

Smith's lives, while all too easily overlooking the others. That is a pity, because the patient reader is rewarded with a rollickingly indiscreet, well-observed, self-mocking autobiography.

Most political memoirs have an eminently skippable set of opening 'childhood' chapters, full of mawkish sentimentality. Smith eschews this approach, and instead gives us a rather riveting social history of London, with his early life from Hanwell to Fitzrovia serving as an introduction to this, and setting up some intriguing arguments on geography and power – themes which recur throughout the book.

Having been active in 1950s Union of Liberal Students politics when the party was barely past its nadir, and having stood for election in 1959, Smith largely abandoned electoral politics thereafter, in favour of exercising Liberal ideas in other spheres. This was a decade before 'community politics' gained traction, but Smith chose to pursue outlets that weren't rooted in just one physical place. There has yet to be a really good account of how a range of active Liberals did this in the Liberal Party's gloomiest years, for instance finding print and broadcast media as well as academia as outlets for Liberal ideas – and the life Smith presents here is an example of this. As a political scientist analysing corporate and political power, and later, as vice-chancellor of the University of Ulster, he was able to put Liberal ideas into practice, proving that one did not need to have held ministerial seals of office to get things done. In the latter case, the book argues

that far from being the 'backwater' appointment that many of his fellow academics regarded it as, the post was unique in giving him 'top table' influence in the Northern Ireland peace process of the 1990s – something no other vice-chancellorship would have done.

His time at the Joseph Rowntree Social Services Trust is of particular interest. It (and its rebranded successor, the Joseph Rowntree Reform Trust) has long been seen as a Lib Dem 'sugar daddy', but this was far from being the case when Smith took over as chair, and the book tantalisingly touches on some of the fascinating politics behind funding British politics. He was also instrumental in funding the first 'Chocolate Soldiers' (researchers for opposition MPs) in the early 1970s, a flurry of constitutional reform initiatives such as Charter 88 in the 1980s, and a string of progressive causes abroad, such as Zimbabwean opposition groups. Once Mugabe turned into a despot in office, the Trust (which had supported him) transferred its support to the Movement for Democratic Change.

Readers will also be surprised by some of the book's pithy judgements on Liberal leaders, several of which challenge conventional wisdom – the widely lauded Jo Grimond, for instance, emerges as a dilettante snob, closer to David Cameron than to John Stuart

Mill. Smith is particularly scathing about Jeremy Thorpe, and the book is worth reading alone for the light it sheds on the Thorpe scandal, and the hitherto untold role of how the Rowntree Trusts were involved in persuading former Liberal MP Peter Bessell to testify against his former parliamentary colleague.

Throughout the book, Smith's impish and often risqué sense of humour is evident – from his description of Tim Farron as 'The Lib Dems' answer to Cliff Richard', to a distinctly X-rated anecdote about the choice of lubricants in Northern Ireland, which had me roaring with laughter.

The reader leaves this book realising that Trevor Smith was, in the eighties and nineties, probably one of the most powerful people you'd never heard of. Such an anonymous exercising of power rarely lends itself to the public good, and such people are usually notoriously publicity shy. We are therefore all the richer for this impressive, illuminating and amusing memoir.

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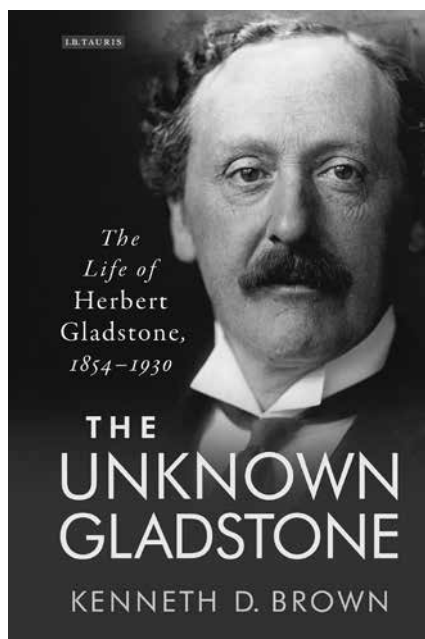
Restoring Herbert Gladstone

