

LIBERAL ROOTS: THE IN A WEST YORKSHIRE CON

From 1966 to 1971, as a teenager, **Jaime Reynolds** lived in Morley, West Yorkshire, now part of south Leeds. During that time he was an active member of the Liberals, who were enjoying something of a renaissance in the Batley & Morley constituency. In 1969 Batley borough council was briefly the only local authority in England and Wales where the Liberals were the largest party. Jaime's desire was to chart the story of Liberal fortunes in these Yorkshire mill towns and pay tribute to the efforts of the pioneers who led the revival there. Thanks to the Liberal Democrat History Group, a few years ago he reestablished contact with **Peter Wrigley**.



THE LIBERAL PARTY

CONSTITUENCY, 1920s – 1970s

PETER WAS ONE of those pioneers, parliamentary candidate in 1970 and February 1974 and still today an active Liberal Democrat in the Batley & Spen constituency. Peter's recollections, local research, and the memories he has gathered from others involved have greatly enriched this joint portrait of the decline of a Liberal stronghold and its revival in the 1960s.

The Batley & Morley constituency was one of the band of West Yorkshire Liberal strongholds in the area of Huddersfield, Halifax Bradford and Leeds where a distinctive current of Radical, Non-conformist, free trade Liberalism persisted until 1945 and in some cases later. This Northern Radical tradition stretched across the Pennines into Colne Valley and the Lancashire cotton belt where towns such as Rochdale, Bolton, Darwen, Mossley and Rossendale were notable Liberal redoubts. It was closely linked with the social and political culture that arose around the textile industry and mirrored that industry's rise and decline.

Batley and Morley have particular claims to fame in Liberal history. Herbert Asquith, the future Liberal Prime Minister, was born

in Morley in 1852. He moved away as a child and though he was said to have few sentimental attachments to his birthplace, he returned in 1895 to open the town hall and in 1913 to be invested as a freeman of the borough. He was treated as a local hero.

It was also the home of Theodore Cooke Taylor,² a legendary figure in Yorkshire Liberalism, an 'advanced Radical' MP, a tireless campaigner for free trade and an 'out-and-out Batley-ite'.³ He was an archetypal patriarchal millowner who pioneered profit-sharing in his textile mill. In his lifetime, over 75 per cent of the firm's capital was passed into the ownership of its two thousand workers. For many years he personified Liberalism in Batley.⁴

Another notable Yorkshire mill-owning family, the Walkers of Mirfield and Dewsbury,⁵ also played an important part in Batley & Morley Liberalism.

'Shoddyopolis'

In the 1960s both Batley and Morley still retained much of the character and fierce local pride of old woollen mill towns.⁶ Morley's magnificent Victorian town hall (built in 1895) proclaimed

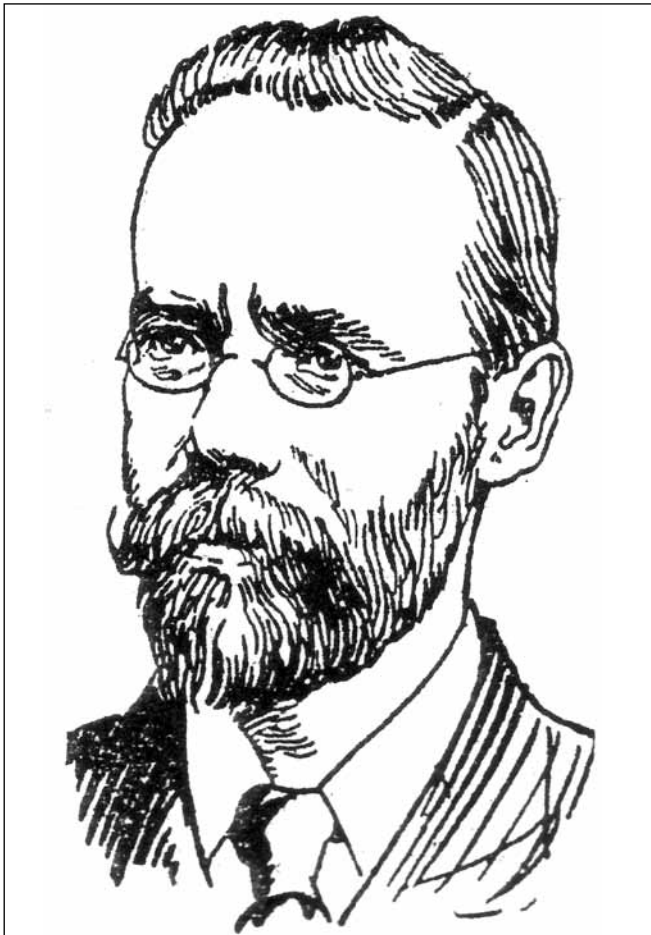
the prosperity and civic spirit it enjoyed at the end of the nineteenth century.

Morley and Batley, and neighbouring Dewsbury, were at the centre of the 'shoddy trade' – the recycling of woollen rags to make new cloth. This industry had boomed in the second half of the nineteenth century and at its peak there were thirty mills in Morley and the same number in Batley. Production flourished well into the twentieth century, and demand was particularly high during wartime. However from the 1960s, competition from man-made fibres and foreign producers, fashion changes, reliance on small-scale manufacture and private capital, and labour shortages, all combined to undermine the trade. The woollen mills with their tall chimneys closed down and within a decade or two the industry had virtually disappeared.⁷

The other foundation of the local economy was coal mining, situated in a number of pits on the outskirts of Morley and also in pits around Batley. This was also a declining industry – the last Batley pit closed in 1973.

By the 1960s the physical appearance of both towns was changing. In Morley, sweeping

Batley and Morley and surrounding district: constituencies 1918–50



slum-clearance programmes had redeveloped some three thousand houses up to 1968 and a further 1,250 were demolished between 1968 and 1975. We can recall canvassing not far from Morley town hall in streets of blackened back-to-back terraces which disappeared soon after. In the early 1960s, only Liverpool had more inhabited back-to-back houses than Batley. By 1972 only a couple of streets survived.⁸

The years of decline

In the 1920s much of the old Radical political culture remained intact. At parliamentary elections Batley & Morley was a Liberal–Labour battleground, with the Conservatives generally backing the Liberals.⁹ In the town halls a similar Lib–Con alliance dominated the scene, opposing the Labour Party, which at that time was under the charismatic textile trade unionist leader, Ben Turner, who served as both MP and as a member of Batley council.

