the assistance of mulled port on one occasion). However, Pearce also considers the contribution that less well-known figures made to the debates. He cites to great effect the speech of John Hawkins, a Whig backbencher, dismissing the arguments of 'that class of protagonists … who always entertain a sincere conviction at any given moment that the present is not the right moment for the discussion of this question, and they arrive at such conviction by this ingenious dilemma. When the people are clamorous for Reform, they tell us that we ought not to concede such a measure to the demands of popular turbulence; and when the people are silent, that silence is proof of indifference and therefore the measure need not be passed' (p. 134).

While Pearce focuses primarily on Westminster, the extra-parliamentary activities of what Hawkins termed 'the people' and what others referred to as 'the populace' or, less sympathetically, 'the mob', are given their place in his account. Pearce's eye for a telling detail – the rough-sharpening of their swords by the Birmingham garrison (so as to inflict more serious wounds on would-be rioters), the request for fifty copies of the Birmingham Political Union's rule-book (so that similar organisations could be set up elsewhere to campaign for Reform) – means that the relatively limited attention he gives to popular politics is nonetheless effective in conveying the mood of the time. His citations from Charles Greville's diary are particularly revealing, and indicate that the forthcoming publication of an abridged version of Greville's diaries (edited by Pearce) will be a fertile source for historians of this period.

Such are the strengths of this lively and interesting work. Whether it greatly advances historical knowledge on the subject is another question. This is certainly not the book for those wanting detailed statistics on the number of voters enfranchised by the 1832 Reform Act, or a roll-call of the constituencies disfranchised and created. Pearce's analysis of the impact of the Act amounts to less than a page. He fails to mention key innovations such as the creation of an electoral register, which had a crucial impact on the future development of party organisation. He also ignores other elements of the Act which have attracted more recent interest from historians, notably the issue of 'gender', with the 1832 Act being the first legislation to define the franchise as specifically male.[1] Those wishing to understand points such as the distinction between the potwalloper and the scot-and-lot franchises (which Pearce conflates into one category) or the finer implications of the Chandos clause (entirely absent from this study, although the source of some controversy among academic historians) will also not find much help here. Nor does Pearce engage with any of the secondary literature on the Act, although ending as he does with Sydney Smith's declaration that 'they had accomplished a very great good' (p. 302), it is clear that his account fits in with more recent work which has tended to reassert the significance of 1832 in the face of earlier efforts to downplay its impact.[2] Nevertheless, for those wanting a readable account of the events surrounding the passage of the 1832 Reform Act, Pearce's work still has much to commend it.

'When the people are clamorous for Reform, they tell us that we ought not to concede such a measure to the demands of popular turbulence; and when the people are silent, that silence is proof of indifference and therefore the measure need not be passed'.

Dr Kathryn Rix is a Junior Research Fellow in History at Christ's College, Cambridge, and is currently working on a study of the professional Liberal and Conservative agents in the late nineteenth century.

1 See for example Anna Clark, 'Gender, class and the constitution: franchise reform in England, 1832–1928', in James Vernon (ed.), *Re-reading the Constitution: New narratives in the political history of England's long nineteenth century* (Cambridge University Press, 1996), pp. 230–53.

2 See, for example, Derek Beales, 'The Electorate Before and After 1832: The right to vote, and the opportunity', *Parliamentary History*, 11:1 (1992), pp. 139–50.

The double Duchess and a violently moderate man

Henry Vane: *Affair Of State: A Biography of the 8th Duke and Duchess of Devonshire* (Peter Owen Publishers, 2004)

Reviewed by **Tony Little**

The 8th Duke of Devonshire embodied late Whig politics; he led the Liberal Party for five years and served in both Liberal and Conservative governments. The Duke was only man to be offered the premiership three times, without taking the office, and Henry Vane argues he deserved a fourth chance at the opening of the twentieth century. Louise van Alten was from one of the oldest Hanoverian noble families and fashioned a career as a British political hostess, with a beauty that won her the hand of two dukes. Yet, outside the circle of historians of the nineteenth century, they are largely forgotten.

In 1852, the twenty-year-old Louise married Viscount Mandeville, who succeeded as Duke of Manchester in 1855. Despite their rank, the Manchesters were not among the richest in the land. The Duke does not appear to have had strong political

ambitions, unlike his wife who, Vane argues, set out to establish a Tory salon to rival the Peelites' Lady Waldegrave and the Whig establishments of Ladies Sutherland and Palmerston. The social occasions managed by these leading hostesses were critical in building party cohesion and facilitating political plotting. Lady Palmerston's successes can be contrasted with the social ineptitude of Lady Russell as an important factor in the ultimate victory of Lord Palmerston over Lord John Russell.

