

Reviews

and Thatcherite 1980s – to look more kindly on David Cameron’s ‘modernising’ project. Jones touches on the disputes over the tuition fees pledge in the Federal Policy Committee in 2008–9, where Evan Harris led successive revolts against leadership attempts to modify the proposal. He notes Clegg’s acceptance that the coalition’s deficit reduction should come overwhelmingly from spending cuts rather than increases in taxation – to my mind one of our crucial errors in 2010. But he underplays the systemic dilemma that faces any third party in our two-party system: that the only way to national power is through coalition, but that the junior partner in any coalition gets the blame and not the credit.

One lesson is that a party of ideas needs to rethink its approach in the light of changing circumstances every decade. Jones could have discussed more directly the impact of economic, technological and social change on Liberal politics and policy. He gives the party too little credit for its influence

over British social regulation, from abortion reform through to sexual equality and LGBT rights – with a voice and parliamentary influence, outside government, that has helped to make Britain a more open and liberal society. But globalisation, the replacement of British enterprise by multinational investment, the continuing technological revolution and its impact on the unskilled, all pose challenges to liberalism that the party has struggled to address. For these we need to develop new policies. But many of the old policies that Grimond espoused remain directly relevant, and some are underplayed by the party today: active citizenship, the importance of the third sector between the state and private enterprise, profit-sharing and co-ownership, decentralisation of government and strong local democracy, spreading power and wealth as widely as possible.

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and the good of the time, including Viscounts Samuel and Simon (former Liberal and Liberal National leaders respectively), the Liberal classicist Gilbert Murray, and Jan Christian Smuts, then prime minister of South Africa, had contributed fulsome tributes. Waugh then goes on to contrast these comments on the character and achievements of Campbell-Bannerman with his relegation to someone whom, even in 1973, Wilson called an almost forgotten figure.

Whilst it is perhaps not surprising that the general public have almost no knowledge of Campbell-Bannerman – indeed I remember a ‘University Challenge’ contestant thinking he was a Tory in answer to one of Jeremy Paxman’s questions – his obscurity among Liberal Democrats is more surprising. In part, perhaps, this relates to a more general ignorance about Liberal history among a party most of whose members have joined since the 2015 general election. It also, of course, relates to the gap in the ‘big picture’ story of the Liberals between Gladstone (the ‘Grand Old Man’) and Irish home rule, and the rivalry of Asquith and Lloyd George, the ripples from which were felt through the party even as late as the 1970s. Even Campbell-Bannerman’s role as the Liberal leader who achieved the party’s greatest electoral victory in the 1906 general election does not in itself restore him to the prominence he deserves in its history. What Waugh

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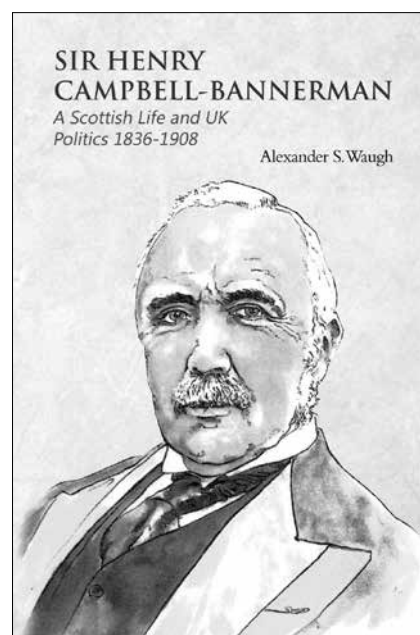
Alexander S. Waugh, *Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman: A Scottish Life and UK Politics 1836–1908* (Austin Macauley Publishers (2019)

Review by **Malcolm Baines**

ISTILL VIVIDLY REMEMBER finding the last major biography of Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman, by John Wilson, in a library surplus sale in Shrewsbury on my way to help in the Brecon and Radnor by-election. Alexander Waugh has spent much of his life putting together another biography: one which is in many ways a potpourri of Campbell-Bannerman’s life, combined with digressions into Scottish life, politics and history, looking back at one point even as far as the year 641. This range is in many ways the great charm of the book and it helps when reading it to have a wide range of historical and indeed cultural interests, otherwise the reader could rapidly find the constant digressions both distracting and irritating.

The other great strength of the book is the amount of information that it contains. Lists of Liberal cabinet members and the posts they held pepper the pages; whilst if you want to know who the other parliamentarians were who attended Glasgow High School (Campbell-Bannerman’s alma mater) then Table 29 in Appendix 6 is the place to look.

