

# New Liberals and Old in the Revival of 1957–66

AT THE PEAK of the first significant revival in the Liberal Party's fortunes since the 1920s, most commentators saw it as a new force in politics. Alan Watkins defined the party's leader, Jo Grimond, as a 'new Liberal' only loosely linked to the party of a generation before. Comparisons were made between the Liberals and the US Democrats, with Grimond, like J. F. Kennedy, symbolising a new political generation, while Macmillan, like Eisenhower, represented the past.<sup>1</sup> The *Guardian's* political correspondent, Francis Boyd, declared in 1963 that 'The Liberal Party of today is virtually a new party trying to rebuild itself up from almost nothing.'<sup>2</sup>

The majority of the 350,000 party members at the peak of the revival in 1962–63 were new to party politics. Part of the party's appeal to voters was its self-proclaimed freedom from the class-based Labour–Conservative conflict. But a significant minority had been brought up in 'Liberal families', for whom active liberalism in the reviving party was an appealing or instinctive choice; and, amongst its leaders, this was a majority. Many of the voters who moved to support the Liberals in these years were also responding to family or local loyalties. The aim here is to examine the strength of these links between the old Liberal Party, of the years before and after the First World War, and the new party that emerged under Jo Grimond – among those who led, funded and organised the party, among its local activists and members, and among those most likely to vote for it.

The gap between the absorption of the Liberal government of 1905–16 into the war-time coalition and the first stirring of revival in 1958–59 was less than a lifetime. Young Liberals in their twenties in 1914 had reached their seventies by 1964 – provided they had survived the two world wars. Those who had rallied to the hopes of revival in 1929 were often younger. The national Liberal Party struggled and fractured in the interim, losing MPs and peers both to Labour and the Conservatives. But, at local level, many Liberal clubs continued, linked to local Liberal councillors and aldermen, sometimes in unofficial or official pacts with other council groups. And, when the revival came, the children of Liberals from the world before the First World War were among the most likely to rally to the party as activists or supporters.<sup>3</sup>

The years in between were marked by repeated cycles of hope and despair. There were hopes of recovery in the late 1930s, facing a 'national' government and a weakened and uncertain Labour Party: hopes delayed by the wartime political truce, and dashed by the 1945 election. Nevertheless, the national organisation set to work to raise funds and find candidates in preparation for the 1950 election, in which the Liberals fought 475 seats, and were again disappointed. Each of these brief recoveries brought in new activists, while the disappointing results then lost many to Labour or the Conservatives – or to political inactivity. But Liberalism is inherently an optimistic creed, and an upturn in political

fortunes or illiberal behaviour by the party in power would rally many of them to try again.

Liberals in these difficult years prided themselves on being 'the party of ideas': the party of Lloyd George's *We Can Conquer Unemployment*, of J. M. Keynes and William Beveridge (the latter briefly a Liberal MP in 1944–45, and later leader of the Liberal group in the Lords). The Liberal Summer School attracted intellectuals throughout these years and into the 1960s. After the renewed setbacks of the 1950 and 1951 elections, there followed a battle of ideas between free trade and free market Liberals and Keynesian social Liberals. With free market liberals apparently in the ascendant in two stormy Assemblies (party conferences) in 1953–54, the Radical Reform Group (of Keynesians and social liberals) dissociated itself from the party. Two of

its leading members, Dingle Foot and Megan Lloyd George, joined Labour and became Labour MPs, but others in the group returned when Jo Grimond set out a progressive and internationalist agenda. Conversely, the economic and individualistic wing, which included many of the party's larger funders in that period, moved gradually away in the late 1950s, with the Institute of Economic Affairs (founded in 1955) their most effective alternative vehicle.<sup>4</sup>

There was therefore a wide pool of previously active Liberals scattered across the country as the revival of the late 1950s began, gathering strength after the 1959 election. Some, like the Aclands, Russells, Sinclairs and Foots, came from old Liberal families that stretched in some cases back to the Whigs. Others had grown up in communities that had

Jo Grimond and Eric Lubbock, victor of the Orpington by-election



formed part of the old Liberal coalition of Non-conformists, liberal Jews, intellectuals and business leaders in textile towns. The surge of new members who flooded in discovered pockets of embattled Liberals still holding official positions, party assets, even seats on local councils – making for culture clashes when the newcomers wanted to change long-established habits of campaigning and policy. Liberals who had ‘kept the faith’ through the barren years in the political margins were joined by ‘returnees’ from non-political inactivity or from the other two parties, and by larger numbers of enthusiasts new to party politics – some of whom were the children of former Liberals, others entirely without a political history.