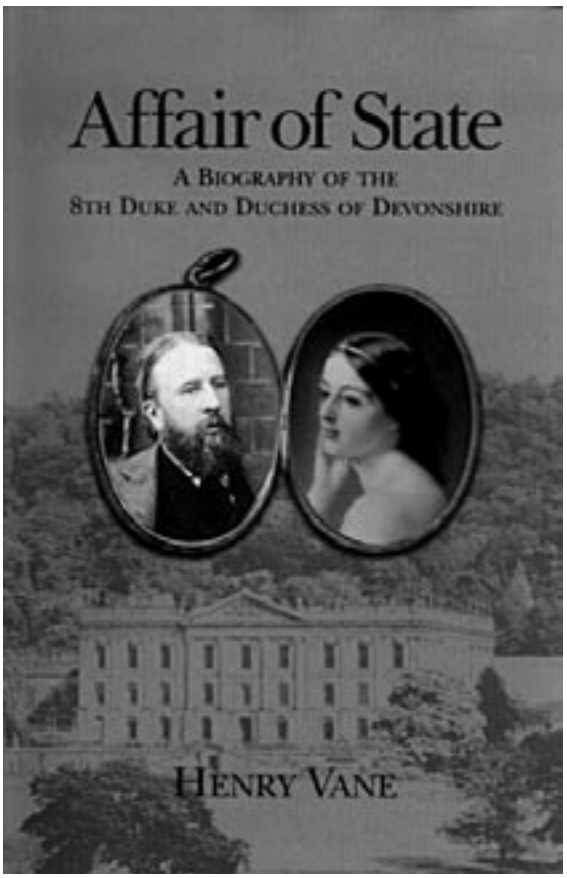
Having wangled a promise out of Lord Derby over a flirtatious glass of champagne, the Duchess of Manchester was appointed as Mistress of the Robes under the Tory leader's minority government of 1858. Despite initial successes at Court, she was snubbed when invitations were issued for the wedding of the Prince of Wales in 1863. Vane attributes this to Queen Victoria becoming aware of and resenting the unconventional manner in which she acquired her household appointment. But is it possible that the Queen disapproved of another facet of her 'fast' lifestyle – an affair with Lord Cowper?

Spencer Compton Cavendish was born in 1833 and, when his father became Duke of Devonshire in 1858, he assumed the courtesy title of Lord Hartington until he in turn became Duke in 1891. Hartington gained an MA from Trinity College, Cambridge, in 1854 and for a few years led the usual life of a young man of high social position, hunting a good deal and serving as an officer in the militia. Between 1859 and 1862 he notoriously conducted an affair with Catherine 'Skittles' Walters, six years his junior, who shared his love for country sports. While never likely to lead to a suitable marriage, this must be considered a serious episode in the life of both parties and Vane has gone to some effort investigate his somewhat babyish correspondence with her.

In 1857, Hartington was elected for North Lancashire. After the 1859 general election, he moved the motion of no confidence enabling Palmerston to displace Lord Derby's government. He was appointed a junior Lord of the Admiralty, and in February 1866 became Secretary of State for War in Russell's government, entering the Cabinet at thirty-four. In Gladstone's first government he introduced the secret ballot and nationalised the telegraphs. After Gladstone's defeat in 1874 and resignation in 1875, Hartington led the Liberals in the Commons but was unable to resist Gladstone's comeback, in 1880, despite the Queen's efforts to make Hartington prime minister. In Gladstone's fractious second government, he served loyally in several roles but these were secondary to his leadership of the Whig faction in the jostling with Chamberlain for the expected succession to the Grand Old Man.

Hartington's stubborn antagonism to Gladstone's Home Rule proposals in 1886 broke up the Liberal Party, with Hartington leading the Liberal Unionists in alliance with Salisbury's Tories. Both in 1886 and 1887, Salisbury tried to persuade Hartington to take the premiership, a step he felt would have left him a prisoner of the Tories. In 1895, when hope of the Liberal Unionists rejoining the Liberal Party had faded, the Duke of Devonshire served under Salisbury and, on Salisbury's retirement, in Balfour's government.

In the creation of the Liberal Unionists, Hartington had co-operated surprisingly well with Chamberlain, the radical who had once attacked him as 'Rip Van Winkle', an allusion to Hartington's slothful habits as well as an attack on his supposedly retrograde politics. But in 1903, Chamberlain proposed to substitute Imperial Preference for Free Trade. Balfour's convoluted mishandling of this crisis concluded with the resignations of both Chamberlain and Devonshire, ending the Duke's career and paving the way for the Liberal landslide of 1906. Vane argues that Devonshire, not Balfour, should have succeeded Salisbury and would have been more effective in restraining Chamberlain's outburst.