Kenneth D. Brown, *The Unknown Gladstone: The Life of Herbert Gladstone, 1854–1930* (I.B. Tauris, 2018)

Review by Roger Swift

HERBERT GLADSTONE, THE youngest son of the eminent Victorian prime minister, William Ewart Gladstone, remains one of the forgotten men of the late-Victorian and Edwardian political world, despite a productive career in the Liberal Party within which he exercised considerable political influence on the question of Irish home rule, served as a most effective chief whip in helping to secure the great Liberal victory of 1906, attained cabinet office under Campbell Bannerman and Asquith as home secretary, and became the first governor

general of the Union of South Africa. Yet Herbert Gladstone has defied serious biographical study, the exception being Sir Charles Mallet's modest work of 1932, *Herbert Gladstone: A Memoir*, and his achievements have been largely understated in the historiography of the Liberal Party, not least because throughout his life he lived in the shadow of his illustrious father, with whom he shared an intense emotional and psychological empathy. In this excellent and much-needed biography, Professor Kenneth Brown seeks to rescue Herbert Gladstone from obscurity



and restore him to his rightful place in the history of the Liberal Party.

The various chapters examine Herbert's journey from Hawarden to Westminster; his personal experience of the Irish question; his years in the wilderness as an opposition MP; his development as a Liberal chief whip; his years as home secretary; his experiences as governor general of South Africa; and his later work within the Liberal Party, largely behind the scenes, until his death in 1930. This is followed by a short but succinct epilogue, which provides an effective conclusion to the biography. This said, the underlying theme that runs throughout the book is Herbert Gladstone's consistent loyalty throughout his career to his father's principles and his desire to protect the name, principles and achievements of William Gladstone.

Educated at Eton and University College, Oxford, where he received a first-class degree in History, Gladstone obtained a lectureship at Keble College, due largely to family connections. His initial interest in politics was provoked by the Bulgarian atrocities of 1876 and his father's staunch defence of the rights of minorities, whose cause Herbert was to champion throughout his life. In 1880 he was returned as the Liberal MP for Leeds (the seat having been previously won and then vacated by William Gladstone in favour of Midlothian) and, in 1885, for Leeds West, subsequently serving the constituency until he was raised to the peerage as Viscount Gladstone in 1910.

In 1881, during his second administration, and despite warnings from his

cabinet colleagues that he could be open to charges of nepotism, William Gladstone appointed Herbert a Civil Lord of the Admiralty, or junior whip, and later in the year he accompanied W. E. Forster, the Irish secretary, to Ireland. While he deplored the violence of the Land League, Herbert concluded that the Irish people were deserving of self-government on both moral and practical grounds and that the root of the Irish problem lay in English autocracy and the culpability of the landlords. Indeed, Professor Brown argues not only that Herbert Gladstone's views on the principle of home rule were at this stage both independent of, and more advanced than those of his father but also that, in flying the 'Hawarden Kite' in December 1885, Herbert was acting entirely of his own volition rather than as a mere cipher for his father, who he regarded as the only Liberal with sufficient political clout to deliver home rule. Herbert's subsequent appointment by his father as financial secretary to the Treasury during William Gladstone's short-lived third ministry was in some respects a recognition of the value placed by Gladstone on his son's important role as a link between himself, the Irish and Liberals in both the country and parliament.

