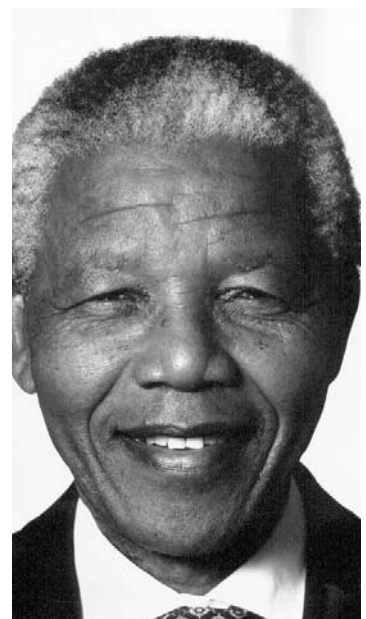
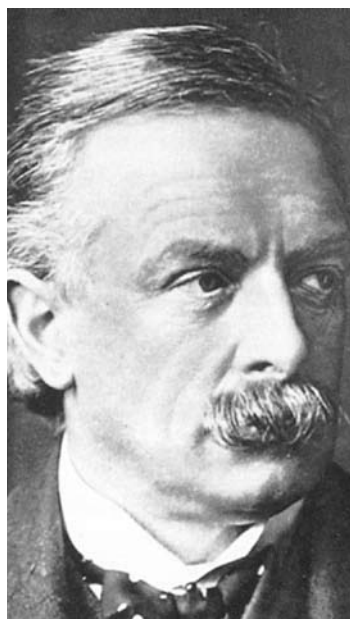
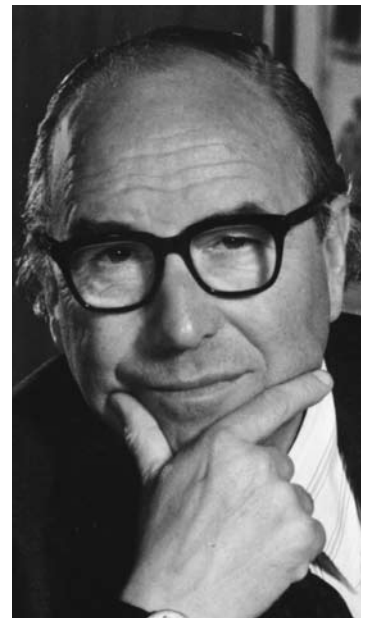


OLD HEROES FOR

As we did in the last Liberal Democrat leadership election, in 1999, in February the Liberal Democrat History Group asked all the three candidates for the Liberal Democrat leadership to write a short article on their favourite historical figure or figures – the ones they felt had influenced their own political beliefs most, and why they had proved important and relevant. Their replies were posted on our website during the leadership election, and are reproduced below. Their heroes? Roy Jenkins, Jo Grimond, David Lloyd George and Nelson Mandela.



Heroes: clockwise from top left – Grimond, Jenkins, Mandela, Lloyd George.

R A NEW LEADER

**Sir Menzies Campbell QC
MP –**

Roy Jenkins and Jo Grimond

I have two favourite historical figures – Roy Jenkins and Jo Grimond. I believe that without them, the identity and vitality of the Liberal Democrats would be significantly weaker than it is today.

Roy Jenkins was always a liberal. At the Home Office, he was responsible for some of the most significant social reforms in this country's history. In the early 1970s, he successfully took on the Labour left over Britain's entry into the Common Market. We should all be grateful to Roy for his political courage and integrity and for all he did to make Britain a more open, tolerant nation.

I came to know Roy very well as a friend and colleague. I admired him for the way he so clearly saw the big picture, the broad sweep of our politics. I agreed wholeheartedly with his vision for the future of the centre-left. But it was Jo Grimond who first inspired me to become a Liberal.

Given my family's allegiances, I might well have joined the Labour Party. But Labour was just as hide-bound and backward-looking as the Tories and neither of the two old parties seemed to offer much vision or hope. Grimond,

by contrast, had ideals and imagination. He sought out new ideas and became their champion. He recast the Liberal Party as the true radicals and innovators of British politics; thanks to him, we became the real party of reform and fresh thinking. I am proud of the mantle Jo Grimond gave us and we must never let it go.

He recognised that our destiny lay in Europe and forcefully made the case for joining the Common Market. Grimond sought to bring government closer to the people it is meant to serve. He supported for many years the cause of home rule for Scotland.

Grimond was unashamedly a man of the centre-left. But decades before the current debates on public services, he was suspicious of solutions based on big, centralised bureaucracies. He recognised they would limit people's ability to shape the decisions that affect their own lives. Grimond gave the Liberal Party a new political compass, arguing that it should become the focus for a new alignment of progressive forces in this country.

In 1979, Jenkins also made a dramatic case for political change, based on an entirely new party. His Dimpleby Lecture is remembered as the intellectual launchpad of the SDP, a counterpoint to the Labour left. He called for

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a new political force that was committed to Europe, a modern economy and political reform. But the speech was a powerful early critique of Thatcherism as well. For Jenkins always believed that government had a duty to tackle poverty and promote social mobility. The speech, like many that Jenkins made, still reads well today as a powerful statement of why the Liberal Democrats exist.

