

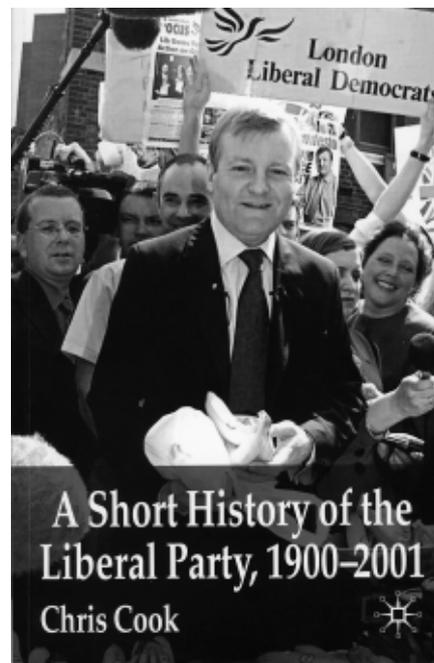
In Viscount Thurso's own lifetime, he was asked by the Scottish Record Office (in 1966) if he would deposit there the papers relating to his tenure of the office of Secretary of State and these papers were consequently deposited in Edinburgh early in 1972. At the same time, Viscount Thurso's son began the transfer of the residue of his late father's papers (the 1st Viscount had died in June 1970) to Churchill College. These papers are now Sections I and II.

In January 1973 the Scottish Record Office agreed to transfer their Thurso papers, relating to his time as Secretary of State for Scotland, to Churchill College, having first xeroxed them. This collection was catalogued in the National Register of Archives (Scotland) Survey 189 (Additional) and comprises Section V of the Thurso collection.

By the spring of 1973, Viscount Thurso's secretary, Miss Cynthia

Metcalf, was sorting and listing the papers that were to be deposited at Churchill College in May and September that year as Sections III and IV.

An online catalogue to the Thurso Papers is available on the A2A web-site at [www.a2a.pro.gov.uk/](http://www.a2a.pro.gov.uk/). The collection itself is open for consultation by researchers using Churchill Archives Centre, Churchill College, Cambridge: individual closures of files are indicated in the catalogue. Churchill Archives Centre is open from Monday to Friday, 9am – 5pm. A prior appointment and two forms of identification are required. Please see our website at [www.chu.cam.ac.uk/archives/](http://www.chu.cam.ac.uk/archives/) for further details, including a list of further collections relating to the Liberal Party, such as the papers of the Dilke family, Sir Dingle Foot, Lord Gladwyn, Reginald McKenna and Sir Edward Spears.



election achievements. If it had covered all the other elements as thoroughly as this, it would be an excellent source – and also, of course, a good deal longer. As it is, it is really quite unbalanced, lacking, in particular, any real consideration of Liberal policy and ideology (although this is rectified a little in its material on recent years).

The choice of the book's starting date is puzzling, as 1900 is in no way a significant date in Liberal history. In fact, this is rather misleading, as the first two and a bit chapters (out of twenty) cover the events of the nineteenth century, mainly starting in June 1859 with the famous meeting in Willis' Rooms which saw Whigs, Radicals and Peelites combining to bring down Derby's Government. That date is normally held to mark the origin of the modern party. In fact, although it is rather short on what Liberals stood for and what Liberal governments actually did, this part of the book provides a pretty decent summary of pre-twentieth century Liberal history.

But as the book gets more detailed, more and more errors and irritations creep in. Events and people are mentioned without any explanation of what or who they were – for example, the Lloyd George Fund is referred to several times without us being told where it originated (the sale of political honours); Violet Bonham Carter

# Reviews

## Too short a history

Chris Cook: *A Short History of the Liberal Party 1900 – 2001* (Palgrave, 2002, 288 pp.)

Reviewed by **Duncan Brack**

The best thing one can say about the latest edition – the sixth – of Chris Cook's *A Short History of the Liberal Party* is that it exists. There is no other up-to-date history of the Liberal Democrats and its predecessors (despite the title, the book actually covers Liberals, SDP and Liberal Democrats) apart from John Stevenson's rather thin, frequently inaccurate and now dated *Third Party Politics Since 1945* (Blackwell, 1993). Chris Cook and his publishers are to be congratulated on bringing out successive editions at increasingly frequent intervals (three editions in the last ten years).

But I can't help wishing it was rather better. A good party history, it seems to me, ought to include a description of the party's leading personalities, its internal structures and ways of functioning, key elements of its strategy (or lack of one) at crucial moments, and party philosophy and policy. It should show how it related to the outside world (i.e. what difference it made), its underlying bases of support in the electorate, and, of course, its electoral record.