### Leading the revival

Significant figures within the ‘new’ Liberal Party were linked to the old by family ties. Eric Lubbock, portrayed by the press, when elected in 1962 as MP for Orpington, as the very image of the new middle-class suburban voter, was the great-grandson of Sir John Lubbock, fourth baronet, Liberal MP and first Lord Avebury, friend of Charles Darwin and founder of the Proportional Representation League (now the Electoral Reform Society).<sup>5</sup> Pratap Chitnis, the agent who led the innovative Orpington campaign and subsequently, as head of the party organisation, drove through the replacement of the various colours Liberals stood for across the country with ‘day-glo orange’, proudly recalled his maternal grandfather, Manmatha Chandra Mallik, a Liberal candidate for parliament in 1906 and 1910. Sir Felix Brunner, president of the Liberal Party (and chair of its annual assembly) in 1962, had ‘followed in a family tradition by standing for election for the Liberal Party’ in 1924, 1939 and 1945.<sup>6</sup> Margaret Wingfield, a prominent policy adviser and candidate in the 1960s who became party president in 1975–76 and

steered the organisation through the complications of the Jeremy Thorpe scandal, was the niece of Charles McCurdy MP, chief whip in Lloyd George’s coalition government.<sup>7</sup> Jo Grimond himself, portrayed by the press as a modernising ‘new man’ in politics, was married to Laura Bonham Carter, the granddaughter of H. H. Asquith.

One key element in the post-1957 revival was Grimond’s circumvention of the party’s ramshackle formal procedures by creating a small ‘organising committee’, led by Frank Byers and comprising Richard Wainwright, Arthur Holt, Mark Bonham-Carter and Jeremy Thorpe. Mark Bonham Carter, briefly an MP after winning the 1958 Torrington by-election, was Laura’s brother.<sup>8</sup> Frank Byers had been president of the Oxford University Liberals in the mid-1930s (Harold Wilson was treasurer at the time), and Liberal MP for North Dorset from 1945 to 1950; after a period of political inactivity, during which he had established a successful business career, he was persuaded by Grimond to apply his managerial skills to the party organisation, and led the 1964 and 1966 election campaigns.<sup>9</sup> Arthur Holt, in contrast, came from a long-standing local industrial, Congregational and Liberal family in East Lancashire. Tasked with revitalising Bolton’s Reform Club and Liberal Association on his return from Japanese prison camp, he then became the local candidate, and was elected in 1951 when the Conservatives offered to stand down in Bolton West if the Liberals reciprocated in Bolton East. He became Grimond’s chief whip, and headed the Liberal Publication Department, which, from 1958, published a succession of policy papers. Richard Wainwright was from a similarly traditional background: the only son of a wealthy Leeds accountant and businessman, he had trained as a Methodist lay preacher and as a conscientious objector had served in the Friends Ambulance Unit in the war. Jeremy Thorpe, the son and grandson of Conservative MPs,

was in this respect an outsider – though his parents were friends of Megan Lloyd George, whom he knew and admired; he had become an active Liberal as a student at Oxford.

The party outside parliament, always suspicious of central direction, insisted after the 1959 election on adding one of the treasurers and the chairman of the party executive as ex officio committee members. This brought in as chairmen of the executive Leonard Behrens, a prominent Manchester businessman and philanthropist who had stood for parliament in 1945 and 1950 (and was president of the party in 1957–58), and from 1961 Desmond Banks, a party staffer in 1949, candidate in 1950, and a co-founder of the Radical Reform Group in 1952 (president of the party in 1968–9).

Grimond's efforts to reshape and redefine Liberal policy led him to draw on the advice of sympathetic academics, on the fringes of the party or outside. Yet the 1957 book of essays to which he contributed, *The Unserving State: Essays in Liberty and Welfare*, which presented itself as 'the first full-scale book on the attitudes and policies of British Liberalism since *Britain's Industrial Future* (1928)', came from a group chaired by Elliott Dodds, who had once been private secretary to Herbert Samuel, a parliamentary candidate five times between 1922 and 1935, president of the party in 1948, and a lifetime Congregationalist.<sup>10</sup> Another of the contributors was Nathaniel Micklem, a leading Congregational minister (and son of a Liberal MP in the 1906 parliament).<sup>11</sup> Grimond's grasp of the importance of the foundation of the European Economic Community was strengthened by the advice of (Lord) Walter Layton, a three-time Liberal candidate in the 1920s, who was deputy leader of the Liberal group in the Lords in the 1950s. He had chaired the committee that had drafted the Liberal Yellow Book in

