

nevertheless been a place where 'great and inspiring things have happened for women and for liberty'.

Diana Wallis MEP stood in at the last minute and delivered an excellent speech. Her first nomination for heroine status was Anne Carter, a woman often in trouble, who lived in Essex in the 1620s. While her motives may be questioned, Anne led a group of men in a raid on a ship following the introduction of a grain tax. One could argue that it was an example of direct action by a group of desperate, hungry people fighting for the good of the local community against central government. Unfortunately, the powers of the day did not see it like that. Anne was captured and hanged for her part in the civil unrest.

Ms Wallis also nominated (though she is still alive) Mary Robinson, a woman who, in Diana Wallis's words, 'rocked the system' and had a tremendous impact on Irish society. Robinson was the first woman President of Ireland and used her presidency for the good of all people in Eire, not just the ones who had voted for her. Diana argued with force that Mary Robinson's impressive record on human rights means she is a liberal heroine, whatever her party label.

Members of the audience then offered nominations for liberal heroine status. Harriet Smith suggested Enid Lakeman for her work on electoral reform, while Sue Vincent offered Caroline Norton (granddaughter of Richard Brinsley Sheridan) who lived in a era where women's voices counted for nothing, yet campaigned for property rights for women. Elizabeth Garrett Anderson was offered as a heroine for her groundbreaking work on women's health. Others suggested included Marie Stopes, Josephine Butler, Emily Hobhouse, Octavia Hill and Helen Suzman.

**Diana Wallis argued with force that Mary Robinson's impressive record on human rights means she is a liberal heroine, whatever her party label.**

As the meeting closed, despite there being no end to the discussion, a clear call came from the audience that the History Group should look at running a special *Journal* issue focused on heroines. Judging from the questions at this fringe, there is much debate to be had about what a liberal heroine is and how to define heroism. Does she have to be dead? Or could she be alive and still working for political change, such as Shirley Williams? And clearly there is a considerable amount of material to consider.

Several members of the audience spoke with warmth and affection about Baroness (Nancy) Seear. William Wallace reminded us of her support for the party through the bad as well as the good years. Liz Baker, in replying, said that Nancy had once offered advice to Sally Hamwee about attending political meetings: 'Always go if there is food'. There was no food at this meeting, but I feel sure that Nancy would have come for the intellectual feast. I look forward to seeing what the History Group serves up at the next conference!

## ARCHIVES

### Liberalism in Dundee

by Iain Flett

Although not a source immediately apparent as pertaining to Liberalism, the sixteenth century wooden-boarded register of burgesses or freemen of Dundee, known as *The Lockit Buik* (Locked Book) contains entries of interest to Liberal historians. George, later Baron, Armitstead, was made a burgess in 1854 not in his own right, but by right of his wife Jane, who was daughter of Edward Baxter of Kincaldrum. He was one of the very few who was later entered again in his own right as an honorary burgess in 1904 'in recognition of his long commercial connection with Dundee and his generous liberality to the Charitable and Benevolent Institutions of the City'.

There are also entries for the following figureheads:

Rt Hon Sir George Otto Trevelyan, Bart., HM Sec of State for Scotland, in connection with his support for Dundee's constitution as a County of City, 1894.

Sir John Leng, printer, publisher and MP for Dundee, 1902.

Rt Hon Herbert Henry Asquith, Prime Minister and First Lord of the Treasury, 1912.

Rt Hon David Lloyd George MP, Prime Minister 'especially to his services in connection with the Great World War now raging', 1917.

Sir Garnet Wilson 'in recognition of his long, distinguished and useful career as a member of the Town Council of Dundee ...', 1971.

In addition to this, there is an amusing and unusual cartoon of Dingle McIntosh Foot on the Friends of Dundee City Archives website index to their Poor

# CLEMENT DAVIES – LIBERAL PARTY SAVIOUR?

Clement Davies led the Liberal Party from 1945 to 1956. During that time, the party came very close to dying out – but it survived. He turned down Churchill’s offer of a government position and in so doing preserved the party’s integrity. His tenure was as long as that of Jo Grimond, the hero of modern Liberalism. And yet today Davies’ leadership is hardly remembered at all.

Did Clement Davies save the Liberal Party from extinction? Or was he part of the problem?

Clement Davies’ contribution to British politics will be assessed by **Alan Wyburn Powell**, author of the new biography, *Clement Davies: Liberal Leader*, and **Dr David Roberts** of the University of Wales at Bangor.

**8.00 p.m., Sunday 21 September**

Lancaster Room, Hilton Brighton Metropole Hotel, Brighton

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database at [www.fdca.org.uk/poor\\_index.htm](http://www.fdca.org.uk/poor_index.htm). It portrays the night that he dressed incognito in 1932 to gain access to the East Poorhouse to test complaints about the accommodation and food.

However, there are two principal collections in Dundee City Archives of interest to Liberal historians. The first is of GD/DLA, Dundee Liberal Association, covering the years 1884 to 1981. Minutes range from those of the Executive Committee, covering the period 1929–58, which include a pamphlet and letter from the Dundee Spanish Medical Aid Committee, 17 May 1937, down to nine ward minute books for the first quarter of the twentieth century. The ward minute books have been found fascinating as a case study by those researching ‘grassroots’ activity.

As in all archives, titles can be misleading; the Dundee League of Young Liberals account book for 1925–38, more importantly, contains 9 loose items, including 4 photographs of Jeremy Thorpe MP, with Sir Garnet Wilson and Nathaniel Gordon, with shoppers in Dundee in February 1972.

The fine tradition, now a faint memory, of keeping pasted newscuttings books has left this collection with a rich insight into the Association’s work and interests. With this series starting in 1882, the second volume contains a Programme for a Grand Evening Concert in 1895, and a ‘Warning to Electors’ poster in 1896, and of course there would have to be at least one volume relating to Churchill’s election campaign of 1909–10,

together with that of Dingle Foot of 1935–45.

There is detailed correspondence in 1947–48 concerning candidates for the Dundee parliamentary seats including Dingle Foot, John Junor and Sir Garnet Wilson, Lord Provost [Scots for mayor] of Dundee, and this neatly leads us to the other collection of interest to Liberal historians, that of Sir Garnet Wilson. Sir Garnet’s family has left Dundee City Archives with its only extensive collection of correspondence created by a Lord Provost, and this collection is an excellent reflection of his views, his contacts, his politics, his own family business of a large department store, and particularly the running of the Home Front in Dundee during World War Two.

Starting with Sir Garnet’s legal apprenticeship

indenture of 1900, there are his speeches from the 1930s on topics as diverse as ‘Style and Vocabulary’ and ‘The Educational Service and the Employer’. His correspondence, which is still being catalogued, includes exchanges in 1940 with his friend and fellow Liberal MP Dingle Foot, in the Ministry of Economic Warfare, and with D. C. Thomson, the Dundee press magnate and arch-critic of Churchill.

These records are available for consultation at Dundee City Archives by prior appointment. Address: 21 City Square, Dundee DD1 3BY; Tel: +44 (0)1382 434494; Fax: 434666. Our website is <http://www.dundee.gov.uk/archives>.