With the failure of the first Home Rule Bill and the formation of Salisbury's second Tory ministry, Herbert Gladstone was one of the leading critics in parliament of both Balfour's Irish policy and Joseph Chamberlain and the Liberal Unionists, whom he described as 'illiberal disunionists', and his growing reputation within the Liberal Party was subsequently reflected in his appointment in 1892 as under-secretary for the Home Office under Herbert Henry Asquith during Gladstone's fourth ministry. Here, he conducted important work behind the scenes in the preparation of the Building Societies Act, the Employer's Liability Act and the Factory Acts, and in the amelioration of the harsh prison conditions promoted by the reactionary Du Cane regime. In 1894, after his father's resignation following the defeat of the third Home Rule Bill, Herbert Gladstone was promoted to cabinet rank by Lord Rosebery as First Commissioner of the Board of Works, a post he held until the fall of the government in 1895.

Following William Gladstone's death in 1898, Herbert Gladstone was preoccupied with family matters but in 1899 he accepted the post of chief whip offered

by Campbell-Bannerman, who was anxious to appoint someone whose politics were, like his own, faithful to William Gladstone's, and with whom he developed a strong working relationship. This was a difficult task, given the deep divisions and personal rivalries within the Liberal Party, not least during the Boer War, and given a dysfunctional party machine. Nevertheless, as Professor Brown shows, Herbert Gladstone achieved considerable success in meeting these challenges, and the Liberal landslide of 1905 owed much to his reorganisation of the party machine by finding and placing suitable candidates in every seat and raising the necessary finances to support them. Most notably, he also negotiated a pact with the Labour Representation Committee in 1903, which ensured that Liberal and Labour candidates did not split the vote in two-member constituencies.

Appointed home secretary in the new Liberal administration, Gladstone inherited a large department with a wide remit which generated a huge workload; yet he was able to sponsor significant legal reforms in 1906–7, including the further amelioration of prison conditions, the promotion of the Borstal idea for adolescent offenders, the foundation of the probation system, and the establishment of the Court of Appeal. Other measures he promoted, with the able assistance of his under-secretary, Herbert Samuel, included the Workmen's Compensation Act (1906), the Deceased Wife's Sister's Marriage Act (1907), the Advertisements Regulation Act (1907), the Factory and Workshops Act (1907) and the Coal Mines (Eight Hours) Act (1908). In implementing the Aliens Act, introduced by the Conservatives in 1905, Gladstone sought to humanise the measure by giving the Home Office greater discretion over migrants fleeing from religious or political persecution, despite claims from the Tory gutter press that he was being too soft on French anarchists, Russian Jews and German gypsies. By contrast, however, Professor Brown shows that Gladstone found difficulty in addressing the challenge to public order presented by the activities of the Women's Social and Political Union. Whilst disapproving of WSPU disorders, Gladstone supported the enfranchisement of women, unlike the prime minister, Herbert Asquith, and most of his cabinet colleagues who disapproved (as indeed did King Edward VII) of his

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attempts to meliorate the treatment of suffragettes in prison, including forcible feeding (which he sanctioned with great reluctance). Nevertheless, by 1909 Gladstone had shown himself to be a quietly effective minister and a force for unity within the Liberal Party and, when the 1910 inauguration date for the recently formed Union of South Africa was announced, Asquith regarded Gladstone, with a proven ability to bring together individuals of differing outlooks and abilities, as the best candidate to serve as the inaugural governor general of South Africa and high commissioner of the adjacent British protectorates, a decision which Edward VII sanctioned, albeit reluctantly. Gladstone was duly raised to the peerage as Viscount Gladstone of the County of Lanark.

During his four years in South Africa, Gladstone faced major challenges. These included the tensions arising from Indian immigration and settlement, not least during Mohandas Gandhi's campaign of passive resistance in 1912, and reports of police ill-treatment of striking Indian workers in Natal and Transvaal, which Herbert sought to diffuse by decisively forcing a full commission of inquiry. He also sanctioned the deployment of Imperial troops to police the disorders associated with the strikes on the Rand in the summer of 1913 (although he had some sympathy with the strikers' cause) and his actions were vindicated both within the British parliament and by the official Witwatersrand Disturbances Report. Indeed, Professor Brown refutes the charge that Gladstone's governor-generalship paved the way for apartheid in South Africa by showing that in avoiding open racial conflict, in assisting the development of an infrastructure for future social and economic development, and in maintaining the Union within the sphere of British influence, Gladstone played a pivotal role in the development of the new Union. This was acknowledged by Louis Botha and Jan Smuts (who both wished him to continue beyond 1914) and who admired his tact, wisdom and impartiality.