It is especially interesting, in the case of such a personal book, to understand Waugh’s motivation in writing it. He has helpfully appended a personal prologue and traces his interest back to an article he saw as a pupil in the Glasgow High School magazine in June 1948, 100 years after Campbell-Bannerman was the head boy of the third form. A number of the great



does, however, is – despite all the family and local history and political manoeuvring he includes in the book – to make the case for Campbell-Bannerman as a great politician, a superb prime minister and, unusually, a good man.

The biography is therefore chronological in its structure and takes the reader through Campbell-Bannerman's family background, upbringing, personal life, and political career from his election as MP for Stirling Burghs in a by-election in April 1868 followed in the November by the general election that brought Gladstone to power. Within three years he was a junior minister at the War Office before becoming Chief Secretary for Ireland in Gladstone's second ministry in October 1884 and then joining the cabinet as Secretary for War in February 1886. His ministerial career was, however, inevitably overshadowed by the Irish Question which so dominated Gladstone's third and fourth governments. Waugh not only charts Campbell-Bannerman's progress during these years but also looks at his marriage and his family life – including Campbell-Bannerman and his wife's annual visits to the Bohemian spa of Marienbad – and his relationship with his brother, James, Conservative MP for the Universities of Glasgow and Aberdeen, and subsequently Solicitor-General for Scotland in the Tory governments of the 1880s. They sat on opposite sides of the Commons for twenty-five years and, in a typical Waugh digression, there follows a list of all the other brothers who have sat in different parties in the Commons at the same time. Such is the charm of this book.

Whilst Campbell-Bannerman is not regarded as a major Liberal figure, despite his triumph in the 1906 general election, there are two political events in his life that are better known: his 'methods of barbarism' speech to the National Reform Union, in which he condemned the concentration camps that characterised the final phase of the Boer War; and his triumph over the Liberal Imperialists, Asquith, Haldane and Grey and their so-called Relugas compact, which meant he rather than Asquith led the party into the 1906 election. Both of these are testimonies to those characteristics of

Campbell-Bannerman which Waugh in this book successfully argues have been overlooked: his decent humanity and his often overlooked – by his contemporaries as much as by posterity – political acumen. Indeed, Waugh devotes his final chapter to an appraisal of Campbell-Bannerman as a man, as a constituency MP, as a minister, as prime minister and as a Scot, collating quotations from various Liberal worthies, Tories and constituents all of whom spoke very favourably about him, his character and his ability.

This biography is therefore a very enjoyable read and a reminder (particularly in the current environment) of what could be achieved by an exceptionally competent but unshowy Liberal leader. It does, as I have written above, appeal to those with eclectic interests and those who like to see connections between

people and events: Waugh does this very well and includes a real wealth of these linkages which are always interesting. This is therefore a good addition to the bookshelf of those fascinated by Liberal history and indeed parliamentary history in general, and a welcome contrast to the now rather dated Wilson biography of Campbell-Bannerman. What it is not, however, is a fully rounded biography; it is hard to find a criticism of Campbell-Bannerman in its pages. He does come across as something of a political saint, and at the end that is perhaps the only criticism from this reviewer.

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Liberalism and the Gladstone salon

Phyllis Weliver, *Mary Gladstone and the Victorian Salon: Music, Literature, Liberalism* (Cambridge University Press, 2017)

Review by **Roger Swift**

IN THIS INNOVATIVE and illuminating study, Phyllis Weliver, who is an Associate Professor of English at Saint Louis University, explores the specific role played by Mary Gladstone, the favourite daughter of the great Liberal prime minister William Ewart Gladstone, in late-Victorian salon culture. As Weliver herself acknowledges, this is not a biography of Mary Gladstone, although it tells us much about her life and works; rather, it is an intellectual and cultural study of the ways in which Liberal political ideas were informed by, revealed, and disseminated through Mary's family life and values, friendships, and more especially, through an appreciation of the arts and musical performances which she promoted at the Gladstone salon during the years immediately preceding and following the formation of Gladstone's second ministry of 1880–85.

Born in 1847, Mary was the fifth of William and Catherine Gladstone's eight children and developed a passion for music at an early age, becoming an outstanding pianist who performed before Franz Liszt in 1867 and Arthur Sullivan in 1870. She was also an accomplished violinist and accompanied the virtuoso violinist Joseph Joachim in 1876. When Mary increasingly took over the responsibility of organising the Gladstone salon from her mother in the mid-1870s, she not only developed a reputation within political circles as a notable *salonnière*, displaying a social brightness and a gift for networking in the process, but also ensured that musical performance, as a liberating and elevating experience, became a regular feature of the proceedings.

This study, which builds upon and extends previous publications by Weliver on this subject, comprises two