The local power structure rested on business dynasties that ran the Liberal and Conservative parties and still, evidently, enjoyed the

support of a substantial proportion of their operatives. In Batley, mill owners such as Theodore Taylor, Frederick Auty,¹⁰ Charles Spedding,¹¹ and Edmund Bruce¹² led the Liberals while Thomas Western¹³ was a Tory. Clement Fernsides,¹⁴ founder and proprietor of the *Batley News*, was another prominent Liberal. In Morley, millowners such as the Barkers,¹⁵ the Rhodes/Watson/Marshall clan,¹⁶ Joseph Kirk,¹⁷ and David Dickinson¹⁸ were among the leading Liberals, while the Hepworths¹⁹ were Tories. In some cases these clans extended widely and over several generations. Taylor's brother-in-law John Stubley²⁰ (and his half-brother David Stubley²¹), his half-sister, Gertrude Elsie Taylor,²² his business and political right arm, Hamilton Crothers,²³ and deputy managing director, Ernest Kirk²⁴ were also councillors and the first four served as mayor of Batley. Frederick Auty, also a mayor of Batley, was brother of Margaret Grace Auty²⁵ who became Mrs Herbert North.²⁶ She was active in the local Liberal Party and the Yorkshire Women's Liberal Federation and mayoress to her husband when he was mayor in 1919–20.

Theodore Cooke Taylor, circa 1906; Brian Bradley Barker, Mayor of Morley

Four generations of the Barkers served as councillors and aldermen on Morley council over a period of more than eighty years and several of them were mayor. The Rhodes clan served some ten mayoral terms. The Liberal Association seems to have been constituted to a considerable extent by these pillars of the community and their entourages.

Naturally there were strong Liberal–Nonconformist links. The Taylors, Stubleys and Fearn-sides were Congregationalists and Crothers's father was a Methodist New Connexion Minister. The Barkers were Primitive Methodists. The Rhodes family were also Dissenters. Ben Turner, the leading Labour figure in the constituency, recalled cases of ministers and lay preachers urging congregations to vote against him in Batley & Morley.²⁷

In many cases the outlook of these practical businessmen Radicals was sharply ideological. Some years later Theodore Taylor explained his continuing commitment, despite many disappointments, to the Liberal Party and his attitude to the other parties:



I am a lifelong Liberal and ... don't want to have to change my party. I have never, however, seen party as a primary consideration, but only as a means to ends which can be summed up in this case as maintaining and extending human freedom. It has always been threatened and I suppose it always will be, by ambitious men. At present in Britain, we are threatened by three sets of folk, the cartelites (with Protection as one of their instruments), the trade unions, and the 'intelligentsia' socialists. The latter two parties seem pretty well combined at present in the 'Labour Party'. The ... cartel traders and trade unions have much in common, being both monopolistic in principle and, of course, the true socialist is a state monopolist. The truth is that all three sections are in fact monopolists of dangerous types. It seems to me that the Liberal Party, if it were to stick to its principles, has a good chance to save the country ... however ... some leading Liberals cannot resist the

Raymond Stone (photo provided by Sheila Stone); Batley's Liberal Mayor, Vera Ball, in 1969 (*Batley News*)

temptation to gain popularity by applying wrong views ... I think I can be at present most useful as an inside Liberal, doing my best to keep the Party as sound as one can ...²⁸

By the mid-1920s, party distinctions between Liberals and Conservatives at local government level had become somewhat obscured as they increasingly adopted the label of 'Independent'. However it seems to have been well known which of the parties most individuals supported. In the interwar period, *The Times* published lists of new mayors by party each year and the vast majority were classified as either Conservatives or Liberals including almost all the Batley and Morley ones. In Batley, the Liberals dominated the mayoralty, occupying it for sixteen years between 1919 and 1945, while Labour and the Conservatives had only two years each and six were unidentified. In Morley, between 1919 and 1939 Liberals held the mayoralty for seven years, Independents for six, Labour for five and Conservative for three.

As elsewhere, the Liberal hegemony was broken by the

events of 1931 and the split in the party between the Samuelite Free Traders and the pro-Tory Liberal Nationals under Sir John Simon, who was MP for the neighbouring constituency of Spen Valley. The split threw the Batley & Morley Liberals into turmoil. On the one hand there was considerable respect for Simon and a shared anti-Socialist outlook and readiness to work with the Conservatives. On the other hand compromising the party's independence was anathema for the Radical Free Traders who made up the local Liberal elite.

The Batley & Morley Tories clamoured for their own candidate committed to 'safeguarding' of British industry from cheap foreign imports and by September 1931 a 'cabinet' representing the local Conservatives nominated Wilfrid Dewhurst Wills of Skipton, who belonged to the tobacco family, as prospective candidate. At this stage it was uncertain whether the Liberals would also bring forward their man.²⁹ However, the obvious choice, Walter Forrest,³⁰ who had lost the seat to Labour at the 1929 general election, had recently joined the Conservatives.³¹

In the confusion of the political crisis of October 1931, the Liberals conceded Batley & Morley to the Conservatives. It seems that there was an understanding that in doing so, the Tories would stand aside in next-door Dewsbury where the free trade Samuel-ite Liberal Walter Rea gained the seat from Labour.

However the Tory win seems to have been regarded as an aberration or accident. In 1934 after pressure by the Liberal Nationals on the Conservatives to concede them more seats, Batley & Morley was identified as one of the constituencies which a Liberal National would stand a better chance of retaining. However these discussions did not lead to any change in the National candidate.³²

The Liberals' sacrifice in 1931 proved in vain. At the next general election in 1935 a 'National' candidate³³ was nominated against Rea in Dewsbury who lost his seat. The Batley & Morley Liberals were dismayed at this development and some looked for a candidate to stand against Wills and Labour. The names of Colonel James Walker³⁴ of the Mirfield Liberal dynasty, and a Leeds retired police sergeant, Ernest Dalton,³⁵ were mentioned. However not all of the local party had agreed with this move. One prominent Liberal was reported as saying that 'those who want to fight may get their own way ... If they do they will drive a lot of Liberals into the Conservative camp for good. The excuse that a candidate is being put forward because Sir Walter Rea is opposed won't wash.' An Ossett Liberal stated that they did not agree with splitting the National Government vote.³⁶

In the end at a private meeting the Liberals decided not to fight, according to Herbert Brook,³⁷ the President of the Association, because 'the time was too short to allow us to get our organisation into working order and make certain of victory'. However Ernest Dalton was invited to be the candidate next time and a motion to pledge support to W. D. Wills was defeated, with 'no more than four or five of the 80 or 90 present voting in favour.'³⁸

The decision to stand aside was unsurprising given that Batley & Morley was a marginal constituency, and in fact Labour gained the seat from Wills, even without

a Liberal to split the anti-socialist vote. What is striking is the extent of local Liberals assertiveness and their refusal to back the Tory candidate. This was after all Sir John Simon's backyard, but there seems to be no evidence of any marked impetus to line up with the Liberal Nationals.³⁹ At this time many Liberals still hoped and even expected that the two wings of the party would reunite just as the Asquith and Lloyd George factions had fused in 1923.

