

research, though it would be fair to conclude that it is more suggestive than conclusive and that it points to a Celtic-fringe rather than Cornwall-only phenomenon.

Turning to the third of Ault's putative factors – campaigning – he draws extensively on telephone surveys conducted in constituencies around the UK before and after the 2010 general election to set the Cornish 2010 results in context. Around 2,600 people were surveyed over thirteen constituencies, making the individual constituency results prone to significant margins of error but sufficient to draw more general conclusions. The constituency analysis gives a multifaceted result, both showing the importance of local campaigning intensity to Liberal Democrat results but also that in some areas in Cornwall the party outperformed for its level of activity, suggesting a wider regional (or, given what is said above, Celtic-fringe) effect.

Boris' Winston

Boris Johnson, *The Churchill Factor: How One Man Made History*

(Hodder & Stoughton, 2014)

Review by **Andrew Connell**

ANOTHER BOOK ABOUT Churchill; is there anything more to say? In identifying Churchill's refusal – backed by Archibald Sinclair in a walk-on role, but not by his 'former mentor' Lloyd George, 'dazzled' by the Fuhrer and now 'an out-and-out defeatist' – to

Given contemporary debates in the party about whether really intensive literature-based campaigning works, it is worth noting that Ault finds that delivering six or more pieces of literature a year outside of election time delivers results. His post-2010 surveys in a smaller sample of seats also give a hint of what was to nearly sink the party in 2015: the less the electorate focused on the contest as being a local choice between rival candidates (rather than a national contest), the worse the Liberal Democrats did.

As the book is an adaptation of John Ault's PhD, it shows its academic roots frequently. Often that is useful, such as in the range of reference sources given for further reading. The less specialist reader should also be aware that this also means the book moves relatively slowly at times when Ault goes through literature reviews. There are also enough typographical errors to be fairly noticeable, and occasionally they also obscure understanding – as with the reference to phantom Appendixes B, C and D for details of the telephone surveys. The typography also is functional rather than beautiful, though at least the generous line spacing leaves plenty of spaces for scribbled thoughts.

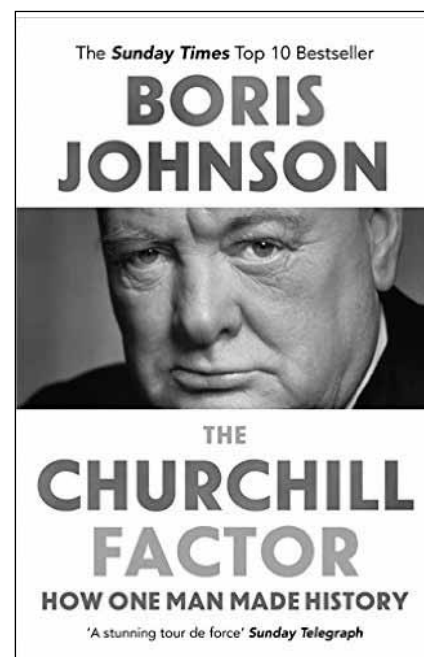
Overall, the verdict on Cornwall is that whilst it was campaigning which most propelled Liberal Democrat success, it worked best in tandem with popular and effective characters – and the environment in the Celtic fringe in general was the most receptive for this combination.

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negotiate with a seemingly irresistible, but irredeemably evil, Third Reich in the summer of 1940 as his supreme achievement, Boris Johnson is in accord with an historical consensus contested only on the far right.

But his Churchill is not only the hedgehog who knew one big thing; he is also the fox who knew many things. Egregiously intrepid, courageous, vastly energetic, farsighted and clear-thinking but unfailingly human, Boris's Winston had a unique historical impact that was 'colossal' yet benign. Rationally skipping between Conservative and Liberal parties while embodying the best instincts of both, he was progenitor and later creator of the welfare state (albeit 'heavily influenced' by Lloyd George); he turned the scales in World War I by pioneering the tank, and in World War II by forging the special relationship with the United States. Indeed, most of what is best about modern Europe, Africa and the Middle East can be attributed to Churchill; and what is worst to subsequent failures to heed his wisdom.

Not that Johnson's story is pure hagiography. Churchill is acknowledged to have been wrong about the Dardanelles, Chanak, the gold standard, India and the abdication. But even then he turns out not to have been really to blame. The return to gold was pressed upon him against his better judgement by the likes of Montague Norman, who should have known better; and in his quixotic championing of Edward VIII's right to marry Mrs Simpson and remain king he was ahead of his time. True, Churchill had personal flaws: he was self-indulgent and improvident; he could be inconsiderate and rude. But in the final analysis these were the flaws of the diamond, subsumed in the greatness of the man. If love is imagining that you know someone's faults but they just don't matter, here is a love story.



Coalition: Could Liberal Democrats have handled it better?

The 2015 election decisively ended the Liberal Democrats' participation in government. Did what the party achieved in coalition between 2010 and 2015 justify the damage? Could the party have managed coalition better? The meeting marks the publication of the autumn *Journal of Liberal History*, a special issue on the policy record of the coalition.

Speakers: **David Laws** (Minister for Schools, 2012–15), **Chris Huhne** (Secretary of State for Energy and Climate Change, 2010–12), **Akash Paun** (Institute for Government). Chair: **Jo Swinson** (Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Employment relations, consumer and postal affairs, 2012–15).

7.45pm, Sunday 18 September

Lancaster Room, Hilton Brighton Metropole (no conference pass necessary)

The suggestion that in identifying so closely with Winston Boris is effectively proclaiming admiration of himself as he would wish to be seen is irresistible; and depending on his future career, the *Churchill Factor* may be a key source for historians of the author. It certainly offers clues to his role in the 2016 referendum. Yes, Churchill was 'a visionary founder of the movement for a united Europe'; but he envisaged a unique semi-detached British role, a vital bridge between Europe, the US and the Commonwealth. Johnson could have gone either way on Brexit. I think he

calculated that his Churchillian formula could best be negotiated in the wake of a close vote to stay in the EU, and on the assumption that remain would win campaigned to limit its majority. He was aghast at the result, and after a half-hearted attempt to float the model, walked away – for a few days, until Theresa May, unexpectedly appointing him Foreign Secretary, gave him the opportunity to put his hero's theory into practice. Watch this space.

Like Winston, Boris writes to sell copies. His prose has neither Churchillian grandiloquence nor the

conventional restraint of those who consider themselves serious historians. The bibliography was compiled by a scholarly amanuensis. The text is not annotated, although page-by-page 'Notes on Sources' at the end of the book enable the reader to track down most of the quotations, if not the evidence for the plausible assertion that Winston Churchill never in his life rode on a bus. What Johnson offers is a series of bracing chats. He wants the reader to engage with him, share his jokes, travel with him as he explores the ground on which his hero trod and imagines Churchill's clerical assistant, 'a pretty Home Counties sort of girl in flattish shoes, with a sensible skirt and nothing too fussy about your jewellery or make-up'. These conceits may impress or irritate, but most readers will turn the pages to the end; and even if they are uncertain as to the significance of what they have just read, they will know they have been entertained.

Andrew Connell is a retired history teacher. His book, Appleby Gypsy Horse Fair: Mythology, Origins, Evolution and Evaluation, was published in 2015. He is a former mayor of Appleby and a Liberal Democrat district councillor.

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