

and Oxford. As a young man he walked in the Highlands with Sir Archibald Sinclair, and married into the Asquith family. Yet, Barberis argues, he had already become a convinced Liberal at Oxford, and chose in 1935 to pursue a political career in a declining party because he was a disciple of T.H. Green and John Stuart Mill, modified by A.D. Lindsay's Balliol teaching about public service.

He inherited a party which had almost lost its radical wing, leaving behind a group of anti-socialist libertarians. He shifted it rapidly from economic towards social liberalism, writing extensively himself and drawing on the expertise of some of the best academics in Britain. His themes of active citizenship, community, wider distribution of wealth and power, and constitutional reform, still resonate for Liberal Democrats; so do his doubts on national sovereignty and independent defence (and on independent deterrence). Paddy Ashdown's comment, when setting out on a new cycle of reflective policy-making after the 1987 election and party merger, that 'we have been living too long off the intellectual capital of the Grimond era' (p. 210), recognised how much Jo had shaped the Liberal approach over the previous thirty years.

In his later years, Jo grew increasingly gloomy about the possibility of striking a stable balance between autonomous local communities, enterprise, and an active state. As the 1974–79 Labour government gave in to public sector unions, Jo flirted with the Institute of Economic Affairs, which had been founded by economic liberals who left the party as he had taken control. But he opposed Mrs Thatcher both for her nationalism and her political illiberalism. There were, Barberis, accepts, many 'loose ends' in his political philosophy. But Liberals have to live with the tension among the principles to which they are committed; and Grimond, this book argues, was

a deeply committed Liberal. 'It was in a way his fortune never to have held ministerial office. Thus he was spared entanglement in the grubby realities of power politics – realities that he would have found uncomfortable if not demeaning ... to remain a man

of integrity, so giving politics a good name.' (p. 214).

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## Lloyd George and Churchill

Robert Lloyd-George: *David & Winston: How a Friendship Changed History* (John Murray, 2005)

Reviewed by **Dr J. Graham Jones**

**'He was spared entanglement in the grubby realities of power politics – realities that he would have found uncomfortable if not demeaning ... to remain a man of integrity, so giving politics a good name.'**

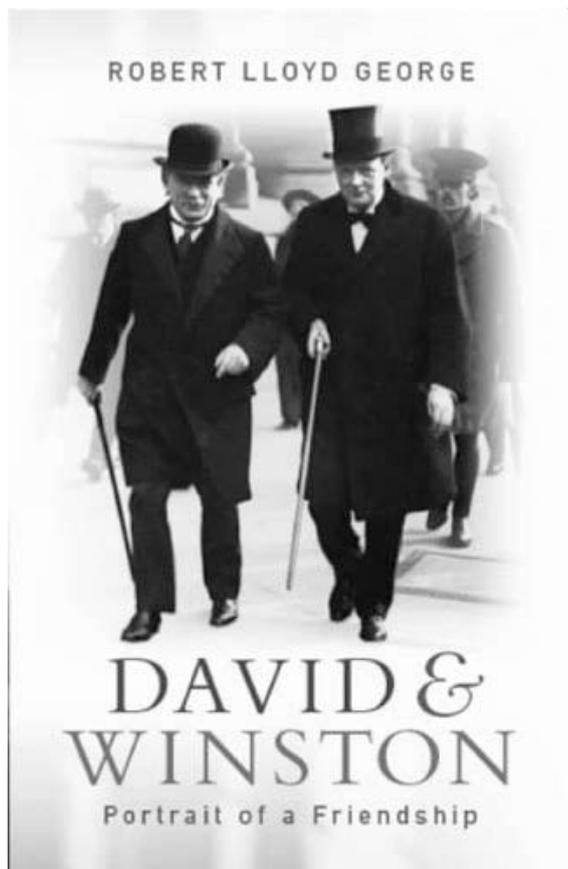
In a comparison of Lloyd George and Churchill, it has been said that Churchill was the greater man, but that Lloyd George was more fun. This fascinating book, thoroughly researched and exquisitely written by Lloyd George's great-grandson, tends to confirm this opinion. The author, Robert Lloyd-George, is the son of the present (third) Earl Lloyd-George of Dwyfor. It takes as its main theme Lloyd George's influence on Churchill's political career and, to some extent, personal and family life. The author has read widely and thoughtfully through a rich array of secondary, and some primary, source materials, and has skilfully woven his findings into a lucid and compelling read. Although Mr Lloyd-George is not a professional historian, his understanding of the intricacies of twentieth century political history is impressive.