1928, had been the only Liberal in the British delegation to the Council of Europe at its inaugural meeting in 1949, and was a close friend of Jean Monnet, the 'apostle' of European integration, with whom he had worked on transatlantic supply for the allied war effort in both world wars.<sup>12</sup> Grimond's extensive writings and speeches, redefining Liberal policies in his early years as leader, combined a commitment to 'modernisation' and a post-imperial Britain with established social liberal commitments such as industrial democracy and political decentralisation.<sup>13</sup>

Links between old and new were much thinner in terms of party finance. Edward Martell and Lord Moynihan, who had led the party's efforts to raise money for the first ten years after the war, left the party to set up the libertarian 'People's League for the Defence of Freedom' in 1956, taking several large donors with them. The Cadbury family's gradual withdrawal from supporting Liberal causes

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was completed with the closure of the *News Chronicle* in 1960.<sup>14</sup> The Rowntree connection survived through the Joseph Rowntree Social Service Trust, which was one of the party's most important funders in the 1960s. The reverend Timothy Beaumont, the son of a Tory MP (and grandson of two of the 1906 generation of Liberal MPs), became one of the party's most generous and active funders from his return from serving as an Anglican priest in Hong Kong in 1959. He became one of the party's treasurers in 1961, together with Ronald Gardner Thorpe, a first-time candidate in 1959 and city businessman who later became lord mayor of London.<sup>15</sup> The 1960s revival was desperately dependent on small donations, gathered through appeals at annual assemblies

and rallies; as membership and support sank in 1965–66, the party became deeply in debt.

### Candidates, activists and members

The disastrous results of the 1950 and 1951 elections left local Liberal organisations across the country badly shaken. But pockets of the party faithful remained. In 1953, 350 constituency associations in England and Wales were still affiliated to the national party – though many had completely lost representation on local councils, and others (particularly in the north of England) had maintained representation through electoral pacts with other parties. Across northern counties and in the south-west many Liberal Clubs retained some links with political loyalties. Bradford's sixteen clubs kept constituency associations alive and funded through the 1950s. Colne Valley had fifteen active clubs into the 1960s; Huddersfield almost as many. In Glossop and Rochdale, the local Liberal club remained the centre for Liberal activities.<sup>16</sup>

Even in apparently derelict constituencies, groups that were often scarcely active were nevertheless still constituting formal associations and sometimes controlling useful assets. The 1959 Nuffield election study noted

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that in Tiverton 'the two sources of Liberal strength, long-standing members and "dis-sident" newcomers, worked uneasily in combination.'<sup>17</sup> Activists moving from elsewhere and new members infiltrated inactive associations and clubs in order to regain control; control of assets was sometimes contested in the courts. In strongly Nonconformist areas like

Torrington, revival might start by contacting local chapel stewards – a tactic recommended by the party organisation.<sup>18</sup> Personal relations between older and newer members could make a marked difference to the pace of revived activity – but so could generational divides and religious and social attitudes. The Scottish Liberal Party conference in 1960 witnessed a heated debate on reform of the laws on divorce and homosexuality, proposed by the Association of Scottish Liberal Students, with older members successfully claiming that acceptance of the proposals would shake the foundations of Liberal support in the Highlands.<sup>19</sup> As late as 1967, the long-standing officers of the Truro Liberal Association resisted the nomination of young local activist David Penhaligon as parliamentary candidate, preferring the Oxbridge graduate Michael Steed. When, after the 1970 election, Penhaligon was adopted as candidate these officers resigned.<sup>20</sup>

From the perspective of 2025 it may be difficult to understand the past importance of Nonconformity in British society, and the influence of Nonconformist beliefs and heritage in shaping Liberal (and Labour) political commitment in this period, in spite of the decline of Nonconformist church attendance in the 1940s and 1950s.<sup>21</sup> At the end of

the nineteenth century, the political divide (in a not-yet-universal electorate) had been as much about religion as class: Anglican Tories versus Nonconformist Liberals, disputing over education

and disestablishment – at its peak in the controversy over the 1902 Education Act. There were subtle differences between Baptists and Congregationalists, who elected their own ministers, and Presbyterians and Wesleyan Methodists, whose ministers wielded authority over their congregations.<sup>22</sup> Quakers had (and have) no ministers, speaking their minds

in meetings without bowing to any earthly authority. Resistance to social hierarchy (represented by the established Church as well as social conventions and class distinctions – and for some also union hierarchies) combined with moral conscience and independence of mind to create a willingness to accept minority status and argue that the majority were wrong.

