

Their second regret was a failure, at least since the heyday of David Alton, to translate the party's local government success into Liberal and Lib Dem MPs from Liverpool. (Both speakers, as well as the chair, Chris Rennard, hailed from Liverpool Wavertree, which Cllr Storey called the party's 'big dream'.)

One of the intriguing issues to arise was 'why Liverpool?' Why had Liberalism – and, more particularly, a special urban variety of Liberalism – proved so successful in that city? Cllr Storey put it down to the fact that Liverpool is 'a maverick place ... where people like to buck the trend'. Sir Trevor believed that Liverpudlians like to support the underdog. For his part, Chris

Rennard saw Liverpool as 'a commonsense place'.

This question, as well as the specific policies, strategies and tactics that Liberals in Liverpool have followed, could have been developed in further depth. For instance, when the party has won, has it really been because Labour has lost? But no matter: we can come back to the analysis another day. At the spring fringe meeting, a good cross-section of the party's activists and campaigners came to honour three giants of community-based Liberalism, listen to their stories and celebrate their achievements. What Sir Trevor and Cllr Storey proved above all was that, in Liverpool, Liberals don't talk politics, they just do it.

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Permission campaigning

Paul Richards: *How to Win an Election* (second edition; London: Politico's Publishing, 2004)

Reviewed by **Mark Pack**

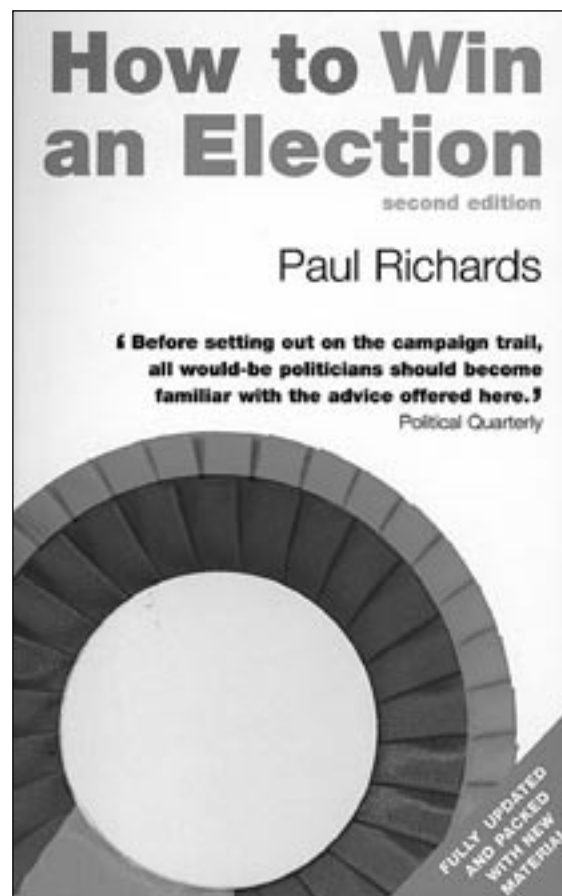
Taken at face value, this new edition of Paul Richards' book is a failure. The blurb promises a guide to winning elections, yet a novice reading this book will not come away with the practical skills to have a chance of winning. But if you ignore the over-eager publishing hype on the back of the book and in the press release launching it, and instead take it as a gentle canter through the elements of modern elections, it is much more successful.

To give one simple example – a reader of the section on internet campaigning will almost certainly come away knowing that it is important and what it involves in broad terms, but

having learnt almost nothing about how to actually go away and send emails or develop a successful website.

The author has a long record of standing for, or organising campaigns on behalf of, the Labour Party in UK elections – and, as he points out, his own personal lack of success when standing is an almost irresistible item in his own biography. Yet he does have real experience to impart which helps distinguish the book from some of the abstract academic tomes covering the same area.

Although he can't resist the occasional mindless partisan jibe, the book gives a fair wind to examples and campaigning styles



from all the main UK political parties. His breezy and readable style makes his views always clear and concise. Even if the descriptions sometimes gloss over the complexities – as with his superficial comments on turnout levels – you know clearly and quickly what his views are.

