

- Political Science Review*, August 1927, pp. 519–28.
- 11 Fitzmaurice, Lord, *The Life of George Leveson Gower, Second Earl Granville (1815–91)*, Vol. 2 (London, 1905) for Granville to Lord Derby, 27 December 1885; and HG MSS, 46,041, T. Wemyss Reid to H. Gladstone, 9 December 1885.
  - 12 *The Times*, 11 October 1900.
  - 13 Steele, E. D., ‘The Irish presence in the north of England 1850–1914’, *Northern History* (1976), pp. 229–32; HG MSS, 46, 041, J. Kitson to H. Gladstone, 21 February 1885.
  - 14 *The Times*, 4 May 1886; Wemyss-Reid, T., *Memoirs and Correspondence of Lyon Playfair* (London, 1899) p. 342; Hind, R., *Henry Labouchere and the Empire 1880–1905* (London, 1972), p. 127.
  - 15 DNB, p. 337.
  - 16 Russell, A., *Liberal Landslide: The general election of 1906* (London, 1973), p. 39.
  - 17 HG MSS, 46,039, J. Mathers to H. Gladstone, 26 September 1889 and 13 September 1891.
  - 18 *The Times* 20 March 1880 and 11 October 1900.
  - 19 Bealey, F., ‘A Note: Negotiations between the Liberal Party and the Labour Representation Committee before the General Election of 1906’, *University of London Institute of Historical Research Bulletin* (1958); *The Times*, 30 March 1900 (Nottingham NLF); Poirier, P., *The Advent of the British Labour Party* (New York, 1958), p. 260, letter from Gladstone to Crooks, 21 March 1905.
  - 20 *The Times*, 11 July 1892.
  - 21 HG MSS, 41,215, H. Gladstone to H. Campbell-Bannerman, 16 January 1906.
  - 22 *Ibid.*, 46, 036, J. Henry to H. Gladstone 25 May 1905, 9 April 1907, and 13 October 1908.
  - 23 DNB, p. 337; nearly all Gladstone’s speeches and published statements during the 1900 election moved the Liberals’ position on the war closer to that of the government – e.g. see *The Times*, 13 October 1900; HG MSS, 43, 543, Ripon to Campbell-Bannerman, 16 September 1900 and Wolf, L., *The Life of the First Marquis of Ripon*, Vol. 2 (London, 1921), p. 28.
  - 24 For more on the Relugas plot see McCready, H., ‘Home Rule and the Liberal Party 1899–1906’, *Irish Historical Studies*, XIII, September 1963, pp. 316–48.
  - 25 See Iles, L., ‘Victories for the Left: The British General Election Debates of 1906 and 1945’, *University of Illinois Urbana Microfilms Series*, MA History dissertation, August 1982, from p. 100 and Iles, L., *A Handlist of the Papers of the Rt Hon. Charles and Lucy Masterman 1873–1977* (Edgbaston, 1987).
  - 26 See Pearson, H., *Labby: the Life and Character of Henry Labouchere* (London, 1945), p. 225; Samuel, H.,

*Memoirs* (London, 1945), p. 195; Fulford, R., *Votes for Women* (London, 1958); Wingfield-Stratford, E., *The Victorian Aftermath 1901–14* (London, 1933), p. 323; Raeburn, A., *The Militant Suffragettes* (London, 1973); and, for Harcourt’s attitude, see *The Times*, 15 February 1909.

- 27 Much of this section is drawn from the *Liberal Magazine* and *Lloyd George Liberal Magazine* for the era; also useful is Cowling, M., *The Impact of Labour 1920–24* (Cambridge, 1971), which is predictably sympathetic to the more right-wing post-World War One Gladstone.

# LETTERS

## Election 2005

I would like to follow-up Neil Stockley’s thoughtful report of the History Group meeting ‘Election 2005 in historical perspective’ (*Journal of Liberal History* 50).

First, I should make my own stance, as the 2005 candidate for the Windsor constituency, clear. I believe the last general election was a missed opportunity for our party. We had two unpopular main parties and this was a situation where we, as the third political force, should have come strongly through the middle. Neil’s summary of the Blackpool fringe meeting gives the game away when he reports all the speakers as saying, ‘we had made more than steady progress.’ ‘Steady progress’ in the context of this election, and for a party purportedly on the up, is not good enough.

As he analyses what happened, Neil muses on the intractable problem of why the Liberal Democrats made serious inroads in Labour-held constituencies (up 7.7%) but hardly any impact, in general, in areas which had a sitting Tory MP (up a mere 0.6%). He seeks answers to an electoral conundrum and this letter attempts to help that search by proposing two possible reasons for the disparity.

As we went into the general election many middle-class voters in the ‘blue’ parts of England (such as Windsor) seemed suspicious of our Council Tax policy, whilst others absolutely hated our approach on income tax.

(Incidentally, in historical terms, have the Liberals ever been a high tax party?) These people hated our higher earners’ tax proposal not because they were currently earning £100,000 themselves, but because they intended one day that they would, i.e. they felt we were challenging their aspiration to do better in life.

The second reason we fared badly against the Tories was very clear on the doorsteps. When asked, ‘Who will you be voting for?’ the answer, invariably, was, ‘Not Tony Blair.’ These voters then implemented their strong dislike of the Prime Minister on the day by following the precept of the old Arab proverb – ‘My enemy’s enemy is my friend’. By this light they wanted above all to vote for the party that was most opposed to the leader of New Labour. Since the Lib Dems were seen as ‘neither left nor right’ (or as Neil says, equally damningly, ‘either left or right’) many reluctantly felt they had to vote Tory. However, and this is the point, they weren’t really Tory – and probably still aren’t!

So the message about 2005 from Tory constituencies in the South-East (like Windsor, which has never had anything other than a Conservative MP) is simple. Our tax policies were wrong and we were perceived as too bland in terms of opposing the Prime Minister. By such mischance are great opportunities lost.

*Antony Wood*