This support for independent Liberalism was confirmed in the following years. Ernest Dalton was selected as prospective candidate for the next general election expected in 1940 and the Liberals were very active in Batley in the later 1930s, for example in the campaign against rising prices launched by the party in 1937.⁴⁰ However their calculations were upset by a by-election in February 1939. Dalton first offered to withdraw in favour of a 'United Front' candidate, but this elicited no response. The Liberal Association then decided not to fight the seat 'in order to conserve its resources for the coming General Election'.⁴¹ Labour chose a candidate with considerable appeal to Liberals – an official of the League of Nations Union with a background in the co-operative movement, who pitched for the Liberal vote claiming that Gladstone would have agreed with his party's foreign policy. He received some Liberal support for his campaign from outside the constituency,⁴² but Wills claimed the support of several prominent local Liberals, including some who signed his nomination papers.⁴³ Theodore Taylor issued a list of questions to the candidates to help Liberal voters make up their mind whom to support. Ernest Dalton issued a denial that any active Liberal in the Batley & Morley division was working for Wills, though he admitted that he was getting backing from some Liberal Nationals.⁴⁴

At the end of the campaign a *Manchester Guardian* correspondent gave this somewhat unscientific assessment of the Liberal tradition in the constituency:

Batley may be regarded as safe for Labour. Ossett is usually assessed as consisting of one half of Labour voters and one half of

Liberals and Conservatives; in municipal elections the Liberals and Conservatives act tacitly together. At Morley a genuine Liberalism survives, not the kind of Liberalism that sleeps in the pocket of the Tory party, but the old type of Nonconformist Radicalism ... Radicals of this school detest the National Government, but are extremely uncomfortable with political associates whom they think insist too much upon doctrinaire Socialism ...⁴⁵

Labour held the seat with an increased majority.

The next general election was not held until the end of the war in 1945. The Batley & Morley Liberals rallied around Ashley Mitchell,⁴⁶ a dissident Liberal, who stood on an ultra-traditionalist anti-Beveridge platform. Mitchell, who came from an Ossett mill-owning family, was a long-standing pillar of Henry George's land value taxation movement. He was also a fervent Free Trader. In 1943–45, such Liberals were sidelined by policy shifts in favour of town and country planning and William Beveridge's social insurance plan.⁴⁷ The dissidents had formed the Liberal Liberty League to resist the trend but had been decisively defeated at the party's assembly in February 1945. Mitchell with some other traditionalists had resigned in protest from Huddersfield Liberal Association and there was wider uneasiness about Beveridge among West Riding Liberals.⁴⁸ According to Mitchell's account he was persuaded by friends in Batley to contest the seat which he agreed to do as 'an independent free from party directives', although he was nevertheless adopted by 'the local Liberal selection group'. His campaign was supported by mostly elderly Liberal luminaries including Theodore Taylor, who spoke for nearly half an hour on the merits of free trade at a rally in Batley Town Hall, Miss Elsie Taylor, Herbert Brook (the chairman of the Batley & Morley Liberal Association), Alderman David Dickinson, who was mayor of Morley 1942–43, and Alderman Patterson of Ossett. Despite an influx of Liberal Liberty League activists and Mrs Mitchell's canvassing efforts with the 'Women's Auxiliary', the

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George-ists were disappointed with the result. Labour held the seat with a large majority and Mitchell came third with 13.5 per cent of the votes, enough to keep his deposit. This was effectively the last stand of the old Radicals in Batley & Morley.⁴⁹

After 1945 the Liberals did not contest the seat again until 1964. Their failure to contest a by-election in 1949 drew criticism from the Yorkshire Young Liberals.⁵⁰ Labour easily held the by-election which launched the long parliamentary career of Dr (later Sir) Alfred Broughton, another Labour MP acceptable to many Liberal voters: he came from a family who had been general practitioners in Batley through three generations. He held the seat until his death in 1979.

Theodore Taylor's decision – at the 1949 by-election and again at the 1950 general election – to back, and speak on behalf of, the Conservative candidate, for the first time since he began participating in elections in 1868, symbolised the final passage of the old Liberal elite into the Tory camp.⁵¹ It was one of the relatively few constituencies not contested by a Liberal in 1950. Some younger members of the Association were keen to fight and C. E. Hindley, chairman of Bradford Liberals, was available as a candidate. However the majority followed the advice in a letter from Taylor arguing that:

in order to defeat the Socialist party it is necessary that those who are opposed to Socialism should unite. I know the reluctance of old campaigners to join with their former opponents in a political struggle, but it is more than a party which is at stake – it is the welfare and prosperity of our country which, in the hands of the Socialists, would certainly diminish.⁵²

In local elections both in Batley & Morley, the Liberals and Conservatives had stood under the 'Independent' umbrella for more than two decades by the 1940s. It was said nevertheless that they could still be easily identified as belonging to one party or the other.⁵³ A Liberal Association was functioning as late as 1950 and some local government figures were still regarded as leading Liberals – Colonel James Barker in Morley, for example.

However it seems likely that in many cases Liberal allegiance had become purely nominal. Barker chaired a Tory meeting in the 1949 by-election. Theodore Taylor died in 1952 at the age of 102 and his departure marked the demise of the old Radical cause. Any Liberal organisation or activity in the 1950s was invisible.⁵⁴ If it existed at all, it was probably concentrated in the urban villages of Birstall, Gildersome and Drighlington which joined the constituency from Spen Valley in 1949 and had their own Liberal clubs. However these areas were under the influence of Liberal National collaboration with the Tories. Peter Wrigley recalls much talk of the Lib Nats, Sir John Simon and Walter Runciman (who had been MP for Dewsbury until 1918), on the doorsteps when he first started canvassing in the 1960s.

The Independents held off Labour until after the Second World War. Labour briefly took control of both Batley & Morley for the first time in 1945. Labour established firmer control over Batley in 1950 and held it continuously and often with large majorities until 1968. Morley was more marginal, swinging backwards and forwards between Labour and the Independents in the 1950s and '60s.⁵⁵

Revival in Batley

Liberalism in Batley & Morley emerged anew in the period between the October 1959 general election and the May 1960 local elections.

Peter Wrigley takes up the story:

I had spent the years 1957 to 1963 in the London area, at college and in my first teaching post. In that period I became disillusioned by the Tory Party (partly because of the cover-up of the Hola Camp massacre of 1959, and, like many others, inspired by Jo Grimond) and joined the Liberals through the Hayes and Harlington local party. They were at such a low ebb that I was invited to be their chairman at my first meeting! I declined and was never very active there. I returned to Birstall in 1963, became active and was adopted as PPC in 1968. My knowledge of the history of the revival

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of the Batley & Morley Liberals is based on what I picked up in that period. I believe it was Bill Berry who, as part of the Grimond revival, placed an advertisement in the local paper inviting those interested to form a local Liberal Association. I was often told that in the early days the greatest progress was made in Morley, where the leading lights had been a couple who lived in Gildersome. However, when I came on the scene the Morley activity had faded to almost nothing, whilst things had flourished considerably on the Batley side.