Hartington had known the Duchess of Manchester from the late 1850s and Vane suggests they became lovers around 1864. Despite being excluded from the Prince of Wales' wedding, the Duchess became an established member of the somewhat dissolute Marlborough House set that surrounded the heir to the throne. Hartington's love of good food, hunting and horse racing ensconced him in the same circle. The affair between the two was widely known but they abided carefully by the conventions of the time. Both seem to have been on good terms with the Duke of Manchester, perhaps helped by his reputed fondness for alcohol, something that Vane only hints at. Indeed at one stage Hartington contemplated making a threesome with the Manchesters for an overseas tour.

Although the Victorian world shared our obsession with

celebrities, the press was more careful to wait for the incontrovertible evidence of court cases before indulging in the pleasures of prurience. Hartington's discretion allowed his public career to continue untarnished by scandal. Louise married her second duke in 1892, after the death of her first husband and Hartington's father. Once officially established as a couple, Louise was able to entertain on a grand scale at Devonshire House in London and at Chatsworth, most spectacularly during the celebrations for the Queen's silver jubilee in 1897. The age of the salon had passed but Louise was thought to have helped push Hartington in a conservative direction and to have kept him engaged in politics despite his distaste for the infighting.

So why is Hartington so neglected? Gruff, offhand, unpunctual, careless of his personal appearance, though with a nice line in self-deprecatory humour, his public persona was too austere to command adulation rather than just respect. Goschen once described Hartington as 'a moderate man, a violently moderate man' but it is the charismatic personalities like Gladstone or the men of exceptional ideas like Chamberlain who command attention from posterity rather than the safe pair of hands and the 'might-have-been' premiers.

In addition, Hartington has not been fortunate in his biographies. The two-volume tombstone by Bernard Holland was published too close to his death to allow a full approach to his private life. The only modern life, prior to Vane's, was, self-consciously, a political life only.[1] In contrast, Henry Vane has clearly concentrated on the social life. While we must be grateful that this redresses the balance, it has its own disadvantages. Judging from the way in which Vane drags in most of the social embarrassments that surrounded the Prince of Wales, there is insufficient material on the Devonshires for their lives to stand

Goschen once described Hartington as 'a moderate man, a violently moderate man'.

on their own, which is a disappointment as the Duchess in particular appears to be a character whose political influence should be further investigated.

More importantly, the significance of the Duke of Devonshire is essentially political. Outside politics, what did he accomplish? If he had been only a hunting, shooting and fishing duke who restored the family fortunes, we would no doubt be pleased that we can still enjoy the treasures of Chatsworth and the pleasures of Eastbourne but nothing more. Consequently Vane cannot stick to his intentions; politics keeps surfacing. But his concern to return to the social means that the issues are over-simplified, particularly in the way that he feels obliged to take the Duke's side in all the quarrels which divided the statesmen of the Victorian and Edwardian periods. For readers of the *Journal* that must be frustrating, and a challenge for a historian to bring us a balanced life of one of the finest of the last generation of Whigs.

Tony Little is Chair of the Liberal Democrat History Group.

1 Patrick Jackson, *Last of The Whigs: Political Biography of Lord Hartington, Later Eighth Duke of Devonshire (1833–1908)* (Fairleigh Dickinson, 1994).

ARCHIVES

The Beveridge archives at the LSE Library

by **Sue Donnelly**

William Henry Beveridge was born in 1879 and educated at Charterhouse and Balliol College, Oxford. He was Sub-warden of Toynbee Hall between 1903 and 1905, before becoming a leader writer for the *Morning Post* from 1905, where he wrote on social problems. He joined the civil service in 1908 and entered the Board of Trade. He was the Director of Labour Exchanges 1909–16, and he was a leading authority on unemployment and social security, authoring *Unemployment: a Problem of Industry* in 1909 (revised 1930), a pioneering study of the labour market's complexity. He helped draw up the 1909 Labour Exchanges Act and part ii of the 1911 National Insurance Act, the latter introducing unemployment insurance for two and a quarter million workers in the heavy industries.

In 1919, he became Director of the London School of Economics, a period often described as a second foundation of the School. It was a period of tremendous growth, and Beveridge's directorship was responsible for the School's recognition during the 1930s as one of the world's leading social science centres. He was a central figure in the sheltering of the 'refugee scholars' displaced by Nazi oppression in the 1930s; the Academic Assistance Council was established as a result of his initiative. He resigned the directorship in 1937, taking up the Mastership of University College, Oxford before joining the government in 1940. In 1944 he became the Liberal MP for Berwick-upon-Tweed, and after the loss of his seat in 1945 he served as a Liberal peer in the House of Lords.

His most famous contribution to society is the Beveridge Report (officially, the *Report on Social Insurance and Allied Services*) of 1942, the basis of the 1945–51 Labour government's legislative