The book's eight chapters have a broad spread, from the purpose of elections, to the formation of strategies, to the delivery of campaigns. Paul Richards's own particular emphasis through the book is on 'permission campaigning'. This is the idea that, with a public that is often cynical and uninterested, politicians first have to work hard to get 'permission' from them to engage in discussion on an issue and need then to build up a personal dialogue.

He also draws heavily on one of his previous publications, on media management, which makes that section of the book one of the few to offer detailed 'how to' steps from which the reader can learn practical skills.

The book's production qualities are variable. In its favour is

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good clear printing on decent paper and a spine made using proper glue – particularly important in a reference work. Counting against is the poor index, which a series of spot checks showed up to miss many items. Page 160 is also in the wrong place and a description of US primaries that states there are four types is not followed by details on all four.

For someone wanting to know more about what happens in campaigns and why, the book is a success – just don't expect to learn how to do actually do it yourself.

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extract covering the Unionist years privately in 1981³ and the period when Derby served under Disraeli, ending with his resignation in 1878, was not published until 1994⁴. These, presumably final, extracts have had to wait a further nine years.

This new volume contains a selection from the hitherto unpublished period 1878–85, together with a reprint of the hard-to-obtain, privately printed selection from 1885 onwards. In one extensive volume we have the bulk of Derby's jottings on his Liberal and Liberal Unionist periods.

John Vincent suggests that the diary entries were made at the time or delayed by only a day or two by pressure of business or illness. Vincent adds that they have not been subject to retrospective correction. Internal evidence appears to substantiate this. The entries sometimes repeat views from a few days earlier and show no sign of hindsight. Derby is – at least sometimes – careful to distinguish comments he has noted immediately from those he was not able to record at the time and has had recorded from memory. He is also careful how he handles mere hearsay.

So what do we learn? These diaries served a very different purpose to Gladstone's. Gladstone provided effective time-management sheets, occasionally enlivened by a stray comment, to ensure that he could account to his deity for his labours on earth. Derby was not a religious man. Rather, he recorded the passing events, as they occurred, which were significant to one of the country's leading landowners and front-rank politicians. He is particularly useful in his occasional thumbnail sketches of his contemporaries and sometimes waspish about the recently deceased, repeating the gossip which inevitably coloured contemporary responses to events but which is usually missing from official lives and academic studies. Even after Vincent's editing, we see a glorious mixture of the

The diary of a somebody

John Vincent (ed.): *The Diaries of Edward Henry Stanley, 15th Earl of Derby (1826–93) Between 1878 and 1893: A Selection* (Leopards Head Press, 2003)

Reviewed by **Tony Little**

The Stanleys have not been well treated by history, or at least not by historians of the nineteenth century. Edward George Stanley, the 14th Earl of Derby (1799–1869) led the Conservative Party through the difficult period that followed the destruction of Peel's government in the Corn Laws dispute, and, without ever commanding a majority, he held the premiership three times. He paved the way for the leadership of Disraeli, whom the Tory party would probably never have accepted without Derby's backing. Yet he did not receive a Victorian 'tombstone biography' of any weight and Vincent argues that he still does not have the modern biography he deserves.¹

His son, Edward Henry, the 15th Earl, who also achieved a front-rank position in Victorian politics, as Foreign Secretary under Disraeli and as Colonial Secretary under Gladstone, also lacks a biographer. But perhaps here lies the answer. Despite the family motto, 'Sans Changer', both father and son were what some might describe as turn-coats. The 14th Earl served, as Hon. Edward Stanley, in both

Grey's and Melbourne's Whig governments before falling out over reform of the Irish Church in 1834 and joining Peel's Tories in 1837. The 15th Earl became a close political friend of Disraeli but quarrelled with him over the handling of the late 1870s' Eastern crisis and may have been 'stitched up' by Disraeli and by Salisbury, to whom he was related by marriage. Gradually he was absorbed into the Liberal Party and became the only man to serve in both Disraeli's and Gladstone's cabinets. However, yet another twist occurred, and he broke with Gladstone over Home Rule, ending his life as a Liberal Unionist.

In the absence of a biography, the diaries must serve as the monument for the 15th Earl of Derby, important not only as a significant source about his life but for the way in which they fill out the lives of his contemporaries. For this we must be grateful for the dedication and persistence of John Vincent, his collaborators and his publisher. The first extracts from Derby's diaries, covering the period from 1849 to 1869, were published in 1978.² Vincent published the

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