Almost all the points at which the careers of the two politicians interact are thoughtfully covered in this comprehensive volume. Political history and personal detail are dextrously brought together within the book. There is new, fascinating material on the 1913 Marconi crisis, the drift towards the outbreak of the First World War, and Lloyd George's central role in propelling Churchill towards

the premiership in May 1940 (though the important role of Liberal MP Clem Davies at this juncture is not recorded at all). We are, however, all too regularly given lengthy quotations from the source materials which the author used in his research. On occasion these are over-long, given that many are taken from printed volumes which are within easy reach of most readers. The most glaring example is Churchill's tribute to Lloyd George in the House of Commons on 28 March 1945, printed on pp. 241–46. If it was considered necessary to reproduce this at such length in the book, it might well have been relegated to an appendix.

The author's writing style is unfailingly succinct and lucid, a real joy to read. This is immediately apparent in the description of Lloyd George at the beginning of the book:

Though only five foot six-and-a-half inches tall, he had a powerful frame and a deep chest. He wore a magnificent moustache and his carefully tended wavy hair was rather longer than was the custom of the time. He had a large and distinctive head, a broad forehead and striking greyish-blue eyes which sparkled with humour one moment and flashed with anger the next. (pp. 3–4).



LG's predecessor as Prime Minister, Herbert Asquith, 'would have made a superb judge and was a great peacetime prime minister. By now [1916], however, it was clear that he lacked the dynamic energy and dedication required in a war leader' (p. 129).

The volume is superbly illustrated with a wealth of cartoons taken from contemporary newspapers and journals such as *Punch* and the *Pall Mall Gazette*. There are also a number of fascinating photographs, many previously unpublished, taken from the family album. All are notably well chosen to reflect the themes in the text and they add much to the appeal and interest of the book.

Given the amount of ground covered in a relatively short volume, some factual errors and misjudgements are nigh on inevitable. On page 14 there is some confusion between Lloyd George's eldest daughter Mair Eluned (born in 1890) and the second daughter Olwen Elizabeth (born in 1892). 'Every seat in Wales' did not fall to the

Liberals in 1906 (p. 36), and it is unclear why Baldwin and Chamberlain are described as merely 'nominal leaders of the Conservative Party' (p. 29). There is some misunderstanding of the use and application of the infamous Lloyd George Fund in the 1920s (p. 192), and few historians would agree that, had Lloyd George remained in good health, he 'would have dominated the National Government' formed in August 1931. The undying enmity of both Baldwin and MacDonald would surely have relegated 'the Goat' to the sidelines of political life at this juncture. Is it really true to claim that Lloyd George 'hated writing letters' (p. 151)? He always seemed to relish writing regularly both to his wife Dame Margaret and his younger brother William.

One surprising omission is the lack of any reference to the award of an earldom to Lloyd George in January 1945. In the previous November, at Churchill's personal instigation, a Royal Marines courier had arrived at LG's North Wales home Ty Newydd, Llanystumdwy, bearing the offer of an earldom from the Prime Minister to a terminally ill Lloyd George, who was by then wracked with cancer. The 'Cast of Main Characters' printed on pp. 249–63 is most helpful, but

Mr Lloyd George should note that Frances Stevenson was born in 1888 (not 1890), and that A. J. Sylvester lived from 1889 until 1989 (not 1885 until 1984).

Perhaps the greatest weakness of the scholarly apparatus is the rather inadequate notes printed on pp. 270–84. They are confined simply to identifying the direct quotations used in the book, and yet even these are highly selective and many are incomplete, failing to give the full call numbers of the relevant documents. Many important quotations in the text still remain unidentified. The reader would undoubtedly have been much better served by conventional scholarly footnotes or endnotes.

Yet, given the huge number of biographies of both Lloyd George and Churchill and the spate of more specialised studies of certain aspects of their careers, Robert Lloyd-George has still succeeded in producing a thoroughly worthwhile book, a stimulating read for professional historians and interested laymen alike, abounding with information and fresh perspectives. It is certain to arouse great interest.

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## A hand-to-mouth man?

Patrick Jackson: *Harcourt and Son: A Political Biography of Sir William Harcourt, 1827–1904* (Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 2004)

Reviewed by **Martin Pugh**

**S**ir William Harcourt was the kind of politician we rarely see nowadays. He was intelligent, cultured and well-read but also robust and aggressive, and in fact a bit of a verbal bully towards colleagues and opponents alike. Denis

Healey is perhaps the nearest modern example.

Harcourt was undoubtedly a major figure in Victorian Liberalism; he served as Liberal Leader in the Commons from 1895 to 1898 and effectively led the party there during several periods