-breaking examination of British social policy. The resulting report, *Social Insurance and Allied Services* was published in December 1942, three weeks after the Allied victory at El-Alamein.[47]

Maynard Keynes, at that time a high-ranking Treasury adviser, had during the previous months responded enthusiastically to Beveridge's early draft proposals for his Report. The two met in London over several convivial lunches and dinners at various West End clubs, and these meetings were important to Beveridge, as Harris has noted, 'both in enhancing the financial viability of his report and in smoothing the way for its reception in official circles.'[48] Keynes described the final draft of Beveridge's Report as 'a grand document', and conveyed to him his hope 'that the major and more essential parts of it might be adopted substantially as you have conceived them'.[49]

The Beveridge Report presented a vision of society's battle against the 'five giants' of want, disease, ignorance, idleness and squalor. Its particular focus was on the struggle against want and, to a lesser extent, against disease and unemployment, and hence on the development of social security and health-care policy, but as the document stated:

> Want is one only of the five giants on the road of reconstruction and in some ways the easiest to attack. The others are Disease, Ignorance, Squalor and Idleness.[50]

The Report provided a comprehensive system of social insurance delivered in the form of cash benefits, financed by equal contributions from employees, employers and the State, together with a public assistance safety net. In addition, it proposed both the unification of the administrative systems of different aspects of social security, and the standardisation of benefits and contributions at flat rates for different types of social need.

Three key assumptions underlay the proposed system of social insurance, each of which, in Beveridge's view, was inseparable from the goal of the abolition of want. First, accompanying the new system, there should be a national health service available to all. Second, there should be state provision of tax-financed children's allowances. Third, there should be a commitment to state action to reduce unemployment. This third assumption was developed further in Beveridge's later report, *Full Employment in a Free Society*, based on his own independent enquiry.

The keystone of Beveridge's system of social insurance was the notion of universal entitlement, which thereby conferred equality of status upon citizens. In the case of social security, the basis of entitlement was the principle of contributory insurance, which Beveridge believed would protect and foster individualist values of personal responsibility and independence, thrift and self-respect. In the case of healthcare, the basis of entitlement was the principle of citizenship, which entailed the possession of both social rights and collective responsibilities for common needs.

In spite of Beveridge's lack of formal commitment to Liberalism in the interwar period, and his former, deliberate party-political neutrality, his Report on social insurance was nonetheless, as Freeden has commented, 'a highly liberal document in terms of its ideological orientation, as if Beveridge had emerged from outside the march of time to become suddenly and totally immersed in some radical implications of progressive liberalism, which liberals themselves could not voice'. In spite of his loose connection with British Liberal thought in the interwar years, his Report was 'in a circuitous way … the very spirit of progressive liberalism, and Beveridge succeeded in capturing that spirit where others had failed, or were on the point of giving up'.[51]

Beveridge's … Report on social insurance was … as Freeden has commented, 'a highly liberal document in terms of its ideological orientation, as if Beveridge had emerged from outside the march of time to become suddenly and totally immersed in some radical implications of progressive liberalism, which liberals themselves could not voice'.

A number of key themes in the British liberal tradition can be identified within the Beveridge Report.[52] Among the most significant of these was the assertion that social security involved a co-operative partnership between the State and the individual.[53] This was a point that Beveridge was to develop further in his work of 1948, *Voluntary Action,* the third and least known of his reports on social and economic reconstruction, in which he stated at the outset that:

> The theme of this report is that the State cannot see to the rendering of all the services that are needed to make a good society.[54]

He went on to contend that:

> the State is or can be the master of money, but in a free society it is master of very little else. The making of a good society depends not on the State but on the citizens, acting individually or in association with one another.[55]

With an emphasis consistent, as Harris has noted, with the liberal idealist philosophy of T.H. Green, Beveridge believed that this interdependent relationship between the individual, the State and the voluntary sector would not only foster social solidarity but also enable individual citizens 'to exercise both their feelings of altruism and their democratic rights.'[56] In addition, and more in tune with the liberal utilitarian tradition, the Report underlined Beveridge's high regard for the role and character of the professional administrator as a disinterested specialist or expert, reflecting his own underlying belief in the efficiency of a benevolent central State, serviced and guided by a technocratic elite and promoting the common good.

A second, overtly social liberal theme that pervaded the Report was the reformist belief that the abolition of want entailed some degree of redistribution of income. Indeed, his plan as a whole was described by Beveridge as 'first and foremost a method of redistributing income so as to put the first and most urgent needs first, so as to

make the best possible use of whatever resources are available'.[57] The contributions of those in regular employment and in good health would thus help the unemployed and the chronically sick.

Third, however, and reflecting more the classical liberal tradition, the Report also emphasised its belief that the pursuit of social security was linked to liberal-individualist notions of individual freedom, initiative, enterprise, personal responsibility and voluntary effort. As Beveridge stressed at the outset:

> The State in organising security should not stifle incentive, opportunity, responsibility; in establishing a national minimum, it should leave room and encouragement for voluntary action by each individual to provide more than that minimum for himself and his family.[58]

A few months before the publication of the Report, he had expressed the same view when writing to the chairman of the Board of Education on the subject of child allowances. 'Social insurance in a free society', Beveridge wrote, 'must, I think, to a large extent consist of putting people into a position to meet their responsibilities rather than removing their responsibilities entirely.'[59]

Finally, the Report reflected liberal thinking, and themes in Beveridge's political outlook that were recurrent throughout his life, both in its rejection of sectional interests as a basis for public policy-making and in its suspicion of producers' organisations and preference for voluntary associations of various kinds, such as friendly societies, consumers' organisations or philanthropic and mutual aid movements. This preference was further underlined in his third report, *Voluntary Action*, in 1948. As Harris has therefore emphasised:

> Beveridge's commitment to planning must be set against his spirited defence of personal freedom and against his emphasis on voluntarism and on the crucial role of a wide variety of intermediate organizations.[60]

In its overall ideological approach, the Beveridge Report has been characterised by Freeden as comprising 'a blend of left-liberalism and centrist-liberalism'.[61] It thus combined the two main tendencies of British Liberal ideology in the interwar period: the former stressing community, social justice and social welfare, together with greater state intervention in pursuit of those ideals; the latter stressing personal freedom, individuality and private property.[62]

In assessing the Beveridge Report's practical political impact, Addison has described it as 'the blueprint of the post-war welfare state in Britain', providing the foundations and underlying principles of the Attlee Government's social legislation of 1945-48. As for Beveridge's personal contribution to that achievement, his Report was 'a brilliant coup by one man, which at once synthesized the pressures for a more progressive capitalism, and jolted all three parties into accepting the resulting formula as the basis of a new post-war consensus'.[63] For acting, as Harris, too, has noted, in the role 'of a synthesizer and publicist rather than that of an innovator',[64] Beveridge had proved a skilful and persuasive advocate of social policy ideas, launched in favourable circumstances, who succeeded in winning over the country's political and administrative elites into acceptance of those ideas, including those who were initially opposed or sceptical – notably, the establishments of both the Conservative Party and the senior civil service, and sections of the Labour Party.[65]

The circumstances in which Beveridge had applied those persuasive skills as an advocate and publicist were uniquely favourable since, as his biographer has observed, 'his mingled tone of optimism, patriotism, high principle and pragmatism exactly fitted the prevailing popular mood'.[66] That reality was subsequently reflected in the public response to his Report, with national sales of 100,000 copies within a month of its publication.

Beveridge's reputation as principal architect of the British welfare state needs, however, to be qualified in one important respect. He himself disliked the term 'welfare state' because of its paternalistic implications and its 'Santa Claus' and 'brave new world' connotations. He preferred instead to refer to either a 'social service state'[67] or 'welfare society'. The latter was 'a phrase he was proud to have coined',[68] implying, as we have seen, a wider partnership between individuals, voluntary organisations and the State in the promotion of welfare, with the State by no means always the best provider.

The Report reflected liberal thinking, and themes in Beveridge's political outlook that were recurrent throughout his life, both in its rejection of sectional interests as a basis for public policy-making and in its suspicion of producers' organisations and preference for voluntary associations of various kinds.