In the 1950s, the majority of the tiny Liberal parliamentary party were Congregationalists. In the 1966–70 parliament, two of the twelve MPs (Wainwright and Bessell) were Methodist lay preachers. In rural Wales, the south-west of England and in Lancashire and Yorkshire, those who had hung on in the defeated party and many of those who returned in its revival came from these churches. Half of the Liberal activists in Newcastle-under-Lyme at the beginning of the 1960s were Nonconformists, twice the percentage among the local population. In one Lancashire town in 1971 eight of the nine Liberal councillors were Methodist lay-preachers.<sup>23</sup>

The total membership of the Liberal Party trebled between 1955 and 1963, to reach a claimed peak of 350,000. A high proportion of those who joined were young, reflecting the attraction of an idealistic party and the personal appeal of Jo Grimond's intellectual style. Student Liberal societies at Oxford and Cambridge, which had remained active throughout the lean years of their party, were flourishing from the mid-1950s, often with membership close to 1,000; they were an important source of future activists and parliamentary candidates. By 1962 there were twenty-three student organisations in the Union of Liberal Students, from universities and colleges across the country. The National League of Young Liberals, which had also survived from before the 1906 government, grew between 1957 and 1962 from 140 to 300 branches, claiming 15,000 members. 'The recent willingness of several thousand young

people to work for the Liberal Party', a survey of youth politics concluded, 'is the most striking ... aspect of the political participation of youth in contemporary Britain.'<sup>24</sup> In the 1964 election, over half of the Liberal candidates were under 40 – and forty-four of them still in their twenties.

Parliamentary and local candidates were often the key to the revival of activity and membership. Outside traditional areas of Liberal strength there was an almost accidental element in local revivals; the presence or absence of key activists was crucial. In Liverpool, Cyril Carr and a few supporters started by winning a ward, with some support and advice from existing activists in Birkenhead. Ten years later they took control of the city council. Jeremy Thorpe's charisma and energy built up the North Devon Party organisation from six branches in 1955 to thirty-eight by the 1959 election, with over 4,000 members. The 1959 Nuffield election study of the Tiverton campaign notes that the first-time candidate, a local gentleman farmer who had left the Conservative Party after the Suez intervention, provided much of the impetus for a campaign in a seat not fought in 1955, even though 'many of their votes came ... from parishes where Nonconformity was held to be a strong influence.'

In the fallow years of the early 1950s, the party had been painfully short of potential parliamentary candidates. A high proportion of those who had stood in 1950 and 1951 had dropped out of politics or joined another party; four of the twelve MPs elected in 1945 had joined Labour by 1955, and thirteen former Liberal candidates stood for the Conservatives in the 1955 election. Returning former members, as well as enthusiastic new recruits, gave the party more choice in a larger number of seats for the 1964 election. A survey by Michael Steed and William Wallace of 1964 Liberal candidates found that a third of those who stood in 1964 had been active Liberals before

1951, forty of them before 1945; several of these had become inactive and returned as the party recovered. Thirteen had first been Liberal candidates in 1950, four in 1929 or 1935. Over half of these veterans were Nonconformists (including Methodists and Quakers); several were related to former Liberal politicians. First-time candidates were far less often linked to past political and religious families, though a significant minority had previous experience in one or more other parties, including the wartime Common Wealth Party and local Independent groups. In Devon and Cornwall, the clear majority of candidates were party veterans. In the north of England there was a high proportion of Nonconformists. But in the south-east of England, younger and newer candidates predominated, largely graduates and in professional occupations.

The new generation nevertheless absorbed something of the party's traditions and assumptions as they became fully involved. At the 1958 Assembly, Sir Arthur Comyns Carr, that year's president, told the delegates about his experiences as a schoolboy in the election of 1900. Young Liberals at their annual dinner in 1966 applauded Sir Leonard Behrens as he told them about the Young Liberals of 1910. At the Leith constituency party's annual general meeting in 1962, the report on rising activities inspired elderly members to sing the Liberal Land Song, first adopted by Liberals at the time of Lloyd George's 'People's Budget' in 1909.<sup>25</sup> Socialisation of new members passed on party principles.