The respondents to Bill Berry's⁵⁶ advert included several people who were to spearhead the revival: Trevor Evans⁵⁷ and Clifford Lockwood⁵⁸ in Soothill, and Raymond Stone⁵⁹ in Birstall. Among the activists in Batley were many teachers – such as R. Stone, C. Armitage,⁶⁰ P. Wrigley, G. Gaunt,⁶¹ R. Beman⁶² and K. Gatenby⁶³ – and employees in local government and the health service – such as T. Evans, L. Ely,⁶⁴ and V. Ball.⁶⁵

The new Association clearly distanced itself from the tradition of collaboration with the Tories under the Independent label. Raymond Stone, standing for the first time in 1961, declared: 'I am a Liberal by conviction and I do not wish to deceive the electors of Birstall by using any other label, especially the term 'Independent' which has been brought into disrepute by Conservatives using it as camouflage.'⁶⁶ In many respects the local party was fresh and modern. Gone were the old mill-owning patriarchs and in their place were much younger activists mostly new to the Liberal Party and often working in the public sector. None of them appears to have been involved with the old organisation of ten years before. However that is not to say that there were no traces of traditional Liberal influences. Raymond Stone was a teetotaler and prominent member of Birstall Temperance Hall. Cicero Armitage served for fifty years as a lay preacher with the Congregational Church and was the son-in-law of Clement Fearn-sides, a Liberal mayor in the 1930s. The party received active help and encouragement from John G. Walker, the Yorkshire Federation

president, who came from the old Radical family, the Walkers of Mirfield.

There was also a sustained attempt by Raymond Stone to reassert the party's interest in the Birstall Liberal Club, which was selling its premises at this time. The club had abandoned its mission to 'promote the cause of Liberalism and provide means of social intercourse between persons professing Liberal principles' some time previously and none of its current trustees was Liberal. After extensive but inconclusive legal research Raymond Stone concluded that any action would 'court a great deal of unpopularity and hostility which might be a stumbling block to further progress of the Liberal Party in the area, as we believe that a good deal of support for myself in the municipal election came from the membership of the club'⁶⁷.

The first Liberal candidates stood in 1960 and the the initial breakthrough came in Birstall. Standing for the first time in 1961, Raymond Stone came a good second to Labour with one-third of the votes. The following year, at the height of the post-Orpington surge when the Liberals made sweeping gains nationally, he stood again under the slogan 'Build a Better Birstall with Stone', and comfortably gained the seat with a swing of almost 12 per cent. Thereafter Birstall remained safely Liberal down to 1970.

Soothill was the other Liberal stronghold. The ward was securely Independent after 1945. Trevor Evans's surprise victory in 1964 was clearly aided by the absence of Labour opposition and came after an intense and comprehensive door-knocking campaign against the complacent Independents. From 1967, the ward was consistently Liberal, though usually with small majorities.

Cicero Armitage gained a seat from Labour in Batley East in 1963. 'Mr Armitage' (as Peter Wrigley always thinks of him) was a very popular junior school head in Birstall. There were further sporadic Liberal wins in this ward but it remained marginal.

The Liberals never managed to win the other two wards – Batley North and West, both Labour-leaning – though they came close in the early days.

Political outlook

Peter Wrigley does not remember much discussion of 'high politics' at any of the meetings – ward or constituency – nor any disputes over policy, either local or national. Members and councillors, perhaps with some exceptions, had a Liberal ethos rather than a detailed knowledge of or concern about, national policy. Peter summarises their outlook as:

- Exasperation with class-based politics and commitment to a party which tried to represent all the community, and not just one side.
- Belief that councillors and MPs should be servants of the public rather than an exclusive cabal which made decisions in their own rather than the public's interest.
- Expectation that councillors should think for themselves and not slavishly follow a whip. (That had to be modified as the group increased in size!)
- Strong commitment to their areas.
- Inspiration from Jo Grimond, the then apostle of the 'New' politics.
- Industrial partnership and cooperation rather than competition.
- Openness and good communications, though via the press and surgeries rather than literature.

Two areas which might have caused contention had they been pressed too far were Liberal policies on Europe, and immigration. Some of us were ardent Europeans and proud of the fact that the Liberals were and are the only party to have advocated membership from the beginning. Others were less enthusiastic. Batley had at the time a large immigrant population, largely from Pakistan and Bangladesh, recruited by the mill owners as cheap labour. I suspect some members were very uneasy about this, whilst others, like me, were proud of the stance the party had taken on the admission of the Kenyan Asians. Just before I was selected as PPC one of the local working men's clubs announced a colour bar. Just so that the association would be in no doubt as to what they were

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getting, I wrote a letter to the Telegraph and Argus, which was published, condemning this. A small group of Young Liberals and I joined a protest march. One of our councillors came to watch from the pavement. I was nevertheless selected: there wasn't much competition!

Views in other parties were probably similarly eclectic. For example the chairman of the governors at Batley Grammar School, where I worked, was a Labour Alderman, J. W. Thorn-ton. I remember having long arguments with him, I advocating comprehensive education and he being strongly pro-grammar school.'

After adoption as prospective candidate Peter Wrigley joined the Candidates' Association and attended the national Candidates' Association meetings and the party council which met twice a year in in the National Liberal Club.

On the whole most Liberals did not leak beyond the region, and weren't really much interested outside their own patch. We were very parochial. This was before the era of working and lower-middle-class affluence and few, if any, of the activists would have been able to afford to attend the assemblies, except perhaps as part of the annual family holiday, which might not have pleased those with partners and children. In any case, the assemblies were too late for the traditional northern holiday weeks (known as Feast Weeks in Yorkshire and Wakes Weeks in Lancashire). Many of the activists were teachers and would not have found it convenient, or affordable, to take time off so near the start of a new school year. Hence links were mainly with the region. Jeremy Thorpe made a flying visit in the late 1960s. This was part of a regional 'Leader's Tour' and was organised by Michael Meadowcroft. Our turn came for an hour or so on a Friday afternoon, and we toured a local 'up and coming' firm called 'Shaw Sideloaders', then went on to the town hall to meet Vera Ball, mayor, and other councillors.

Community politics in Morley

Morley proved stonier ground than Batley. Efforts to gain a foothold in the early 1960s came to nothing. Frances Sowden contested North ward in 1962 (13 per cent) and 1963 (11 per cent), but could make little impact in this hard-fought Labour/Independent marginal. Drighlington, where the Liberals received 23 per cent of the votes in 1962 seemed more promising, but it was left uncontested in 1963. Thereafter Liberal activity in Morley seems to have largely subsided until the end of the decade.