The Beveridge Report of 1942 was one of the two pillars of the Liberals' radical programme of 1945 for post-war social and economic reconstruction. The second pillar was his independent report of 1944, *Full Employment in a Free Society*. Its central concern was how to abolish unemployment without infringing essential civil and political liberties, which, in his view, were 'more precious than full employment itself'.[69] The protection of those essential liberties – freedoms of speech, expression and religious worship, freedoms of assembly and association, freedom of choice of occupation, and so on – would therefore preclude 'the totalitarian solution of full employment in a society completely planned and regimented by an irremovable dictator'.[70]

Beveridge had earlier insisted, as we have seen, that his system of social insurance needed to be supplemented by state action to achieve and maintain full employment – by which he meant not total abolition of unemployment, but a margin of unemployment of not more than three per cent. His own private enquiry was therefore designed to achieve the goal of full employment, defined in that manner, thereby slaying the giant of idleness, just as the report of 1942 had aimed to slay the giants of want and disease. The outcome of his endeavour, *Full Employment in a Free Society* was published in November 1944, five months after the appearance of the Churchill Government's Full Employment White Paper of June 1944. It is clear from Cabinet papers that the government's official commitment to the goal of full employment, and hence to publication of its White Paper, was intensified by awareness in Whitehall of the development of Beveridge's own resolute undertaking.[71]

Beveridge had not become converted to Keynes's economic

theories, including his ideas of expansionist public finance, until after publication of the Beveridge Report of 1942, as Harold Wilson, who had been Beveridge's research assistant at Oxford in the late 1930s, later confirmed when Labour Prime Minister.[72] By 1944, therefore, adopting a broadly Keynesian approach to the problem of unemployment, Beveridge was proposing a new kind of annual budget that used taxation, public borrowing and deficit-financing to control levels of public expenditure, business investment and consumer demand. Advocating a high degree of central direction of the economy without recourse to large-scale nationalisation, Beveridge's programme for maintaining full employment involved state investment in nationalised industries such as transport and power; public spending on a wide range of 'non-marketable' goods and services, such as roads, hospitals, schools and defence; state subsidies for food and fuel; and state regulation of private investment and consumption by means of monetary and fiscal policy.[73]

Beveridge readily acknowledged the state-collectivist and centralist nature of this programme of measures, declaring that:

> Full employment cannot be won and held without a great extension of the responsibilities and powers of the State exercised through organs of the central Government. No power less than that of the State can ensure adequate total outlay at all times, or can control, in the general interest, the location of industry and the use of land. To ask for full employment while objecting to these extensions of State activity is to will the end and refuse the means.[74]

Yet in spite of the range of state-interventionist proposals in the report, Beveridge also continued to adhere to liberal-individualist and voluntarist beliefs. This was evident in his statement that:

> The underlying principle of the Report is to propose for the State only those things which the State alone can do or which it can do better that any local authority or than private citizens either singly or in association, and to leave to those other agencies that which, if they will, they can do as well or better than the State.[75]

The description of Keynes and Beveridge as 'reluctant collectivists' appears, as we have seen, to be largely justified.

In this respect, then, it may be said, as with Keynes, that Beveridge was to some extent a 'reluctant collectivist'. As George and Wilding have observed:

> His liberal principles led him to seek to stress the limitations which he believed should be applied to government action, while on the other hand, his passionate concern about social ills led him at times to the view that many less essential liberties could rightly and reasonably be sacrificed to their abolition.[76]

In a collection of his articles and speeches entitled, *Why I am a Liberal*, published shortly before the 1945 General Election, Beveridge gave further ideological shape to his social and economic policy proposals, depicting them as cornerstones of a radical, interventionist programme that would liberate Britain from the 'giant evils of Want, Disease, Squalor, Ignorance and Idleness enforced by mass unemployment, which have disfigured Britain in the past'.[77] Like Keynes, Beveridge presented his version of social liberalism – which he referred to as 'Liberal radicalism' – as an enlightened middle way that avoided the errors both of free-market individualists and of collectivists 'who desire extension of state activity for its own sake'.[78] His approach would certainly involve an extension of the responsibilities and powers of the state into social and economic policy areas, using 'the organised power of the community' to purge the country of its social ills and thereby to 'increase enjoyment of liberty'.[79] But state intervention of that kind was thus justified not for its own sake but rather by the enhancement of personal liberty, in its positive sense as the widening of opportunity, and by the promotion of the common welfare that it would make possible.

Beveridge's dominant influence on the Liberal Party and its election campaign in 1945 was not, however, to be rewarded by the fruits of electoral and political success. At the 1945 General Election the Liberal Party won only 12 seats, in scattered rural constituencies throughout Britain, polling 2.2 million votes with only a 9 per cent share of the total national vote. Beveridge himself, an MP for barely seven months, had been, together with Sir Archibald Sinclair and Sir Percy Harris, among the Liberals' most high-profile electoral casualties. Beveridge's own declared commitment to 'the adventure of putting Liberalism on the map again as an effective political force',[80] had ended in profound disappointment as his party became the victim of its various shortcomings, as well as of new developments. Among those factors could be cited the Liberals' financial and organisational weaknesses, together with their lack of connection with any major social class or sectional interest group. But highly significant, too, were the advent of a new voting generation without any inherited Liberal tradition, and, boosted by the support of that new section of the electorate, the surging rise to political maturity of the Labour Party. In stark contrast, the Liberal Party's eventual, tentative recovery was not to be even faintly discernible until the winter of 1955-56. Subsequently it was more clearly apparent following Jo Grimond's accession to the Liberal leadership in November 1956, which heralded both a revival of his Party's fortunes and a reinvigoration of British Liberalism.

Conclusion

The description of Keynes and Beveridge as 'reluctant collectivists' appears, as we have seen, to be largely justified. The social liberalism which they both espoused involved a major extension of the power and responsibilities of the State into the fields of economic and social policy. But for Keynes the 'Agenda of the State' would relate to 'those functions which fall outside the sphere of the individual,'[81] and which needed to be exercised by the State in order to rectify market failures. For Beveridge, too, statist measures were proposed only, he stressed, for 'those things which the State alone can do or which it can do better than any local authority or than private citizens either singly or in association.'[82]

The state-collectivist measures that lay at the heart of their policy prescriptions stemmed, it is true, from their shared belief in the efficacy of a benevolent state guided by policy intellectuals such as themselves. But theirs was nonetheless, as George and Wilding have suggested, 'a collectivism not of principle, but of necessity.'[83] For the extension of state activity which they advocated was for both Keynes and Beveridge an essential, pragmatic response to the debilitating economic and social ills of their time. It was not, however, intrinsically desirable, as in the socialist view, but rather was considered by them to be a necessary means of enlarging effective freedom, of promoting the common good, and of developing a more humane and stable form of managed capitalism. Keynes and Beveridge were thus advancing the case for a liberal as well as largely pragmatic version of collectivism that could draw upon a British social liberal tradition stretching back to the late-Victorian and Edwardian eras and which had been developed more recently in the Yellow Book of 1928.

In broader ideological terms, the social liberalism of Keynes and Beveridge reflected, too, their belief that there was not a rigid antithesis in British Liberal thought between individualism and collectivism, a belief that the Yellow Book had also affirmed. Moreover, for Beveridge the tension within Liberalism between individualist and collectivist positions was itself a manifestation of its nature as a flexible and dynamic political creed. In his view, that was indeed one of Liberalism's attractive and appealing features, not an indication of some basic incompatibility of attitude within its philosophical framework. In the light of twenty-first century disputes, and at times exaggerated divisions, between 'social liberals' and 'economic liberals' among today's Liberal Democrats, that seems an important historical point to consider whilst reflecting on the far-reaching intellectual contribution of Keynes and Beveridge to a British Liberal tradition which Liberal Democrats of all kinds have inherited.