The geographical strength of the 1955–66 revival partly reflected traditional areas of Liberal support – in the south-west of England, rural Wales and the Scottish Highlands, and in scattered parts of England's industrial north. This was particularly the case in parliamentary elections. Colne Valley had been fought by Lady Violet Bonham Carter in 1950. Roxburgh and Selkirk had been won in 1950, though lost again in 1951. At the lowest point

in Liberal fortunes, John Bannerman (a Liberal since the 1930s, Gaelic speaker and former Rugby international) had come close to winning the Inverness by-election in 1954. But the presence or absence of a small group of activists who might recruit others to rebuild a local organisation – or the opportunity of a by-election – determined whether or not latent Liberal support was mobilised, and how far revival might reach. In the suburban interwar and postwar estates of the south-east, memories of past Liberal strength were largely absent. Here active Liberalism often had to be rebuilt from the ground up, mostly by a younger generation of new Liberals.

### Supporters and voters

The Liberal Party only fought 216 seats in 1959, then 365 seats in 1964, down to 311 in 1966. Surveys therefore struggled to identify a stable Liberal vote, given that half the electorate wasn't able to cast a vote for the Liberals when it came to it. A quarter of those who described themselves as Liberals to the Butler/Stokes survey in 1963 were denied a candidate the following year. A slate of candidates comparable to the 517 who stood in February 1974 might well have won a percentage of the national vote not far short of the 19 per cent then won. The average percentage per seat contested in 1964 was 18.5 per cent.

It therefore made sense to look for 'potential Liberals' – those answering 'yes' to the Gallup survey question 'Would you be likely to vote for the Liberals if you thought they would get a majority?' – as the pool of unrealised support. This never sank below 30 per cent except between 1951 and 1955, when it nevertheless remained around a quarter of the electorate. In August 1962 it reached 41 per cent. There was also evidence of a persistent core Liberal vote. In the 1964 election Liberal candidates gained at least 10 per cent of the vote in all but fourteen of the seats fought (mostly

in London). In seats not fought by the Liberals, the turnout was over 2 per cent lower; the Nuffield Election study (p. 348) concludes that 'about one in five of Liberal voters ... abstained if no candidate [was] available.' Successive election studies during these years also noted that spoilt ballot papers were higher in seats the Liberals did not contest – evidence of a tiny diehard remnant. The Butler and Stokes surveys were told by 35 per cent of Liberal voters in 1964 that they had made up their mind to vote Liberal by 1951 or before. But the surveys also showed that more than half in their sample who switched parties between 1959 and 1966 were switching between the Liberals and the two 'main' parties – strong evidence that potential Liberals were swayed by local circumstances and their perceptions of the binary national choice of government.

Alongside the entirely new voters Grimond's Liberal campaigners attracted, there were many who recalled past support. In the political life cycle, opinions formed in early adulthood often persist into old age. At the end of the 1950s, a third of the sampled voters had either themselves voted Liberal or remembered one or both of their parents as having been Liberal supporters. This is not surprising: the Liberals had polled a third of votes cast in 1922 and 1923, a quarter in 1929, and had received 2,620,000 votes as recently as 1950. Butler and Stokes recorded older respondents who referred to Lloyd George and the introduction of national insurance as reasons for supporting the Liberals in the early 1960s. Other older voters referred to Beveridge and the welfare state.

A secondary factor in the survival of Liberal loyalties was reflected in the high level of Nonconformist support for the party. Nearly 20 per cent of respondents to the Butler/Stokes survey who declared themselves Nonconformists also declared themselves Liberals

– twice as many of those who identified themselves as Church of England, and even higher than those who gave no religious affiliation. This was strongest in the north of England, where 40 per cent of Liberal supports were Nonconformists, compared to 33 per cent in Wales and 25 per cent in the south-west. In contrast, only 15 per cent of Liberal supporters in England's south-east had personal or parental Nonconformist links. The distinction between 'old' and 'new' Liberals was also evi-

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dent in recollections of parental loyalties. In the south-west, and in parts of the Midlands, over 40 per cent of respondents remembered Liberal parents and over 30 per cent of the children of Liberal parents were now Liberals. Contemporary comment on 'new' Liberalism correctly focused on the south-east. In 1964, 49 per cent of the Liberal vote came from London and the Home Counties, which contained only a third of the electorate. Significant increases were also gained in the south-west and the Scottish Highlands, from which came seven of the twelve seats won in 1966. But in the old Liberal strongholds of Wales, Lancashire and Yorkshire, fewer constituencies were fought and fewer advances made; Colne Valley was the only seat won through recapturing traditional loyalties.