A second revival took place in Morley at the end of the 1960s. Jaime Reynolds recalls:

'hen I first became politically active in Morley around 1968, the Liberals seemed so absent that I decided instead to help another venerable third party which had a couple of activists in the town and had started to contest the borough council election in one or two wards. This was the Independent Labour Party (ILP), founded by Keir Hardie, which, after a period of

Procession of councillors, probably for the centenary of Batley's incorporation as a borough (1969). Liberal councillors are Bernard Prendergarst in glasses in the foreground, Gerald Gaunt behind him next to Lucy Ely. Behind and to the right of the bespectacled top-hatted figure is Harry Gledhill and the tall Trevor Evans; Cicero Armitage is just behind Gledhill with Vera Ball behind their shoulders (photo provided by Sheila Stone).

glory in the early 1920s, had split away from the Labour Party and declined to almost nothing by the 1940s. A few loyalists continued to keep the flame burning thanks – as I was told – to the fact that the party still owned the old ILP publishing house which gave it rather more resources than other far-left grouplets of the time. They did not seem to be perturbed by the fact that I regarded myself as a Liberal, and thus might be considered an ancient enemy of the ILP. This was the time of the Young Liberal 'Red Guards' and as far as I was concerned we were natural comrades on the radical left. Within a short time I made contact with the Liberals through Peter Wrigley and abandoned the ILP. I discovered that efforts were underway to revive the Liberal Party in Morley. In addition to Peter, the nucleus of activists comprised: Philip Heath,⁶⁸ an energetic Liverpoolian, who had been involved with the Liberals there before moving to Morley; Martin Robinson,⁶⁹ a Lancastrian

who had recently started teaching chemistry at Morley Grammar School; and Wilf Whitaker,⁷⁰ a lecturer at Hull Further Education College who went on to stand as a Liberal parliamentary candidate five times. In Morley, apart from Wilf, who was local and had been a keen Liberal at Morley Grammar School, we were all middle-class interlopers.

Michael Meadowcroft, who was laying the foundations of the electoral organisation that was soon to produce a clutch of Leeds councillors and his election as MP for Leeds West in 1983, was an important inspiration in Morley. Peter Wrigley remembers:

When I was adopted as PPC I felt that, rather than try to join the group on Batley Council, the best way forward for the whole constituency was to try and revive things in Morley. One way of recruiting was to distribute contact cards (post-cards with a freepost reply – very adventurous at the time).



Michael Meadowcroft, who had replaced the devoted and highly respected but rather staid Albert Ingham as Regional Secretary in 1967, introduced us to this system. Those who sent them in usually expected literature and were often surprised to receive a visit. I suspect this was how we ‘found’ Philip Heath.

The Morley group was active from about 1969 to 1972. Meetings were usually held at Gildersome Liberal Club – like the one in Birstall, another remnant of the old working men’s Liberal clubs that existed in the area, where some residual sympathy for the party persisted, at least to the extent of tolerating our meetings as long as we did not bother the other drinkers with politics.

The initial strategy was very simple: to get Philip Heath elected for the Denshaw ward, a Labour stronghold dominated by council housing, where neither Labour nor the Independents made much of an effort. Peter Wrigley continues:

We actually caused the Denshaw by-election to be called. This was a ruse to which Michael Meadowcroft alerted us. One of the Denshaw councillors had died and it was common in those days, particularly in moribund ‘one party’ areas, to leave the seat vacant until the following May. However, if a very small number of electors in the ward, I think only two, pointed out officially that the seat was vacant, a by-election had to be called. So we obtained the necessary form, found local electors to sign it and then handed it in at the town hall. We, of course, were ready, with both a candidate and literature prepared: the others were taken by surprise. I remember very clearly the meeting in Gildersome Liberal Club when Philip Heath, Michael Meadowcroft and I planned all this. We had hoped initially to find a local candidate, preferably an ‘opinion leader’ (e.g. a local doctor or similar, a technique that Michael had successfully used in Leeds) but had no success, and it was Michael who steered the conversation round to the solution that Philip, though an

incomer, should be the candidate. We managed to canvass the entire ward, probably a new experience for Denshaw, and came within a whisker of winning. Had we done so, that could have spearheaded the breakthrough in Morley, and Batley & Morley history could have been different.

The by-election was held in September 1969, Philip Heath coming a close second to Labour, with 36 per cent of the votes.

The revival falters

Philip Heath stood again in Denshaw in May 1970 but his vote slipped to 33 per cent and to only 23 per cent at a by-election soon afterwards. In May 1971 Martin Robinson secured 36 per cent in the safest Labour seat, Central Morley, just sixty votes behind Labour, but he was unavailable to contest a by-election held that summer and moved away from Morley the following year. No Liberals stood in 1972 and in fact no Liberal was elected before Morley ceased to be an independent borough and was absorbed into Leeds in 1974.

In Batley the Liberals built up their strength on the council to four seats by 1964, then surged to become the largest party in 1969 when they held all three seats both in Birstall and Soothill, three seats in East and an aldermen (Raymond Stone, group leader). Thereafter they fell back, maintaining the three Soothill seats, one in Birstall and two aldermen (Raymond Stone and Trevor Evans) in 1972 until the dissolution of the council.

After the May 1968 elections the Liberals held the balance with nine seats to eleven for Labour and twelve for the Allied group of Independents and Conservatives. The Liberals and the Allied group proposed a coalition with chairmanships shared out between all parties according to their strengths, but after eighteen years of control Labour decided to leave office. An Allied–Liberal partnership was, it seems, ruled out by the Liberals. The eventual solution was that the Allied group took the chairmanships and the Liberals the vice-chairmanships. In 1969 the Liberals gained one seat (to ten seats), but the Allied group also gained three

more (Conservative nine, Independent six). As the largest single party the Liberals asked for the support of any of the Independents to take control, but there were no takers. There was no interest from the other two parties in sharing out the chairmanships proportionally. So yet again the Allies took the chairmanships with the Liberals acting as vice-chairmen. Vera Ball was elected mayor – the first Liberal to serve as such since the Second World War.⁷¹

As the crucial 1970 elections approached there was some division within the Liberals over tactics. This mainly concerned the double-member East ward which was normally Labour territory and where there was a record of the anti-Labour parties putting up single candidates for the two vacancies raising the possibility of tacit alliances. The Liberal victories there were all achieved with only one Independent or Conservative candidate standing, or none at all. An exception was 1966 when Cicero Armitage faced both Conservative and Independent opponents and lost his seat to Labour.⁷² But any cooperation must have been of the loosest kind as there was often a wide discrepancy between the votes received by the anti-Labour candidates. The issue came to a head in March 1970 when both Armitage and Gledhill were due to seek re-election. Fearing that the Liberals would lose both seats, East ward planned to put up only one candidate (Armitage) and then get Gledhill elected at a subsequent by-election when Armitage was made an alderman. Raymond Stone and others strongly opposed this strategy which would have meant throwing away a seat and criticised East ward’s over-friendly relations with the Independents/Tories. In the end both Armitage and Gledhill stood, as did an Independent, and both seats were lost to Labour. This would have probably have happened anyway even without the split anti-Labour vote.⁷³ Thereafter the Liberal cause collapsed in the ward.