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2 ibid., p. 63
3 ibid., pp. 66, 65
4 ibid., p. 654
5 Alan Watkins, *The Liberal Dilemma* (London: MacGibbon and Kee, 1966), p. 38
6 See R.M. Sommer, 'The Organisation of the Liberal Party, 1936–60', PhD thesis, University of London, 1962, p. 77
7 See Robert Ingham, 'Radical Action', in Duncan Brack and Ed Randall (eds.). *Dictionary of Liberal Thought* (London: Politico's, 2007), pp. 327–9; Sommer, op.cit., pp. 56–77
8 See Robert Skidelsky, *John Maynard Keynes: The Economist as Saviour, 1920–1937* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1992), p. 222
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17 John Maynard Keynes, *The End of Laissez-Faire* (London: Hogarth Press, 1926), pp. 46–7
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19 Paul Addison, *The Road to 1945: British Politics and the Second World War* (London: Quartet Books, 1975), p. 35
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22 Skidelsky, op.cit., p. 224. On Keynes' early philosophical influences, see Robert Skidelsky, *John Maynard Keynes. Vol. 1: Hopes Betrayed, 1883–1920* (London: Macmillan, 1983), Ch.6 (pp. 133–160)
23 Vic George and Paul Wilding, *Ideology and Social Welfare* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1976), Ch.3
24 ibid., p. 54
25 Skidelsky, *John Maynard Keynes. Vol.2: The Economist as Saviour,* p. 222 For this interpretation, see, too, Freeden, op.cit., pp. 166–171
26 Keynes, *The General Theory*, p. 380
27 Keynes, *The End of Laissez-Faire*, pp. 52, 46–7
28 J.K. Galbraith, *American Capitalism* [1952] (London: Penguin, 1962), p. 194
29 Skidelsky, *John Maynard Keynes: The Economist as Saviour* (1992)
30 ibid., p. xxviii
31 ibid., p. 21
32 Quoted in Robert Skidelsky, *John Maynard Keynes. Vol.3: Fighting for Britain, 1937–1946* (London: Macmillan, 2000), p. 265
33 See William Beveridge, *Why I am a Liberal* (London: Herbert Jenkins, 1945), pp. 1–5
34 See José Harris, *William Beveridge: A Biography* (Oxford: O.U.P., 1997) (second edition), pp. 303–4
35 ibid., p. 304
36 ibid., p. 321
37 ibid., pp. 321, 322
38 ibid., p. 304
39 See Alun Wyburn-Powell, *Clement Davies: Liberal Leader* (London: Politico's, 2003), p. 129
40 William Beveridge, *Power and Influence* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1953), p. 337. On reservations within both the Conservative and Labour Parties about the implementation of the Beveridge Report's proposals, see Harris, op.cit., pp. 421–3
41 See George Watson, 'Remembering Beveridge', *Liberal Democrat History Group Newsletter* 14, March 1997, p. 4
42 See *The Manchester Guardian*, 9 December 1942; quoted in Freeden, op.cit., p. 367
43 Harris, op.cit., p. 447
44 Beveridge, *Power and Influence,* p. 340
45 On Beveridge's brief period as a Liberal MP, see Beveridge, op.cit., pp. 340–3

46 See Beveridge, op.cit., pp. 344–351
47 For a detailed analysis of the preparation and development of the Beveridge Report, see Harris, op.cit., Ch.16 (pp. 365–412)
48 See Harris, op.cit., pp. 399, 400
49 Letter from Keynes to Beveridge, 14 October 1942; quoted in Harris, op.cit, p. 404
50 *Social Insurance and Allied Services: Report by Sir William Beveridge*, Cmd 6404 (London: HMSO, 1942), para 8, p. 6
51 Freeden, op.cit., p. 366
52 See Jose Harris, *William Beveridge; A Biography* (Oxford: O.U.P., 1977) (first edition), pp. 472–3; Freeden, op.cit., pp. 368–371
53 See *Social Insurance and Allied Services*, para 9, p. 6
54 William Beveridge, *Voluntary Action: A Report on Methods of Social Advance* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1948), p. 304
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56 Harris, op.cit., 1st edn., p. 472
57 *Social Insurance and Allied Services*, para 457, p. 1704
58 ibid., para 9, pp. 6–7
59 Beveridge, letter to Maurice Holmes, 27 August 1942; quoted in Beveridge, *Power and Influence*, p. 305
60 Harris, op.cit., 1st edn., p. 475
61 Freeden, op.cit., p. 371
62 ibid., pp12–13
63 Addison, op.cit., p. 211
64 Harris, op.cit., 1st edn., p. 449
65 Harris, op.cit., 2nd edn., pp. 421–3
66 ibid., p. 416
67 ibid., p. 452. Beveridge used the phrase 'social service state' throughout his 1948 report, *Voluntary Action*.
68 Watson, 'Remembering Beveridge', p. 5. The phrase 'welfare society' first found print in 1957 in *The Unservile State* (London: Allen & Unwin), the collection of essays on Liberal thought and policy which George Watson edited as chairman of The Unservile State Group.
69 William Beveridge, *Full Employment in a Free Society: A Report by William H. Beveridge* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1944), p. 36
70 ibid., p. 21
71 See Harris, op.cit., 2nd edn., p. 438
72 See Harold Wilson, Beveridge Memorial Lecture, Institute of Statisticians, 1966, p. 3; cited in Harris, op.cit., p. 427, n.60
73 See Harris, op.cit., p. 434
74 Beveridge, *Full Employment in a Free Society*, para 44, p. 36
75 ibid.
76 George and Wilding, op.cit., pp. 53–4
77 Beveridge, *Why I am a Liberal*, p. 22
78 ibid., p. 33
79 ibid., p. 36
80 Beveridge, *Power and Influence*, p. 340
81 Keynes, *The End of Laissez-Faire*, pp. 46–47
82 Beveridge, *Full Employment in a Free Society*, para 44, p. 36
83 George and Wilding, op.cit., p. 54

LIBERAL HISTORY QUIZ 2012

The 2012 Liberal history quiz – with a link to the latest History Group booklet, *Mothers of Liberty* – was a feature of the History Group's exhibition stand at the Liberal Democrat conference in Brighton last September. The winner was David Maddox, with an impressive 19½ marks out of 20. Below we reprint the questions – the answers will be included in the summer issue.

1. Who was the Deputy Leader of the Liberal Party from 1949 to 1951?

2. Who said of the possible formation of a breakaway from Labour in 1981 that such a party would have 'no roots, no principles, no philosophy and no values'?

3. Who is the current Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Employment Relations, Consumer and Postal Affairs?

4. What is the name of the organisation within the Liberal Democrats which seeks to ensure that women are more fairly represented in the Commons?

5. Margaret Wintringham became the first-ever woman Liberal MP by winning the seat of Louth in Lincolnshire in a by-election. In what year?

6. Which Parliamentary seat was contested for the Liberal Democrats by Nicola Davies at a by-election in July 2004, when she lost by just 460 votes?

7. In what year was the Women's Liberal Federation formed?

8. Which seat did Ray Michie (later Baroness Michie of Gallanach) represent in the House of Commons from 1987 to 2001?

9. W. E. Gladstone's daughter acted as one of his private secretaries at Downing Street after the Grand Old Man resumed the premiership in 1880. What was her Christian name?

10. Lady Violet Bonham Carter was a great friend of Winston Churchill. What was the title of the biography of him that she published in 1965?

11. Which Liberal activist became Director of the Electoral Reform Society in 1960?

12. Who did Geoff Pope succeed as Member of the Greater London Assembly when she stood down in June 2005?

13. With what animal is the former SDP MP Rosie Barnes for ever associated, thanks to her appearing with one in a 1987 party election broadcast?

14. On which Caribbean island was Baroness Floella Benjamin born?

15. Christiana Hartley was a Liberal social and welfare rights activist, businesswoman and philanthropist. In 1921 she was elected the first female Mayor of which Lancashire borough?

16. What distinction do Margery Corbett Ashby, Alison Vickers Garland, Mrs J. McEwan and Violet Markham collectively share?

17. In the Liberal interest she contested Hornchurch in 1950 and 1951, Truro in 1955 and 1959, Epping in 1964, Rochdale in 1966 and Wakefield in 1970. Who was she?

18. Honor Balfour was a member of Radical Action, which opposed the wartime electoral truce; which seat did she contest in 1943 as an Independent Liberal, coming within 70 votes (and two recounts) of victory?

19. What is the burial place of Margot Asquith, a location she shares with her husband – and also with George Orwell and David Astor, amongst others?

20. Why are Nora Radcliffe and Margaret Smith notable Lib Dem names?

REPORTS

Mothers of Liberty: How modern liberalism was made by women

Conference fringe meeting. 23 September 2012, with Dr Helen McCabe, Baroness Jane Bonham-Carter and Jo Swinson MP; chair: Lynne Featherstone MP
Report by **Ruth Polling**

One of the most common questions asked when helping the History Group at Lib Dem conferences is why there is so little information about the women who have contributed both to the party and to liberal thought. On the surface the straightforward answer is that for so much of the history we cover women have been excluded from the political process. However a deeper look shows that even before 1918 women often played a crucial role as organisers, campaigners and theorists and this has often been overlooked.

In 2012 the History Group decided to uncover some of this neglected history and the result was a new publication *Mothers of Liberty: Women who built British Liberalism* launched at this fascinating fringe meeting at the last conference. The fringe, like the booklet, covered women's contribution from the earliest days through to recent figures. Dr McCabe presented on the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, Baroness Bonham-Carter focused on her grandmother Violet Bonham Carter, the towering female figure of the mid-twentieth century and Jo Swinson brought us right up to date with the contribution women are making in the party today.

Dr Helen McCabe, a lecturer in political theory at St Edmund Hall, Oxford, started off the event with a whistlestop tour of some of the women who contributed to liberal thought during the nineteenth century. She decided to focus on five of them in a speedy commentary packed with information about not just their contributions and achievements but also their highly unconventional lives.