### **Reshaping the party after 1966**

Grimond's underlying strategy had been to replace – or at least to supplement – the Labour Party as the main alternative to the Conservatives. Labour's achievement of a secure majority in the 1966 election ended that hope – and Grimond resigned the following



January. Ambitious politicians attracted to the surging party in 1961–62 had started to leave in 1963–64; others lapsed back into inactivity.

Grimond's legacy to the party was in the new generation of young liberals he had attracted through his many visits to universities and student groups and his questioning of Britain's post-imperial consensus. The Young Liberals' response to the setbacks of 1964 and 1966 was to turn to extra-parliamentary politics, both through the development of local community politics and through demonstrative campaigns. The clash between old and new became personalised in the mutual hostility between the Young Liberals and Jeremy Thorpe: he as a superb parliamentarian and election campaigner, they as reaching out to non-voters and those disillusioned with conventional politics and politicians.<sup>26</sup>

The next revival, in the early 1970s, came partly out of community campaigning, but also partly out of electoral discontent with divisions within both the major parties. Three of the five by-elections won by Liberals in 1972–73 were in long-past-held constituencies. Berwick-on-Tweed had been represented by Sir Edward Grey when Liberal foreign secretary, and briefly by William Beveridge in 1944–45; the Isle of Ely by James de Rothschild from 1929–45. Neither local association had, however, remained active; the Isle of Ely had only been fought once by a Liberal candidate in the six general elections before Clement Freud's by-election success. Cyril Smith, the victor in Rochdale was a former Young Liberal between 1945 and 1950, then a Labour councillor and mayor until a rift in their council group in 1966–67, after which he returned to the Liberals and successfully ousted the young candidate who had moved into Rochdale to fight the seat: very much an old Liberal ousting the new. The victory in Sutton and Cheam, a suburban seat won by a Young Liberal, was by contrast clear evidence of a different approach to political campaigning.

With Thorpe's resignation in 1975, the party leadership inside and outside parliament moved to a generation that had few or no direct links to the party of the 1920s and before. David Steel, son of a Church of Scotland minister, had been brought up partly in Kenya, joining the Liberals as a student in Edinburgh. Social and economic changes were loosening local political ties and closing Liberal clubs and Nonconformist chapels. Two decades after the beginnings of revival in 1957, few members remained who remembered British politics before 1945. The Alliance with the Social Democrats in the early 1980s introduced another surge of converts and political novices, some of whom became stalwarts of the merged Liberal Democrat Party.

Yet echoes of old Liberal loyalties have remained, passed down the generations. Ray Michie, the daughter of John Bannerman, sat from 1987 to 2001 as the MP for the seat he had fought in 1945. David Rendel, who won the Newbury by-election in 1993, was a great-great-nephew of Stuart Rendel, one of Gladstone's closest parliamentary colleagues. In 2025, the Highlands and the south-west had again become party strongholds. And at party conferences every year party activists still lustily sing the Liberal Land Song, waving 'the ballot in our hands'. ■

William Wallace joined the Liberal Party as a student in 1960, working in several by-election campaigns, including Orpington. He was the party's assistant press officer in the 1966 election campaign, fought Huddersfield West in 1970 and Manchester Moss Side twice in 1974.

- 1 See, for example, *The Guardian*, 31 Mar. 1962.
- 2 Francis Boyd, *British Politics in Transition* (Pall Mall Press, 1964), p. 98.
- 3 This article draws extensively on William Wallace, 'The Liberal Revival: The Liberal Party in Britain, 1955–1966' (Ph.D. thesis, Cornell University, 1968), both on the Nuffield election studies for 1964 and 1966, and on David Butler and Donald Stokes, *Political Change in Britain: Forces shaping electoral choice* (Macmillan 1969). A copy of the thesis was deposited