The Liberal cause was also slipping in Birstall. The last narrow Liberal victory was in 1970. In 1971 Labour surged past the Liberal candidate and in 1972 the Liberals fell to third place.

So we obtained the necessary form, found local electors to sign it and then handed it in at the town hall. We, of course, were ready, with both a candidate and literature prepared: the others were taken by surprise.

The Liberals were pushed back by Labour's increase in popularity in 1970–72 which was a national phenomenon, but hit the Liberals hard in those Northern textile towns where they had won seats in the late 1960s on the anti-Labour swing. The Independents/Conservatives lost support too and by 1972 Labour had recaptured a large majority on the council. By the time the next Liberal surge came in 1973–74 on the back of a string of parliamentary by-election successes, the two municipal boroughs were in the process of dissolution as local government was reorganised. Batley was merged into Kirklees and Morley into Leeds.

Parliamentary elections in the 1960s and 1970s

Elections to Westminster in these years reflected the ups and downs of the party's fortunes both nationally and locally. The Liberals put up a candidate at the 1964 general election for the first time since Ashley Mitchell's maverick bid in 1945 and the first fully official effort since 1929. The candidate was a Leeds pharmaceutical chemist and recent chairman of the National League of Young Liberals, Ivan Lester, who polled 17 per cent. Lester defected to Labour shortly afterwards and in 1966 Bill Berry was the candidate with a vote of 14.8 per cent.

Peter Wrigley takes up the story:

I was selected as PPC in 1968 and tried hard to extend our influence into Morley. In addition I managed to get a good deal of publicity through my membership of the Trades Council. I belonged to the National Association of Schoolmasters, at the time the only teachers' union affiliated to the TUC. The local branch of the NAS appointed me as their delegate to the Batley Trades Council (there was no competition) and as such I attended their meetings which were held I think monthly and to which the *Batley News* sent a reporter.

The most common topic of discussion was the inadequacy of the local bus services (plus *ça change*) but I managed to introduce lots of Liberal themes, particularly regarding industrial

democracy and decentralisation to the regions, and the reporter usually put something of what I'd said in the local paper. A burning topic in the period was Barbara Castle's attempt to tame the unions with 'In Place of Strife', which much embarrassed die-hard Labour veterans and on which we Liberals, through our policies of industrial partnership, had a radical alternative which I very much enjoyed pushing.

In those days parliamentary candidates were not given time off for the three weeks of the campaign so for the first two weeks I would teach full time during the day, and campaign and somehow also keep up with my work in the evenings. The weather was splendid, which was a great help, but the result was a disappointment nationally. However, locally we were proud to be one of only a handful of constituencies where the Liberals increased both the total vote (ours from 6,366 to 6,893) and percentage share (from 14.8 per cent to 15.1 per cent).

In early 1972 I left the area to teach in Papua New Guinea. I tried before I left to fix up a successor but without success. Hence there was no PPC when the unexpected 'Who governs Britain?' election of February 1974 was called. The regional chairman, David Shutt, suggested I return to fight the seat. As I was paid a huge amount of money by British standards, I could well afford it, so flew back, and greatly enjoyed the three-week campaign when, unlike in the previous election, I was able to work at it full time.

The atmosphere was totally different from 1970. Everywhere we were received as realistic contenders rather than as well-meaning also-rans and many people, including some of our campaign team, thought we could win. Optimism was at its highest in the weekend before the poll, when one of the opinion polls put us on 28 per cent and the newspapers speculated as to who might be in Jeremy Thorpe's Cabinet (I wasn't mentioned). Alas the euphoria faded in the final four days. Nationally we polled 19.3 per cent and

The atmosphere was totally different from 1970. Everywhere we were received as realistic contenders rather than as well-meaning also-rans and many people, including some of our campaign team, thought we could win.

in Batley & Morley we obtained 23.8 per cent (11,470 votes).

It was never glad confident morning again. I did not fight the second 1974 election, but had returned to PNG (where I stayed until 1980). Ivan Lester had returned to the fold and polled 20.7 per cent, but by the 1979 election the heart had gone out of the association, possibly partly as a result of the demise of Batley town council and the merger into Kirklees. The candidate in 1979 was Chris Cawood, a Dewsbury teacher, who polled only 10.6 per cent in what he described as 'the cheapest election campaign ever'. Under the old rules that would have meant a lost deposit.

This was the last Batley & Morley election. Morley was merged with South Leeds and Batley with Spennings Dale for the next election in 1983.

A reinvented party?

In 1974 Brian B. Barker, penultimate mayor of Morley, was one of its six councillors elected to serve on the new Leeds Metropolitan District Council. He represented the fourth generation of Barkers to play a leading role in Morley local government. His forebears had all been regarded as pillars of the local Liberal Party, but he was an 'Independent' – in other words a Conservative – with not even a hint of a connection with the Batley & Morley Liberal Association.

At first sight Batley & Morley seems to demonstrate clearly how far the modern Liberal/Liberal Democrat Party that emerged in the 1960s diverged from the old party that dwindled, died or was diverted into the Conservative camp between the 1930s and the 1950s. In a district where the Radical tradition was considered to be a powerful factor until well after the Second World War there seemed to be little if any continuity between the personnel, the outlook and the support of the Grimond-era Liberals and their predecessors.

But did the Liberals so decisively escape their past? In Batley & Morley, as in many other northern industrial constituencies built on textiles, 'Orpington Man' was a rare animal. The Liberal gains of

the 1960s came in areas with a Liberal tradition. In Batley & Morley the most sustained breakthroughs were in Birstall and Soothill,⁷⁴ urban villages with a long Liberal history. They were secured by Liberals with deep roots in their communities such as Raymond Stone and Cicero Armitage who personified Radical Nonconformism, not by incomers applying new electoral techniques as a short-cut to victory. The swing to the Liberals in Batley & Morley and some similar Northern industrial towns in the later 1960s came not because the Liberals were seen as an alternative party of the left, but because they were regarded as an acceptable anti-Labour Party at a time when the Wilson government was unpopular. As Labour recovered, the Liberals lost ground. Their retreat was partly because the ‘pioneers’ had run out of steam by the early 1970s and were unable to find charismatic leaders to re-inspire them. But it was also because the district was undergoing sweeping changes in its economy and local government. This transformation undermined the Liberal roots that had supported the party for decades and had helped to sustain its revival in the 1960s.

Dr Jaime Reynolds was a UK civil servant from 1979 and since 2005 has been an official of the European Commission working on international environmental policy. He has contributed numerous articles to the Journal of Liberal History and other Liberal Democrat History Group publications. Peter Wrigley was a teacher, mostly of economics, and mostly in Batley, but he has spent a substantial part of his career in developing countries: Papua New Guinea (1972–80) and, as a VSO, Malawi (1989–91). He is now retired but continues to campaign as a Liberal Democrat, is honorary president of the Batley & Spen local party and blogs as keynesianliberal.blogspot.com

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In Batley & Morley, as in many other northern industrial constituencies built on textiles, ‘Orpington Man’ was a rare animal. The Liberal gains of the 1960s came in areas with a Liberal tradition.