She started by pointing out the title of the meeting and the booklet is slightly ironic as the very fact of their contribution to the cause of liberty in the nineteenth century and the public activities that came with that meant many of the women chose not to be or were prevented from being mothers to anyone. Even for those who did marry and indeed have children, much of their work was focused on women being seen as more than just wives and mothers but as political beings in their own right.

She also highlighted that in the nineteenth century their contribution was to liberalism rather than the Liberal Party. While some of these women did look to the Liberal Party for support, their case was often rejected with only 73 of 269 Liberal MPs who voted supporting John Stuart Mill's amendment to give votes to women as part of the 1867 Reform Act. However, they did make a major contribution to the liberal view that 'all human beings have the right to a free, flourishing and self-directed life' in challenging the definition of 'all human beings' to include women as well as men.

As Helen pointed out, the first woman she concentrated on was the one we all probably knew something about, describing Mary Wollstonecraft as 'one of the most famous women of the eighteenth century'. However she highlighted that this reputation is only relatively recent and that she had far less influence in the nineteenth century than we may now believe to be the case.

She argued that it is unfair to see Wollstonecraft as merely derivative of Thomas Paine pointing out that her *A Vindication of the Rights of Man*, was written a year before Paine's, and is, like his, a direct response to Edmund Burke's criticisms of the French Revolution. Her *Vindication of the Rights of Woman* was not an add on to Paine but a response to Rousseau, and his advice for the very different education of boys and girls. Her contribution to liberal theory, then, was not just to add women but makes the case for liberalism's core ideas as well as attempts to make liberalism more inclusive.

Even before 1918 women often played a crucial role as organisers, campaigners and theorists, and this has often been overlooked.

Helen then highlighted that Wollstonecraft's challenge to contemporary perceptions of what women could and should do went far beyond her writings to include the way she lived her own life. Indeed she pointed out that all the women she would be discussing made her feel like she had 'had an incredibly boring life'.

Her brief summary of Wollstonecraft's life was certainly not boring. Taking in protecting her mother from her abusive father, a varied career as a companion, school-teacher and governess, and her decision to become a writer and translator (which Helen described as a 'particularly revolutionary choice at the time') Helen then went on to highlight her relationship with a married artist, an affair with 'American adventurer' Gilbert Imlay and, evidently having re-thought her dismissal of sexual relations in the *Vindication*, the birth of her first child Fanny. She also described her travels with two year old Fanny in Scandinavia, her marriage to William Godwin, the birth of her second child Mary (who was to become Mary Shelley) and her death soon afterwards.

As Helen summarised, 'it is hard to imagine a less typical life for a woman at the end of the eighteenth century'. Unfortunately it was this life, recounted by Godwin in his *Memoir,* which was to destroy her reputation and leave Wollstonecraft almost unregarded until the twentieth century. Helen concluded Wollstonecraft's contribution through her life and her writings was to *modern* liberalism rather than the generation following her.

However one woman who was influenced by her was Anna Wheeler, the subject of the second section of Helen's contribution. Wheeler was the joint author, with William Thompson, of *An Appeal of One Half the Human Race, Women, Against the Pretensions of the Other Half, Men, to Retain Them in Political, and thence in Civil and Domestic Slavery* an analysis of the damage done to

women by gender stereotypes, a lack of education and the lack of rights within marriage. In it they are early proponents of family planning and argued that engaging in some form of communal living would free women from domestic servitude.

Helen argued that in this 'they move on from Wollstonecraft in many ways, though retaining the same basic core principle'. Wheeler not only argued for women's legal equality but also identified some other aspects of what made women unfree. Again, Wheeler had an unconventional life, leaving her abusive husband and spending the rest of her life travelling with her children, funding herself from her writings and translations. In her travels she met the radical Unitarian Rev. William Fox and it was to another member of his circle that Helen turned next.

Helen argued that Harriet Martineau made theoretical contributions to liberalism on two fronts. Firstly, she was a well-respected and popular *laissez-faire* economist, whose first work *Illustrations of Political Economy*, a fictionalised account of economics, catapulted her to fame in 1832. And secondly, like Wollstonecraft and Wheeler, she was to stand up for liberal principles and demand that they be equally applied to women, most notably in *Society in America* with its highly critical chapter *The Political Non-Existence of Women*.

Martineau herself remained single, which may have been in order to avoid the oppression she saw and to retain her hard-won financial independence as a popular novelist and journalist. As well as her philosophical contribution Martineau was also an active campaigner for women's rights, petitioning Parliament on the suffrage, women's education and access to the professions, and on the repeal of the Contagious Diseases Act. Most shockingly she rejected religion. As Helen concluded, 'Like Wollstonecraft and Wheeler, Martineau also lived her own life, becoming a practical example of all a woman could do and be.'

Helen pointed out that the life of her next subject, Harriet Taylor Mill, is in many ways less challenging to the social norms than the previous ones. Indeed she is famous to liberals for her marriage to John Stuart Mill and there is much debate on how much she influenced his work. However, as Helen pointed out, that is a debate for another day, and as she made clear Harriet made significant contributions in her own right. Her most famous work, *Enfranchisement of Women* (1851), covers similar ground to the earlier writers but goes on insist that it is bad, both for women and for men, for one half of humanity to be born to rule over the other. As Helen pointed out, even for the most conventional of our women, her life was still highly unusual for a woman of the nineteenth century, sharing much of her life between her first husband and Mill.

She argued their writings and their lives challenged ideas of what women could and should be and have therefore shaped and informed modern liberal thought on what is needed to make liberal principles properly universal.

Helen used her description of the death of Harriet Taylor Mill to introduce her daughter Helen Taylor who she described as 'a woman with a rather different kind of impact on liberalism'. She had been brought up with the advantages that Taylor Mill hoped that all women would one day have and her influence was far more practical than philosophical. She was heavily involved in the women's suffrage campaign and also in education helping to found Somerville College.

Helen concluded by trying to assess the impact of these women today. She rightly pointed out that these nineteenth-century women have been criticised for being too optimistic and not going far enough, believing that equal legal rights would ensure equality. However, she rejected this criticism, pointing out from their starting point rights were an important first step and that this view neglects the analysis they did of what else, apart from the lack of formal freedoms, prevented women from being free. She argued their writings and their lives challenged ideas of what women could and should be and have therefore shaped and informed modern liberal thought on what is needed to make liberal principles properly universal.

The discussion was then taken up by Baroness Jane Bonham-Carter who started by thanking the History Group for the opportunity it had given her to look back over her grandmother's life and be reminded what a remarkable women she was. In her brief and personal speech she gave a summary of the life of Violet Bonham Carter, including a number of stories and anecdotes from those who knew and worked with her.

Born in 1887 the daughter of H.H. Asquith, Jane pointed out that Violet's lifetime had covered the zenith and the nadir of the Liberal Party and that she had a ringside seat which she never deserted. Unlike the women discussed earlier, Violet was of the first generation of women who had the right to stand for Parliament and in fact received invitations from fourteen Liberal constituencies to be their candidate after her support for her father in the 1918 Paisley by-election. However in a slightly different take on the title 'mothers of liberty' Violet decided that elected politics was not compatible with motherhood, she was a mother of four, and turned down all of these offers. It was not until 1945 that she first stood for Parliament and she only became a Parliamentarian through the unelected route of the House of Lords at the age of 77. While she made an impact in the Lords, she clearly didn't have much regard for what could be achieved there describing it as 'the corridors of impotence.'

However, as Jane pointed out, her intellect and gifts of expression and memory ensured that Violet made a massive contribution to the Liberal Party outside of Parliament. Initially her work was assisting her father campaigning and making speeches in his support after he lost his seat at the 1918 General Election. After Asquith's death, Violet briefly dropped out of active politics, only to return in the early 1930s to express her concerns about the rise of the Nazis in Germany. In this she was a great supporter of Churchill who, other than her father, was the dominant political figure in her life.

As Jane listed some of her many causes it was clear her foresight was not just confined to the Nazis. She was anti-appeasement, anti-Suez, anti-apartheid, anti-death penalty, a champion of Beveridge and social reform, pro-Europe, pro-choice, pro-gay rights, pro-immigration and pro-women's rights and equal pay. Jane quoted Mark Pottle, the editor of Violet's diaries, saying she 'never ceased to interpret to modern times the liberal ideals she had learnt from her father in childhood.'

Her influence on the Liberal Party was huge, not just on these headline issues, where, for example,

her position on Suez helped the Liberal Party to have a unique voice, but also on the grassroots. In the dark days of the 1950s Violet was a tireless campaigner, travelling, speaking everywhere and canvassing to keep the Liberal Party alive.