Together, Jo Grimond and Roy Jenkins gave modern liberals our sense of purpose and our moral core. We owe them both a great deal.

**Simon Hughes MP –
David Lloyd George and
Nelson Mandela**

Lloyd George really did know my grandfather. I was first taken to Lloyd George's childhood home (and his final resting place) by the banks of the River Dwyfor by my grandfather before I was three. I have visited regularly ever since. Lloyd George has been an inspiration partly because he had no privileged background and a difficult upbringing. In spite of the inevitable human weaknesses of all politicians, he was the central figure of one of the two greatest periods of radical change this country has known during the last hundred years.

OLD HEROES FOR A NEW LEADER

Lloyd George brought the Liberal Party into the twentieth century, making it a social liberal movement well suited to the demands of the new industrial era. His determination to set in place the beginning of our pension and social security system, together with his great 'People's Budget' of 1909, the first truly redistributive budget, alone would merit his place in any Liberal's pantheon of heroes. Alongside that should be remembered his commitment to constitutional reform and dis-establishment and his abiding interest in international affairs.

Above all, his willingness to remain a radical when in office as well as when in opposition makes him one of the greatest Liberals. The Welsh wizard had the ability to inspire ordinary people, to engage them in the political process, to support radical politics and to get them to respond to the liberal message. Making liberal democracy popular is a cause we still need to champion.

Just as Lloyd George was my hero from the first half of the last century, so Nelson Mandela is my hero from the second. I am privileged to have met him.

When I first started campaigning against apartheid (with Peter Hain, among others), Nelson Mandela was one of the leaders of the struggle from behind bars. When I first went to South Africa in 1986, I stood amongst the burned-out homes of the Crossroads squatter camp, encircled by South African Defence Force armoured cars, and sneaked into townships at night to see families whose members had been necklaced. Mandela was the liberation leader waiting in the wings.

When I spoke alongside Jesse Jackson to tens of thousands in Trafalgar Square at an anti-apartheid rally, Mandela was the inspiration for the international solidarity and struggle. When Mandela walked free from his prison cell, he was the symbol of the triumph of good over evil, and of perseverance over adversity.

When the first South African democratic elections took place, Mandela was the leader who rose above party politics. When he was President of South Africa he was the living embodiment of the qualities of forgiveness, generosity and statesmanship. Even in retirement and infirmity he has continued to display those qualities, alongside the charm and warmth of spirit that makes everyone who meets him feel immediately welcome.

Mandela is the radical pluralist, an enlightened, principled kind of leader who is an inspiration for millions. He is an object lesson to us all.

Chris Huhne MP – David Lloyd George

David Lloyd George will always be a controversial figure in the history of the predecessor parties of the Liberal Democrats, because he is associated both with the great climax of Liberal reform after 1906 and then with the declining and divided years of the historic Liberal Party after universal suffrage.

For me, Lloyd George's appeal is that he was a radical to his bones. His early prominence came in part through his campaign against the Boer War, when he helped to build an anti-war coalition that included not merely the advanced elements of the party, outraged by imperial aggression, but also some of the most conservative and rural elements, who identified with the independent qualities of the Boer community.

In government, Lloyd George had a passionate belief in his own ability to cajole and persuade, amply demonstrated during labour disputes as President of the Board of Trade. He was a great speaker, but also a great listener. The two are connected: great speakers have to be ever-sensitive to the moods and motivations of their audiences. As Chancellor of the Exchequer, he was the kingpin of the government's attempt to force through social welfare

and overcome the opposition of the House of Lords.

The old age pension is Lloyd George's most durable domestic achievement, and a testament to his New Liberal thinking. The roots of this tradition, in the ideas of Edwardian thinkers like L.T. Hobhouse, are the wellspring of Liberal Democrat thinking today, whether coming through the New Liberal – now 'social liberal' – tradition or the social democratic tradition in the Labour Party that rejoined us in 1981.

I also find Lloyd George's style as a politician appealing. He was always an optimist who believed in the power of ideas to persuade and change the world, and he was always prepared to throw himself into the political battle even when the odds looked stacked against him. He was an anti-metropolitan politician: a believer that the best and purest instincts were to be found in the misty valleys of his beloved Wales, from which he always drew emotional strength. Combined with this optimism was a great sense of mischief, captured for me in the marvellous Low cartoon, a copy of which I have on my study wall. Lloyd George is sitting, elfin-like, laughing on the green benches, hugging himself with mirth; never pompous, always able to see the folly and the ridiculousness of power and position.

Lloyd George has the strongest claim to be the father of the British welfare state and a great war leader at a time of desperate national need. In the 1930s, he was the only mainstream politician who understood John Maynard Keynes's analysis of the causes of mass unemployment and the only statesman with the vision to banish it. If in 1929, or later, he had been able to mount a more effective challenge for power, much economic and social hardship would have been averted. It is the country's loss that he was never given the chance to do so.

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