- mill-town municipal boroughs of Batley & Morley throughout, and Ossett until it was transferred to Dewsbury in 1949. In 1937 the urban districts of Gildersome and Drighlington were joined to Morley and Birstall to Batley; and in 1949 they were transferred from the Spen Valley to the Batley & Morley constituency. Ardsley was also joined to Morley in 1937 and transferred from the Rothwell constituency to Batley & Morley in 1949.
- 2 Theodore Cooke Taylor (1850–1952), Batley woollen manufacturer, Liberal MP for Radcliffe-cum-Farnworth, Lancs, 1900–18.
 - 3 Pall Mall Gazette, *The New Parliament* 1900.
 - 4 George Arthur Greenwood, *Taylor of Batley* (London, 1957); T. C. Taylor, *One Hundred Years: Records, Recollections and Reflections* (Whitehead and Miller, 1946)
 - 5 Sir Ronald F. Walker (1880–1971) was president of the Yorkshire Liberal Federation from 1947–60 and of the Liberal Party in 1952–53. His nephew, John G. Walker (1912–2009) was chairman of the Yorkshire party in the 1960s and was a Batley & Dewsbury magistrate and later president of the Batley & Spen Liberal Association. See: <http://www.bramley.demon.co.uk/obits/walkerJG.html>
 - 6 An evocative documentary on Batley in 1968 by Professor Patrick Nuttgens can be viewed on YouTube: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QN6Y8rkaVk>
 - 7 David K. Atkinson, *Morley Borough 1886–1974 – A Pictorial History* (Morley 1973). The Atkinson collection of photographs and much other fascinating local historical material can be accessed on the Morley Community Archives site: http://www.morleyarchives.org.uk/p_homepage2.html
 - 8 *The Guardian*, 8 Feb. 1972.
 - 9 There were straight fights between the Liberals and Labour in 1918, 1923, 1924 and 1929. The Liberals won in 1918 and 1924. In a three-way contest in 1922 Labour won with the Liberals second.
 - 10 Frederick Wilfred Hoyle Auty (1881–1951), Batley woollen manufacturer, Liberal, mayor of Batley 1942–44.
 - 11 Charles Robert Spedding (1865–1938), Batley woollen manufacturer, Liberal, mayor of Batley 1927–30.
 - 12 Edmund Bruce (1873–1955), Batley woollen rag merchant, Liberal, mayor of Batley 1930–32.
 - 13 Thomas Western, mayor of Batley 1920–22.
 - 14 Clement Fearnside (1882–1952), waste-paper merchant, founder of *Batley News*, mayor of Batley 1935–37.
 - 15 Barker family – Morley woollen manufacturers, Nonconformists: James Barker (1842–95), Liberal councillor 1886–95; Brian Bradley Barker (1868–1942), Liberal, on council 1902–42, mayor of Morley 1936–37; James Barker (1899–1971), Colonel, Liberal/Independent, on council 1936–64, mayor of Morley 1952–53; Brian Baines Barker (1925–), Independent councillor, mayor of Morley 1972–73. Brian Bradley Barker’s brother-in-law, Humphrey Akeroyd Bradley (1867–1934) was also a councillor (1934–56) and magistrate.
 - 16 Rhodes etc. clan – Morley cloth manufacturers, Nonconformists. Samuel Rhodes (1857–1920) was mayor 1906–9 and 1911. His nephew Harold Rhodes (1881–1956) was mayor in 1934. Harold’s half-brother Henry Hedley Watson (1866–1929) was mayor in 1919–20 (his son Mayo Marshall Watson was a councillor). Samuel’s brother-in-law’s nephew, Thomas Arthur Marshall (1874–1945) was mayor in 1927–28. See the Ellis Family Tree (Judith Berry) on Ancestry.co.uk for details of the Rhodes and Barker genealogies.
 - 17 Joseph Kirk (1858–1931), Morley woollen manufacturer (having started as an overlooker), Liberal, on council 1905–31, mayor 1923–25.
 - 18 David Dickinson (1880–1965) Morley textile manufacturer, Morley alderman, mayor 1942–43.
 - 19 Hepworths: Benjamin Peel Hepworth (1858–1948), Morley woollen cloth manufacturer, Wesleyan, Conservative, mayor of Morley 1929–31; his daughter Clare Elizabeth Hepworth (1900–78) was a Morley councillor, alderman and mayor 1956–57, also freeman of the borough.
 - 20 John Stuble (1850–1911), Batley woollen manufacturer, Liberal, Congregationalist, alderman, mayor 1909–11.
 - 21 David Stuble (1858–1934), Batley woollen manufacturer, mayor 1911–12, 1917–19.
 - 22 Gertrude Elsie Taylor (1875–1957), Batley councillor 1920s–40s, mayor 1932–34.
 - 23 Hamilton Crothers (1869–1935), born Sheffield, insurance clerk then secretary to Theodore Taylor, Batley Liberal councillor, mayor 1922–24. His brother Montague (1862–1934) was deputy managing director of Taylors.