Jane concluded that Violet was a 'wonderful daughter, deeply loving mother, absolutely terrible mother-in-law … and a great, great liberal.'

As Violet Bonham Carter's contribution was largely outside Parliament it fell to the final speaker, Jo Swinson MP, to bring the meeting up to date and focus on some women Liberals' contributions in the House of Commons. She started by highlighting that, even though the booklet had mainly concentrated on the great heritage of Liberal women, there were a number of women who today and over the past few decades had made major contributions to the party.

She started with a personal tribute to Shirley Williams, who she described as an 'inspiration' and also 'personally supportive' to her and other women in the party. She highlighted her rational but also emotional intelligence and suggested that, had she been born a few decades later, she could have been leader of the party. In a return to the earlier stories she also described Shirley as a lifelong nonconformist, summing her up, as many others have done, as 'she's just Shirley'.

She did highlight however just how far women have to go to achieve equality of representation. Jo pointed out that just over ten years ago when Sandra Gidley was elected to Parliament there were so few women in the Liberal Democrat Parliamentary Party that it was possible for male colleagues to ask her, 'will you be like a Ray (Michie) or like a Jenny (Tonge) or like a Jackie (Ballard)?' Sandra was quite right to point out in her response that there were not just three models of a female MP in the same way there are no three models of a male one when she responded, 'I think I'll be like a Sandra'. Even today only seven of the fifty seven Liberal Democrat MPs are women which allowed Jo a brief word about each one of her female colleagues, including our panel chair Lynne Featherstone, who Jo commended for her courageous work as Equalities Minister. She also highlighted the work of Kirsty Williams, who is currently the only female leader of any part of the Liberal Democrats and was also the first female leader of any party in Wales.

Her influence on the Liberal Party was huge, not just on these headline issues, where, for example, her position on Suez helped the Liberal Party to have a unique voice, but also on the grassroots. In the dark days of the 1950s Violet was a tireless campaigner, travelling, speaking everywhere and canvassing to keep the Liberal Party alive.

Jo went on to point out that, while only seven of the Liberal Democrat MPs were female, women were making a huge contribution to the party up and down the country. In the dark days it was often women that kept the party alive in many constituencies and now the party is full of unsung female heroes. She particularly wanted to highlight the contribution her own mother had made to her election campaign, driving her to meetings, cooking for her and delivering a whole area of her constituency over and over again. She pointed out there were women like that all over the country who are often not thanked for all they do, but it would be impossible for the party to win seats without them.

Jo had just been appointed as junior Equalities Minister when she made her speech and she described her 'pride and humility to take this agenda forward.' She accepted in the speech that there was a long way to go both in the Liberal Democrats and in the Cabinet. In answer to a question, she also went back to a theme which had been present throughout the meeting about the balance between motherhood and active politics and whether this was possible with the demands made by Liberal Democrats of their candidates. She accepted more needed to be done not just for women, but for all parents and carers to be active in politics. She believed that, for more women to come forward as candidates, local Lib Dem parties need to review which tasks have to be done by the candidate, enabling them to concentrate their time for the most important task of meeting voters, while freeing up enough time for a family life. It was clear from her answer that, while the legal equalities sought by the earliest women to contribute to liberalism have been achieved, there is still a faintly ironic ring to the title *Mothers of Liberty*.

Jo ended on an optimistic note however. Earlier in the evening she had attended a Leadership Centre reception for people from under-represented groups seeking to be candidates for the Liberal Democrats. The two events on the same evening had convinced her that there was a great heritage of women in the party and also a bright future. Updated editions of *Mothers of Liberty* could be a whole lot longer.

Ruth Polling is a member of the Liberal Democrat History Group's committee, and the Group's conference organiser.

REVIEWS

'Remains to be seen'

Chris Bowers, *Nick Clegg: The Biography* (Biteback, 2011; paperback edition, 2012); Jasper Gerard, *The Clegg Coup* (Gibson Square, 2011)

Reviewed by **Duncan Brack**

Mid-career biographies are always chancy things to write. It's usually difficult to assess a politician's record and impact properly until they retire, or die, early judgments may be rendered irrelevant by subsequent events, and individuals may be less willing to say what they really think about someone who's still their boss or colleague, or still alive.

Nevertheless, such is the interest in Nick Clegg, as the first Liberal leader to enter UK government

since 1945, that not one but two biographies of him appeared in 2011; and the better of the two, Chris Bowers' *Nick Clegg: The Biography*, was republished in paperback in autumn 2012. Effectively this is a second edition, with the last four (out of fifteen) chapters substantially rewritten – rather demonstrating my point about the perils of instant history. Accordingly, the phrase 'remains to be seen' features on quite a few occasions as the authors attempt to analyse the impact of Clegg and his leadership.

(It should be noted that the publicity for *The Clegg Coup* claims that, 'contrary to news reports, the book is not a biography'. This is a strange claim to make, as essentially it is, though it also looks more extensively at the roles played by key Clegg allies such as Danny Alexander, David Laws and Paul Marshall. The author also claims, with a refreshing lack of false modesty, that it is the first major study of Liberalism since Dangerfield's *The Strange Death of Liberal England* in 1935. It isn't.)

Both books suffer from weaknesses which limit their value. Neither uses footnotes or references, so the reader is often unsure whether quotes stem from public statements or private interviews. *Nick Clegg* does at least contain a bibliography; *The Clegg Coup* doesn't.

More seriously, both of them are based almost entirely on interviews; the authors seem incapable of using any written source, or at least anything written by Clegg himself – including, most notably, Clegg's chapters in *The Orange Book* and its social-liberal riposte, *Reinventing the State*, his 2009 booklet for Demos, *The Liberal Moment*, or any of his speeches, most of which are never even mentioned. This is a major flaw; Clegg has used his more thoughtful speeches to explore his interpretation of Liberalism, and of the purpose of the Liberal Democrats, and anyone interested in understanding the man and his politics has to analyse them.

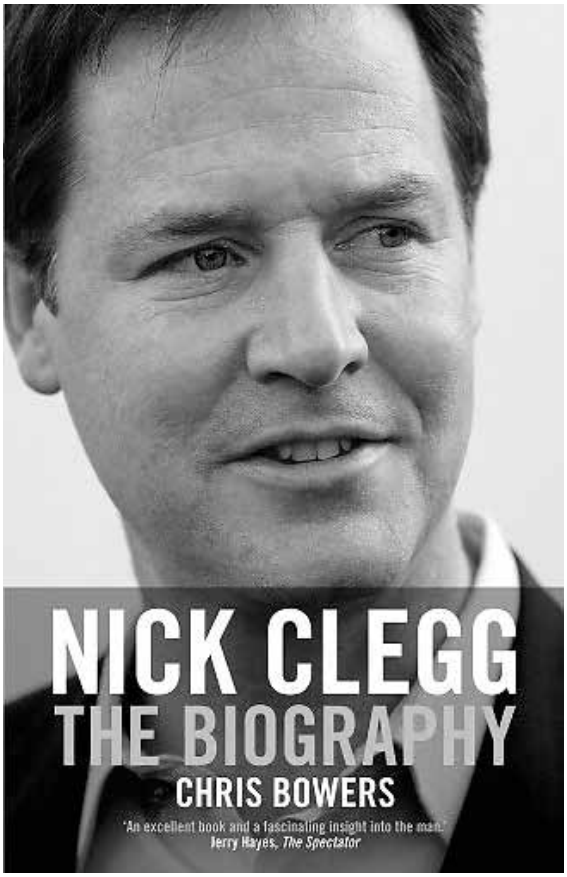
The – mostly minor – errors present in the 2011 edition of *Nick Clegg* have been corrected in the 2012 version, though a few more have crept in: the Copenhagen climate change conference was in 2009, not 2010, for example; clause IV in Labour's old constitution was about nationalisation, not about the trade unions. *The Clegg Coup* contains far more mistakes, including claiming that the last British peacetime coalition was formed in 1918 (what about 1931?), calling the Liberal who helped to end the post-war identity card system Trevor Wilcox (his name was Harry Willcock), implying that Vicky Pryce left her government job when Chris Huhne's affair was revealed (she had resigned before the election), confusing the June 2010 £6 billion cuts emergency package with the whole coalition cuts programme, mixing up Kosovo and Bosnia, and warning us to be 'wary of Greeks bearing gilts' (p. 245 – not, sadly, a clever reference to the Greek debt crisis).