Throughout the First World War, Gladstone played a leading role within the War Refugees Committee and contributed to several charitable and philanthropic initiatives. He regarded Lloyd George's accession to the premiership in 1916 as more the product of Asquith's inadequacies rather than Lloyd George's ambitions but his antipathy towards the

latter (whom he described as 'The Welsh Goat'), especially after the Coupon Election and the return of the Liberal–Unionist coalition government, rested largely on Lloyd George's policies and behaviour, including the shameless use of the honours system, which he regarded as the antithesis of William Ewart Gladstone's principles and integrity. This antipathy was mutual, Lloyd George describing Herbert as 'a man without adequate gifts ... the best living embodiment of the Liberal doctrine that quality is not hereditary'.

Herbert Gladstone held that Liberalism needed to be revitalised from within during the post-war years and agreed to oversee the organisation of the Independent Liberal Party but his efforts were hampered by party disagreements over the leadership, the development of a distinct policy framework, and the replenishing of party funds. As Professor Brown shows, the fall of Lloyd George in 1922 posed further problems, for while most rank and file Liberals hoped for a reunited party and compromises between Lloyd George's National Liberals (who were well-financed) and the ILP, this proved difficult to achieve and, under Asquith's leadership, the Liberals were annihilated at the 1924 general election, securing only forty-three seats. This left Lloyd George, still Liberalism's most dynamic and charismatic politician, in the party's driving seat. Deflated by these developments, Herbert Gladstone's efforts were largely directed towards containing Lloyd George's influence within Liberalism by highlighting the contrast between the characters of its most eminent leader (William Gladstone) and the most plausible claimant to his succession (Lloyd George) and by protecting and sustaining his father's legacy. Indeed, Professor Brown argues

that during his final years Herbert Gladstone's concept of Liberalism, which was essentially Victorian, was increasingly out of step with the international and domestic challenges arising in the post-First World War world.

This is a fine book, characterised by meticulous and wide-ranging research, which presents a sympathetic yet critical biography in which Herbert Gladstone emerges as a Christian gentleman, a modest, unassuming and compassionate man who never sought office for its own sake but as a matter of public duty and one who remained loyal to his father's principles throughout his life. He was also intensely devoted to his parents, siblings and wife (Dolly Paget, twenty years his junior, whom he married late in life in 1901) and loyal to his political friends, especially Campbell-Bannerman and Asquith. Unlike the 'Grand Old Man', however, Herbert was socially gregarious, with a wide circle of friends and a range of interests, including cricket, tennis, golf, music, field sports and country life in general. Again, unlike his father, he was not an intellectual and his parliamentary performances – he was a good speaker but never a great orator – and reserved manner in cabinet meetings were indicative of self-doubt and a certain lack of confidence. Yet, he was an efficient administrator who achieved much, often working at his best quietly in the background. Professor Brown is to be congratulated for his efforts in restoring Herbert Gladstone to his rightful place in the historiography of the Liberal Party.

Roger Swift is Emeritus Professor of Victorian Studies at the University of Chester and a Fellow of Gladstone's Library. His latest work is Charles Pelham Villiers: Aristocratic Victorian Radical (Routledge, 2017).

Aristocratic Radical

Roger Swift, *Charles Pelham Villiers: Aristocratic Victorian Radical* (Routledge, 2017)

Review by Ian Cawood

ROGER SWIFT'S BIOGRAPHY OF Charles Pelham Villiers is the first modern study of the man who still holds the record for the longest

unbroken period as an MP for a constituency. Villiers was elected to parliament for the constituency of Wolverhampton in 1835 in the aftermath of the Reform