1 The Batley & Morley constituency was formed in 1918, modified in 1949 and existed until 1983. It united the

- 24 Ernest Kirk, director of Theodore Taylor's woollen mill, Liberal/Independent councillor 1945–50.
- 25 Margaret Grace Auty (1875–1960), active Liberal, married Herbert North 1915.
- 26 Herbert North (1867–1943), Batley furniture dealer, Liberal alderman, mayor 1919–20.
- 27 B. Turner, *About Myself* (Houlston, 1930), pp. 175–76.
- 28 Letter from T. C. Taylor to S. Martin, secretary of the Liberal Liberty League 23 Apr. 1945, quoted in Greenwood, *Taylor of Batley*, p. 140.
- 29 *Batley News*, 27 Sept. 1931.
- 30 Walter Forrest (1869–1939), Pudsey woollen manufacturer (sold out 1917), wealthy businessman, Coalition Liberal MP for Pontefract 1919–22, Liberal candidate 1923 and MP for Batley & Morley 1924–29, mayor of Pudsey, knighthood 1935.
- 31 *The Times*, 2 Apr. 1931. Soon after he joined the Liberal Nationals.
- 32 *The Times*, 19 Mar. 1934.
- 33 John Fennell, who ran as 'National Labour' although he was an ex-Liberal.
- 34 Col. James Walker (1879–1954), blanket manufacturer, DSO and bar, chairman Mirfield UDC, brother of Sir Ronald Walker. In 1931, resigned as president of Spen Valley Liberal Association in opposition to Sir John Simon's conversion to tariffs. Chairman of Dewsbury Liberal Association. In the early 1950s, associated with National Liberals and supported the Conservative candidate in Dewsbury.
- 35 Ernest Edgar Dalton (1879–1947), Leeds police sergeant, Nonconformist, prospective Liberal candidate for Batley & Morley in the late 1930s.
- 36 *Batley News*, 26 Oct. 1935.
- 37 Herbert Brook (1883–1949), clerk in woollen mill in Batley, chairman of Batley & Morley Liberal Association 1930s and 1940s.
- 38 *Batley News*, 1 Nov. 1935; *The Times*, 5 Nov. 1935.
- 39 The Liberal Nationals did not form a separate Yorkshire organisation until 1936 and until then did not break with the Liberal Party Organisation even in Simon's Spen Valley constituency. See David Dutton, *Liberals in Schism: A History of the National Liberal Party* (I. B. Tauris, 2008).
- 40 Batley & Morley Liberal Association was affiliated to the LPO in 1938.
- 41 *The Times*, 28 Dec. 1937.
- 42 *The Times*, 27 Feb. 1939.
- 43 *Manchester Guardian*, 7 Mar. 1939. Dalton was critical of the government's appeasement policy and failure to support collective security through the League of Nations and the Republican government in Spain. See his letter to the *Manchester Guardian*, 29 Oct. 1939.
- 44 *The Times*, 28 Feb. 1939, 2 Mar. 1939, 7 Mar. 1939.
- 45 *Manchester Guardian*, 8 Mar. 1939.
- 46 *Ibid.*
- 47 Ashley Mitchell (1886–1977), Ossett worsted cloth manufacturer, father was mayor of Ossett, brother was mayor of Huddersfield, six times Liberal candidate 1923–55.
- 48 In July 1943, the Yorkshire Liberal Federation had rejected Mitchell's motion attacking the Beveridge Report and Mitchell had resigned his Federation offices. M. Egan, *Coming Into Focus – the Transformation of the Liberal Party 1945–64* (Saarbrücken, 2009), p. 122.
- 49 See Ronald Walker's letter expressing 'sympathetic anxiety' about the Beveridge scheme, *Manchester Guardian*, 22 Jan. 1945.
- 50 Sources: D. J. J. Owen, 'Batley and Morley from the Inside', *Land & Liberty*, July/August 1945, p. 65; A. Mitchell, *A Yorkshire Liberal Keeps Faith* (http://www.cooperativeindividualism.org/mitchell-ashley_a-yorkshire-liberal-keeps-faith-1957.html); M. Cole, 'The Political Starfish: West Yorkshire Liberalism in the Twentieth Century', *Contemporary British History*, vol. 25, no. 1, March 2011, pp. 181–82. http://www.cooperativeindividualism.org/georgists_mitchell_ashley.html
- 51 Cole, 'Political Starfish', p. 182, quoting a letter from the chairman of the Yorkshire Young Liberal Federation to Albert Ingham, Yorkshire Liberal agent, 21 Feb. 1949.
- 52 Christopher J. James, *MP for Dewsbury* (C. J. James, 1970), p. 238 – says 1950 was the first time Taylor supported a Tory candidate, but *The Times*, 8 Feb. 1949, says he did so at the 1949 by-election.
- 53 *Manchester Guardian*, 25 Jan. 1950, 13 Feb. 1950.
- 54 *Manchester Guardian*, 8 Feb. 1949.
- 55 A Batley & Morley Association was affiliated to the Liberal Party in 1949 and 1950, but not in 1958.
- 56 Labour controlled Batley in 1945–46, from 1949/50 to 1968, and in 1972–74. It controlled Morley in 1945–47, 1954–55, 1956–60, and 1963–66.
- 57 A. E. 'Bill' Berry (1928–2000), journalist, Deputy Chief Sub-editor of *Bradford Telegraph & Argus*, member of Yorkshire Liberal Executive.
- 58 Trevor Evans (1922–92), local government (later health service) administrator, Batley Liberal councillor/alderman 1964–74, , deputy leader of Liberal group.
- 59 Clifford S. Lockwood (1915–97), Liberal councillor for Soothill and Kirklees, councillor for Batley East & Soothill 1973–76.
- 60 Raymond Stone (1933–85), teacher at Crossley and Porter School, Halifax, studied history at Manchester University, councillor for Birstall 1962–74, alderman and leader of the Liberal group.
- 61 Cicero Armitage (1904–96), headteacher of Birstall Junior School, Liberal councillor for Batley East 1963–70, Congregationalist, lay preacher 1935–85.
- 62 Gerald Gaunt, pupil at Batley Grammar School, teacher in Huddersfield, Liberal councillor for Birstall 1967–71.
- 63 Richard Beman, Liberal councillor for Soothill 1969–72.
- 64 H. Keith Gatenby Primary School teacher, councillor for Soothill 1971–74.
- 65 Lucy Ely, elder sister of Trevor Evans, Liberal councillor for Birstall 1967–73.
- 66 Vera Ball, shopkeeper and former nurse, Liberal councillor for Birstall 1963–70, mayor of Batley 1969–70.
- 67 *Batley News*, cutting undated (1961).
- 68 Letter from R. Stone to D. Fletcher Burden, 5 Jan. 1963, and other correspondence in the possession of the authors.
- 69 Philip Heath, sales manager, chairman of Morley Liberals 1970, candidate for Denshaw ward.
- 70 Martin Robinson (1947–), Chemistry teacher at Morley Grammar School, later deputy head at Ryburn Valley High School, former chair Lancaster University Liberal Club, Lib Dem candidate in Calderdale 2010.
- 71 Wilf Whitaker (1946–), educated at Morley Grammar School, Hull University, Huddersfield Polytechnic, lecturer in Geography and Urban Studies, chairman of Yorkshire Young Liberal Federation 1970, president of Normanton Liberals 1974–77, secretary of Boothferry Liberals 1982–83, Liberal parliamentary candidate in Keighley (February 1974), Normanton (October 1974), Barnsley (1979), Selby (1983) and Don Valley (1987). Gerry Wright recalls: 'I was at Morley Grammar School with Wilf Whitaker. He was two years older but I remember him standing in mock elections and raising awareness at every opportunity re the Liberal cause. Regarded as an eccentric by many fellow pupils probably because of his passion and appearance. His tortoiseshell glasses and vestiges of stubble marked him out as a hippy type. A very well-read scholar who did much for the Liberal cause when the party was going through some choppy water. Folklore in Morley. Wilf could not be accused of being bereft of distinctive views and policies. Although I did not share his classless approach to political analysis I matured enough to respect his commitment and views. A great character.' (email, 15 July 2011)
- 72 Raymond Stone's collection of *Batley News* cuttings in possession of authors.
- 73 Bernard Prendergarst was the Conservative candidate; he subsequently joined the Liberals.
- 74 Note on AGM of Batley & Morley Liberal Association March 1970 in authors' possession.
- 75 Soothill Upper (also known as Hanging Heaton) was an Urban District from 1894 to 1910 when half of it was merged into Dewsbury. The remainder of Soothill Upper was joined to Batley.