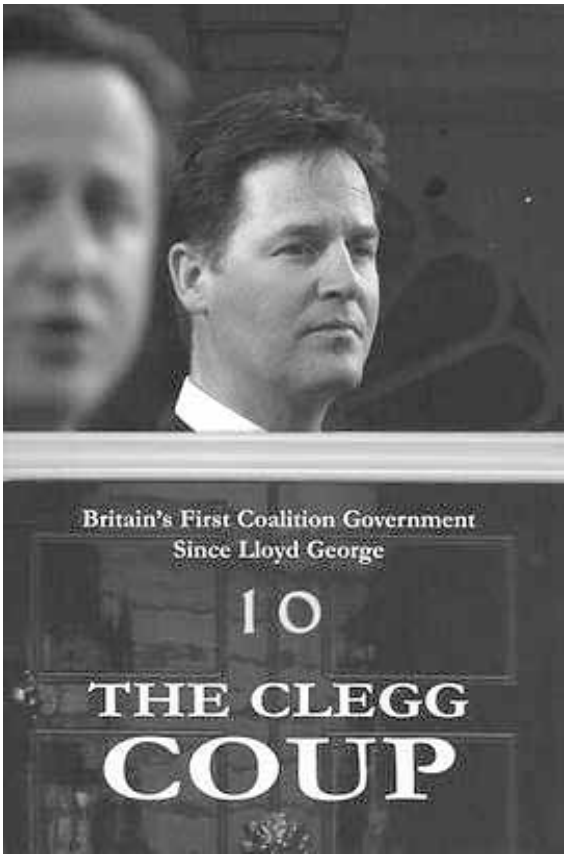
Neither book will win any prizes for style. Bowers' book is a bit pedestrian and long-winded, but overall not too bad. Gerard's version is something else again. No cliché is left unused, no metaphor is unmixed, no prose is ever too purple. The Labour constituencies surrounding Clegg's Sheffield Hallam seat aren't merely coloured red on an electoral map, for instance – they're an 'angry' red. TV studio sofas are always 'squishy'. People rarely 'say' anything; they 'howl', 'fume' or 'rumble'. There is far, far too much text like: 'Even for the steel city, the day seemed to be painted a particularly dark shade of gunmetal grey. But adherents to Liberalism were in a sunny mood that Sheffield morning …' (p. 122)

This is the kind of language Gerard used for his Sunday newspaper columns, and for a brief piece it's OK, sometimes even quite funny. But reading page after page of this rapidly gets very wearing; you're left feeling rather like you've been hit on the head, slowly but repeatedly, with a rubber hammer. The only chapter that isn't written like this – an outline of the history of the party – is actually quite readable (albeit error-strewn), suggesting that the rest of the book could have been too.

On the positive side, however, the interviews conducted by both authors are very good value: wide-ranging, extensive and detailed. Bowers in particular has unearthed some points missed by other writers – for example, when Paddy Ashdown revealed that he was given Clegg's blessing to talk up the prospects of a Lib-Lab deal to the media during the coalition negotiations, thus helping to increase the pressure on the Tories.

So what is the Clegg story? Both books do a good job of recounting Clegg's thoroughly international





family background, featuring ancestors on his father's side who included the Russian writer Baroness Moura Budberg (the so-called 'Mata Hari of Russia', a possible Bolshevik, Soviet and Nazi double agent, and the mistress of, among others, H. G. Wells and Maxim Gorky), while his Dutch mother was as a girl interned with her family by the Japanese in Indonesia during the war. Education at Westminster and Cambridge was followed by postgraduate study in the US.

This background left him with an international outlook, and a stubborn, self-confident and articulate nature; he was always encouraged to challenge authority. He developed a strong belief in fairness, and the rights, and responsibilities, of the individual. Bowers argues that it was his privileged background that drove him to aim to do something worthwhile with his life.

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After a short period as a journalist, in 1994 Clegg joined the European Commission, ending up in Trade Commissioner Leon Brittan's private office. It was Brittan who first suggested that he become involved in politics and, having failed to convince him to join the Conservatives, recommended him to Paddy Ashdown. Ashdown first met him in 1997 and rapidly became a supporter ('unofficial godfather', according to Bowers), tipping him as a future leader; indeed, he tried to persuade Clegg to stand for the leadership on Charles Kennedy's resignation in 2006. Like Ashdown, Clegg was in many ways a political outsider (arguably a valuable characteristic of a party leader) – he had no family or college background in politics, and came into the party in a fairly unorthodox way.

Nick Clegg follows his early political career more thoroughly than does *The Clegg Coup*: selection for and then election, in 1999, to the European Parliament, then selection for Sheffield Hallam after the local party decided the seat was safe enough that they could afford to look for a candidate with potential leadership qualities.

Both books identify Danny Alexander as Clegg's closest political friend, dating back to a walk on the South Downs and a discussion about the future of the party during the 1997 autumn conference. Alexander subsequently became Clegg's chief of staff, drew up the 2010 manifesto and is now the other Liberal Democrat in the 'quad' that resolves coalition disputes. As Gerard observed, 'Alexander sublimates his ego to support Clegg' (*The Clegg Coup*, p. 68), but does not lack ambition; apparently, he sees himself as a potential future party leader. Gerard also identifies David Laws as an ally, particularly in forcing the intellectual agenda; Laws now chairs the 2015 manifesto group. (Gerard also, astutely, reckoned that Laws was more suited to a policy job than a party management one – he 'would be better deployed in a department rich in policy possibilities such as Education' (p. 80). A year after the book came out, that's where he went.)

Both authors accept without questioning the notion that the Liberal Democrats were an immature bunch until Clegg came along. According to Bowers, 'the difference Clegg and the new generation of Liberal Democrats had brought about', was that 'theirs was no longer a cuddly philosophising-and-protest-vote party but one that was determined to use its leverage to get as many of its policies put into practice as it could' (*Nick Clegg*, p. 234). Former Lib Dem council leaders and ministers in Scottish and Welsh governments may beg to differ.

According to Gerard, Clegg single-handedly took the party into coalition after the 2010 election. 'He convened a meeting in Smith Square of his party's MPs, peers and leading officials. And by most accounts he played a blinder, winning over diehards and ditherers …' (*The Clegg Coup*, p. 258). The facts that there had been daily parliamentary party meetings since the election, that the MPs had already decided to opt for coalition rather than confidence and supply, that there was no viable alternative option available, and that a special party conference five days later endorsed the deal by an overwhelming majority are entirely ignored.

This is the first of two major flaws with *The Clegg Coup*: it never considers whether any alternative choice was reasonably available – whether Clegg really made a difference, or whether any Lib Dem leader would have done the same thing because of the circumstances in which they found themselves. It simply assumes, in this instance, that because the party formed a coalition with the Conservatives, Clegg must have steered it to the right.

I am not arguing that Clegg made no difference at all; after all, he was the first Liberal Democrat leader not to have been active in politics under Thatcher's and Major's Conservative governments, and his instincts always appeared to be more hostile to Labour than those of his predecessors, which at least made a coalition with the Tories less difficult. In fact neither book delves into Clegg's political beliefs to any great extent – probably a side-effect of never quoting anything he actually wrote – but *Nick Clegg* does touch on it. His former MEP colleague Andrew Duff is quoted as thinking Clegg would have been at home in Ted Heath's Conservative Party, while Conservative MP Ed Vaizey thinks that the EU was the only issue that stopped him being a Tory. Chris Davies, another European colleague, views him as more of a continental Liberal than a mainstream British Liberal. Bowers reckons he sees Labour as the opposition, and Conservatives as the competition – probably the opposite of what most Liberal Democrats think.

'I really just believe in the basic tenets of liberalism' says Clegg himself (in an interview), 'which starts from the premise that there's something wonderful about every person, there's something marvellous about their potential and talents, and you've got to do everything you possibly can in politics to emancipate individuals, to give them privacy, give them freedom, give them the ability to get ahead' (*Nick Clegg*, p. 340). His strong commitments to education and to social mobility follow from this, but his equally strong dislike of the Labour approach of treating individuals merely as members of groups possibly blinds him to problems of income and wealth inequality and the barriers they place in the way of social mobility. The pupil premium is indeed an assault on inequality, but of little relevance to anyone over school age.

The second flaw with *The Clegg Coup* is that the book never analyses what being steered to the right actually means – presumably because, in reality, there is not much evidence for it. On the few occasions when Gerard looks at changes in policy under Clegg, he

chooses only those which support his argument – such as the 2008 suggestion of cuts in public spending (in the document *Make it Happen*) – while ignoring those that don't, such as the mansion tax.