This book really only scores well on the last point, Liberal psephology, where it provides a comprehensive record of local, by- and general

makes an appearance without us being told she was Asquith's daughter; in 1976 (though from the context you'd think it was 1975), we are told that Cyril Smith seemed about to resign, but not what post he was thinking of resigning from (actually, Chief Whip); and so on. One paragraph of the analysis of the October 1974 election results is written in the present tense, having presumably remained uncorrected since the book's first edition in 1976. Peter Knowlson, a member of the Liberal negotiating team over merger with the SDP, has strangely morphed into someone called Andy Millson. And the post-merger name of the party is given wrongly (it was Social and Liberal Democrats, never Social and Liberal Democratic Party), though it has to be said that Cook joins legions of journalists in that particular error.

More seriously, Liberal *thought* is continuously sidelined. The chapter on Jo Grimond's period as leader refers to his important policy innovations, such as Liberal support for UK entry to Europe, and industrial democracy, in less than half a sentence, whereas the party's opinion poll and electoral record is examined in painstaking detail. The 1986 defence debate at the Eastbourne Assembly – the occasion when the Liberal-SDP Alliance began to fall apart – is referred to with no

explanation of the background whatsoever, while, once again, the same chapter looks at the Alliance's electoral record in impressive detail. Pleasingly, however, the 1986 vote at Eastbourne is *not* represented as Liberal adoption of unilateral nuclear disarmament (another common mistake), though the 1981 vote at Llandudno against Cruise missiles (on a motion moved by a certain P. Ashdown), wrongly, is.

Palgrave, Chris Cook's publishers, have done the book no favours. It suffers from several typos, poor punctuation, blurry typography, erratic paragraph spacing and excessively narrow inside margins. There are no pictures except on the cover, and the index is too skimpy and frequently wrong.

If you want a thorough and comprehensive examination of Liberal, SDP and Liberal Democrat psephology, this book is for you. If you want a fairly concise run-through of the key events in party history, it's not at all bad. But if you want a more in-depth look at Liberal thinking, Liberal policies, Liberal people, and what difference they all made, I'm afraid to say that this book is a disappointment. Now how about a seventh – completely revised – edition?

*A shorter version of this review originally appeared in Liberal Democrat News.*

Council; reading a reminder about a tax return from the Inland Revenue; compiling Government Funding Council time sheets; carrying out Research Assessment Exercise administration in the University; dealing with Home Office statistics of numbers of anti-social behaviour orders granted; and with Criminal Cases Review Commission figures for the numbers of convictions quashed by the Court of Appeal. Numbers and compiling numbers dominate all of our lives in the first years of the 21st Century. David Boyle's book is an antidote to this.

Just because we all know something does not remove the benefit we gain from someone setting it out and telling us what has actually happened and how we got here. We all know that cost or accountant's reporting is not the only or the most important way to measure what is valuable to us or in society. Even though we all know this, it is still important that someone actually sets out the state we are in and how we got here. David Boyle has done that, and in doing so has produced a very valuable piece of research.

David makes his critique of the over-reliance on statistics and accounting by telling a story. The story is largely historical, with most of the chapters dealing with historical matters. It includes chapters on Bentham and Mill and on Keynes. The link between Bentham, Mill, Bertrand Russell and our very own Conrad Russell are well known. I never knew before that there was a connection between Keynes and the environmental economist E. F. Schumacher. The author is critical at times of the utilitarians but is always reasonably sympathetic to our political heroes. He is fair throughout. His chapter on 'the Feelgood Factor' is even fair to politicians and manufacturers, suggesting that they can't (always) be held responsible for people not being happy (see pp. 89 – 92).

Other chapters which have a political edge are on the origins of the census, and on the growing modern acceptance of sustainable investment strategies (chapter 7). The chapter on the census is about the 18th and 19th centuries, Chadwick and the development of the

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## Too many numbers

David Boyle: *The Tyranny of Numbers: Why counting can't make us happy* (Harper Collins, 2001, 236 pp.)

Reviewed by Kiron Reid

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I can't make up my mind whether David Boyle is being revolutionary or whether he is just saying something that we all know already. His latest book denounces the dominance of accounting and lambasts the obsession with statistics in modern times.

In everything that we do counting plays a major role. For example, I spent

today at a seminar by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary about the capital costs in a Best Value Review of Cleaning; discussing the budget at a consultation meeting with NCIS and the National Crime Squad; learning the cost of domiciliary care being considered in a report by the 'Cabinet' (or Executive Board) of Liverpool City