- in the library of Nuffield College, Oxford, where the author was a student while analysing Liberal voters in the Butler/Stokes survey.
- 4 Oliver Smedley, one of the signatories of the IEA's founding trust deed, remained a prominent figure in Liberal Assemblies until 1960–61. Arthur Seldon, one of its early key figures, was recruited to the IEA by the Liberal peer Lord Grantchester; he served on several Liberal Party policy groups, including one on 'Ownership for All' chaired by Elliott Dodds. His Wikipedia entry (accessed in December 2024) states that he was 'involved in ... the Orpington by-election'. His wife, Marjorie, was certainly active in that campaign, hosting a number of students who came to help, including the author.
- 5 He was also responsible for introducing what became the Bank Holidays Act of 1871 and the Ancient Monuments Act of 1881. Apart from his role in the family bank he became a fellow of the Royal Society and vice-chancellor of the University of London.
- 6 Wikipedia, accessed December 2024. His son Hugo fought Torquay in 1964 and 1966, maintaining the family tradition for another generation. The party president who presided over the chaotic 1958 Assembly, where economic and social Liberals disputed conflicting policies, was Sir Arthur Comyns Carr, a distinguished barrister who had served on the Liberal Land Enquiry in 1912 and had fought eleven parliamentary elections since 1918, briefly winning Islington East in 1923–24.
- 7 Family political loyalties have also persisted here. Her daughter, Caroline Ogden, was managing one of the party's most active groups providing clerical assistance for key seats and by-elections in the 2010s and early 2020s. Her granddaughter was a councillor in Streatham.
- 8 Both Grimond and Bonham Carter had been educated at Eton. Bonham Carter had been captured by the Germans in the war and escaped, after which, as a Guards officer, he was assigned to protect the royal family at Windsor; there were press reports about a close relationship with Princess Margaret. Nevertheless, these two were leading a party which saw itself as outside Britain's entrenched social hierarchy.
- 9 Colonel Byers, as he was usually called until he received a life peerage in 1964, had had a distinguished war record, and rose to become a director of Rio Tinto Zinc.
- 10 George Watson (ed.), *The Unservile State: Essays in Liberty and Welfare* (Allen and Unwin, 1957), p. 7. For Elliott Dodds, see Duncan Brack (ed.), *Dictionary of Liberal Biography* (Politico, 1998), pp. 96–8.
- 11 Brack, *Dictionary of Liberal Biography*, pp. 260–1. Micklem had been principal of Mansfield College, the Congregationalist foundation at Oxford University, from 1932 to 1953. He was president of the Liberal Party in 1957–58.
- 12 Ibid., pp. 217–9. Lord Layton's long career included acting as an adviser at the 1919 Versailles peace conference and seventeen years as editor of *The Economist*. His son, Christopher Layton, was a policy adviser to Grimond after 1959, and himself fought several elections in the 1960s.
- 13 Tudor Jones, *The Uneven Path of British Liberalism* (Manchester University Press, 2019), ch. 2, traces the continuity of policy between the interwar years and Grimond's restatement.
- 14 One of Martell's fundraising legacies – the 'newsletter' *Liberal News* – began to lose money after the party doubled its size to enthrone its new members, in spite of recruiting some lively new contributors, including Christopher Booker and the cartoonist William Rushton, who went on (with Richard Ingrams) to found *Private Eye*.
- 15 Jones, *Uneven Path*, pp. 29–30. Beaumont, who had inherited a substantial fortune from American relatives, became (unpaid) head of the party organisation in 1965–66, a life peer in 1967, chair of the executive in 1967–68 and president in 1969–70 (defeating Jeremy Thorpe's preferred candidate).
- 16 A. H. Birch, *Small Town Politics* (Oxford University Press, 1959), p. 57; J. G. Bulpitt, *Party Politics in English Local Government* (Longmans, 1967), p. 78.
- 17 D. E. Butler and Richard Rose, *The British General Election of 1959* (Macmillan 1960), p. 150, here referring to Tiverton.
- 18 *Effective Organizing* (Liberal Party Organization, 1958) recommended such tactics to activists reviving dormant associations. Hugh Tinker's 'Reflections after a General Election: 1964', in his *Reorientations: a Study of Asia in Transition* (Pall Mall Press 1965), discusses the value of 'the non-conformist network' to Liberal campaigning then.
- 19 *The Guardian*, 16 May 1960.
- 20 Annette Penhaligon, *Penhaligon* (Bloomsbury, 1989), pp. 28, 52. When Paul Tyler was interviewed as a potential candidate for Bodmin in 1968, the local committee was upset to discover that he was an Anglican – though mollified when he reminded them that Bishop