Similarly, by the 2010 election, the 'policy prospectus had been transformed into a serious programme' (p. 137) – but we're never told what this was. And in fact the manifesto's top four priorities – the pupil premium, constitutional reform, job creation through green growth and investment in infrastructure, and an increase in the income tax threshold, paid for by closing tax loopholes and green taxation – hardly bear out the argument for an *Orange Book* coup.

In government, Clegg and allies have apparently 'implemented the Orange Book agenda' (p. 88), but, true to form, we're never told what it is. As this *Journal* pointed out when we reviewed *The Orange Book* back in 2005, almost everything in it was existing party policy, with the almost single exception of David Laws' proposal for a social insurance basis for health care (*The Clegg Coup* refers to it, wrongly, as private insurance) – which the coalition has not introduced.

Chris Bowers' *Nick Clegg* is more balanced; he does not see the 2010 manifesto as a lurch to the right, but simply as a response to economic circumstances. Thanks to his interviews, Bowers is good on the tensions within the party in the build-up to the election, mostly over tuition fees.

Although both authors are strong Clegg supporters (Gerard thinks he's the finest Liberal leader since Lloyd George), they are ready enough to outline his mistakes in government – over the distribution of ministerial posts (leaving the party in control of no high-profile departments), over the (with hindsight) excessive readiness to defend the coalition in its first year, over Clegg's willingness to trust Cameron (originating, thinks Bowers, in his more continental background, where partners in coalitions actually try to work together), and over the party's general inability to communicate what it's achieved and what it's stopped. According to Bowers, the party has proved better at policy than politics.

Both books deal with the tuition fees debacle at some length. Gerard thinks that the Lib Dem negotiators' failure to push the issue in the coalition talks lay at the root of the problem, while Bowers blames poor communications; for example, the party never highlighted the fact that raising tuition fees enabled it to protect funding for further education, or tried to present the new system as a graduate tax, which is essentially what it is. Loyal to a fault, Bowers doesn't blame Clegg himself for this.

Bowers is good on the pressures faced by Clegg as Deputy Prime Minister, particularly the abuse he suffered over tuition fees. (Heartbreakingly, he quotes his sons as asking: 'Papa, why do the students hate you so much?' (*Nick Clegg*, p. 249).) Bowers observes, rightly, that Clegg had hardly needed to show much resilience or toughness until his entry into government – but unquestionably has since.

What of the future? Gerard, writing in the summer of 2011, was all sunlit uplands, claiming to detect a modest rise in the Lib Dem poll rating while the Tory one was plummeting (inspection of poll ratings from February to September 2011 shows no such thing). He identified four reasons for optimism over the party's future prospects: the breakdown in class identity, increased educational attainment, the flowering of liberal values, and the enthusiasm of young people (with the party polling at 6 per cent amongst 18–24 year-olds in the latest YouGov poll, the last seems unlikely).

Gerard correctly identifies the long-term decline in the Conservative plus Labour vote (down below two-thirds of the total in 2010, for the first time since Labour supplanted the Liberals in the 1920s), but entirely ignores the competition for third-party voters – from UKIP, the Greens, the Nationalists and others. To be fair, this was less obvious in 2011 than it is now. More interestingly, he raises the question of which voters the party is supposed to recruit to replace those departing in opposition to the coalition and its policies. An unnamed right-wing Liberal Democrat minister is quoted as saying: 'Unless we can get some of the fluffy bunny voters back, we are done for. I'm not sure there are enough centre ground voters. The Lib Dem base has been public sector workers, students and intellectuals. We have contrived to fuck them all off.' (*The Clegg Coup,* p. 234).

This is perhaps the most serious criticism that can be levelled at Clegg: that while he was right to take the party into coalition, and while his record in government has been at least mixed, with several successes to offset against the disappointments, all of this has been conducted without enough thought to the party's ability to survive.

This is perhaps the most serious criticism that can be levelled at Clegg: that while he was right to take the party into coalition, and while his record in government has been at least mixed, with several successes to offset against the disappointments, all of this has been conducted without enough thought to the party's ability to survive. Perhaps worryingly, Richard Allan, his predecessor as MP for Hallam, believes that: '"Doing the right thing" is vitally important to him, so it's important to him to feel he made the right calls on the big issues. It doesn't mean he doesn't care about the party, he does care deeply, but if the party was screwed and the election went up in flames, he would be able to live with himself if he felt he had made the right decisions.' (*Nick Clegg*, p. 362)

But what are the right decisions? Assuming that the party will gain respect for simply participating in government, whatever the coalition's record, and hoping that the economy will recover in time for the 2015 election – when even the IMF is criticising the austerity programme as too harsh – is a pretty big gamble. And whether Clegg himself is now too tarred by the tuition fees issue, the classic example of the 'broken promises' for which he had attacked the other two parties during the 2010 campaign, is an open question.

Of course, we don't know – which, to end where I started, is the problem with writing a mid-career biography. Neverthless, despite its weaknesses, *Nick Clegg: The Biography* contains interesting material and is well worth reading; even *The Clegg Coup* has some nuggets, if you can stand the style and its inability to support its central thesis.

I'll leave Chris Bowers to have the last word:

> Not all Lib Dems will agree, but then such is the transformation in the party under Clegg's leadership and the 2010–15 coalition that it's hard to know who the Lib Dems will be in 2015. They will still be there, but possibly with a very different support crew than they had in 2010 – and with massive uncertainty about their future as a party. There's no question Clegg has contributed

to a spectacular revival in the prominence of liberalism in British government, but whether it's a sustainable revival or a revival that comes with an in-built self-destruct button remains to be seen. (*Nick Clegg*, p. 374).

Duncan Brack is Editor of the Journal of Liberal History; he also wrote the chapter on the Liberal Democrats in Duncan Brack and Robert Ingham (eds.), Peace, Reform and Liberation: A History of Liberal Politics in Britain 1679–2011 *(Biteback, 2011).*

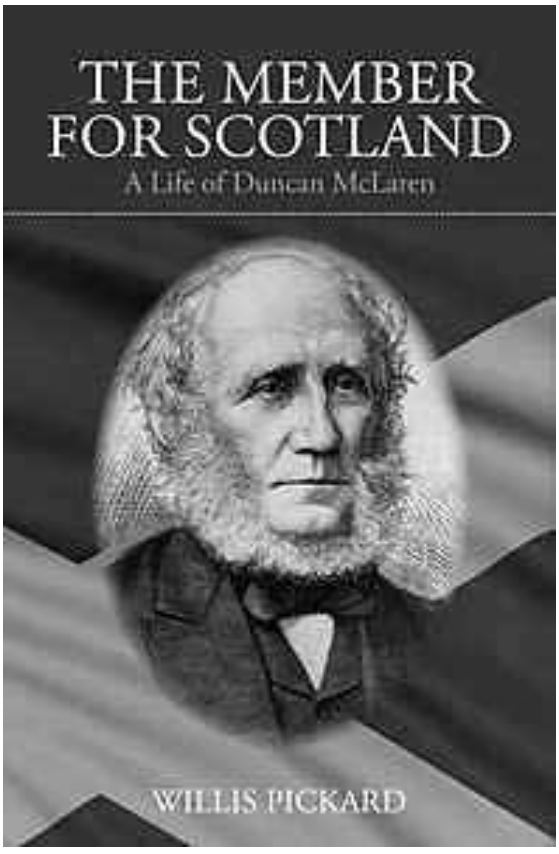
Scottish Liberal

Willis Pickard, *The Member for Scotland: A Life of Duncan McLaren* (John Donald, 2011)
Reviewed by **Ewen A. Cameron**

Willis Pickard, very well-known in journalistic and educational circles in Scotland, has performed a signal service to Scottish history by writing this extremely well-documented biography of Duncan McLaren. Reading Pickard's notes and bibliography, it is striking that the last major biography, by J. B. Mackie, was published in 1889. Despite the fact that Mackie's book was commissioned by the McLaren family and its tone was in the tradition of Victorian hagiography, Pickard quotes the view of John Bright (McLaren's brother-in-law) that 'not one quarter of the praise due to McLaren has been given to him.' (p. 270). Pickard's book lies on the spectrum between this extreme and that of the modern contextualised biography where the subject can disappear entirely. Indeed, Pickard maintains a good balance between the details of his subject's life and career and the contexts – Edinburgh, Scotland, Voluntaryism, Liberalism – in which he operated during the nineteenth century.

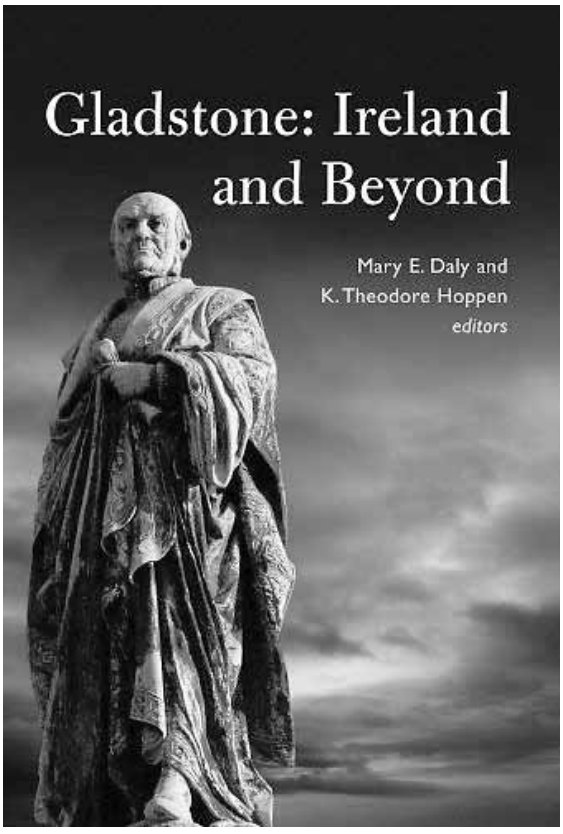
Despite his prominence in nineteenth-century Scotland, he is something of a forgotten figure, although many of the political campaigns in which he was involved have been much studied by recent writers on Scottish history, such as Graeme Morton. Iain Hutchison, Michael Fry and Robert Anderson. McLaren was born in 1800 to a family which had roots in the highland county of Argyll but he spent most of his life in business and political circles in the lowlands of Scotland. He was most prominent in Edinburgh, where he entered the drapery business and prospered; his other business interests, in banking, property and railways, were less profitable. He carved out a career in local politics, his first election to the City Council came in 1833, a very difficult time for Scotland's capital which was virtually bankrupt, and he rose to be Lord Provost from 1851 to 1854. He contested Edinburgh's parliamentary representation for the first time in 1852, was elected in 1865 and served until his retirement in 1881. He died in 1886. These bare biographical bones do not do justice to the significance of McLaren's career or to the interesting material contained in Willis Pickard's excellent biography. Pickard has immersed himself in McLaren's voluminous correspondence and his extensive and disputatious published works. This research has produced a very clearly written and, as far as the Scottish context is concerned, successful account of McLaren's career.

McLaren was involved, sometimes tangentially, in many of the major controversies of nineteenth-century Scotland. There are, however, several features of his career which ensure that he is more than the kind of character whom Anthony Trollope might have permitted a brief appearance at the Duke of Omnium's dinner table. The first is that he was the archetypal representative of the thoroughly Liberal culture of Scotland after 1832. To be sure, McLaren was opposed to the Whig clique which dominated its politics in the early part of the period. He was at the forefront of all the leading campaigns which provided a radical challenge to the Whigs: the Anti Corn Law League, the National Association for the Vindication of Scottish Rights, the opposition to Macaulay's representation of Edinburgh in the 1840s and 1850s. Further, he was intimately connected with a wider Liberal culture in which Scotland was very important on account of its consistent delivery of a large number of Liberal seats and its support of key Liberal causes. His third marriage to Priscilla, younger sister of John Bright, helped to deepen these connections but he was also close to Richard Cobden; indeed, the Cobden–McLaren connection is certainly worthy of further exploration. Pickard is especially good at bringing out the atmosphere of Scottish politics in this period and McLaren's wider connections. This has certainly been done in books by Hutchison and Fry at a more general level but the biographical focus of this study provides an exceptionally good window on the key features of the political landscape of Victorian Scotland. While Pickard's view is generally a positive one, he does not elide McLaren's more than occasional narrowness of view, which renders him an unappealing character at times. He was certainly representative of the belief in individual effort and responsibility which was central to Liberalism of this period. His



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.

Ewen A. Cameron is Sir William Fraser Professor of Scottish History at the University of Edinburgh. His most recent book is Impaled on a Thistle: Scotland since 1880 *(Edinburgh, 2010).*



Gladstone and Ireland

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

The 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 Jorges 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). *Dr Anthony Howe, School of History, University of East Anglia, Norwich NR4 7TJ; 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 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.*

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 Colllege, Birmingham; 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 Boshyk, yury@gel-net.com; or Dr Cheryl Brook, 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.*

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.*

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'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.*

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.*

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.*

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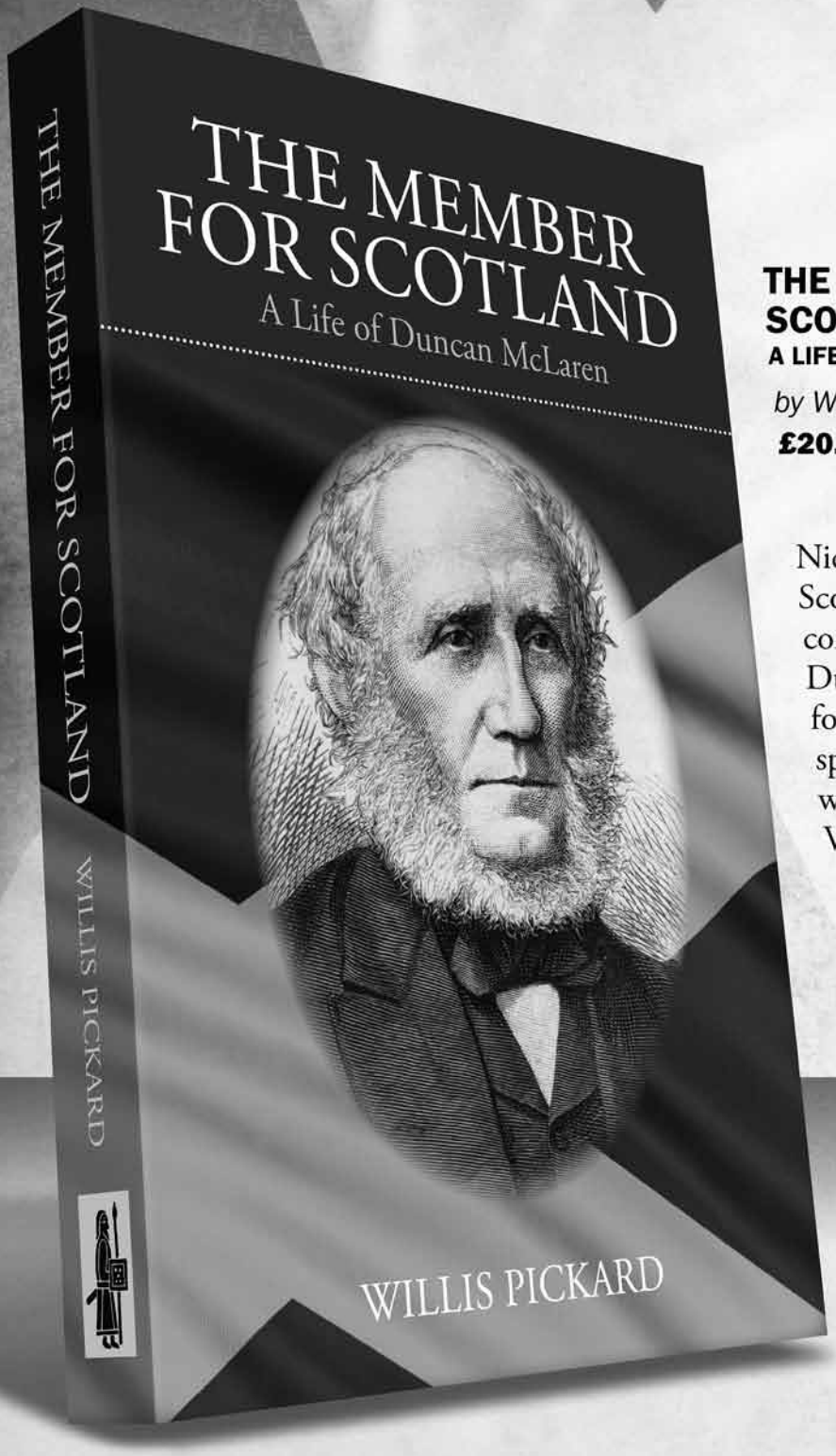

THE MEMBER FOR SCOTLAND
A LIFE OF DUNCAN MCLAREN
by Willis Pickard
£20.00 pbk

Nicknamed 'The Member for Scotland' at Westminster for his commitment to Scottish issues, Duncan McLaren is largely forgotten now. Willis Pickard has spent ten years researching and writing the biography of a titan of Victorian Liberalism.

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A Liberal Democrat History Group evening meeting

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

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 it 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.